

PRAYER

Reverend Dr. Paul Taylor, St. Vincent Archabbey, Latrobe, Pennsylvania, offered the following prayer:

We stand before You, O Holy God, conscious of our sinfulness, but aware that we gather in Your name.

Come to us, remain with us, and enlighten our hearts. Give us light and strength to know Your will, to make it our own, and to live it in our lives.

Guide us by Your wisdom, support us by Your power, for You are God, our God, the holy God.

You desire justice for all. Enable us to uphold the rights of others. Do not allow us to be misled by ignorance or corrupted by fear or favor.

Unite us to Yourself in the bond of love and keep us faithful to all that is true.

As we gather in Your name, may we temper justice with love, so that all our discussions and reflections may be pleasing to You and earn the reward promised to good and faithful servants.

We ask this of You who live and reign forever and ever.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause one, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentlewoman from Massachusetts (Ms. TSONGAS) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. TSONGAS led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

WELCOMING REVEREND DR. PAUL TAYLOR

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SHUSTER) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and introduce a good friend and community leader in my home State, Reverend Paul Taylor, and to thank him for offering today's invocation. Reverend Taylor made the trip to the Nation's Capital from the great city of Latrobe, Pennsylvania. I know my colleague, TIM MURPHY, joins me in welcoming Reverend Taylor to the House of Representatives.

For the past 17 years, Reverend Taylor has dedicated his life to the students and faculty at Saint Vincent College. As a member of the college, he has held several prominent positions, including dean of admission, dean of

students, and his current role as executive vice president.

Reverend Taylor's civic engagement and enthusiasm for improving the lives of others is not limited to higher education. Reverend Taylor also serves on the board of directors for the Latrobe Area Hospital Charitable Foundation and assists as a weekend parish priest.

In his personal life, Reverend Taylor is an avid hunter and serves as the chaplain to the six-time Super Bowl champion Pittsburgh Steelers, and he performs mass every Sunday for every home game.

Reverend Taylor is a warm and welcoming leader. He has helped build a strong foundation at Saint Vincent College that will last for decades to come. I am proud of the work he has done in the Pennsylvania community and am privileged to call him my friend.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain 15 further requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

FRACKING

(Mr. WILLIAMS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. WILLIAMS. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 2728, the Protecting States' Rights to Promote American Energy Security Act, is a commonsense bill that promotes energy independence, protects jobs, and preserves states' rights.

The 25th District of Texas contains the Barnett Shale, a major job creator, energy provider, and economic driver in the oil and gas industry. Reports this month showed that 825 out of the 1,762 active rigs in the United States are located throughout the State of Texas. That is almost half the Nation's active drilling rigs.

The shale oil boom in Texas contributes to our Nation's overall ability to cut reliance on foreign oil and get one step closer to energy independence. I will tell you one thing that can stop this progress dead in its tracks, however, and that is red tape and Federal bureaucracy.

For 60 years, States have regulated their own hydraulic fracturing operations, but the Obama administration is attempting to step in and add duplicative and costly regulations. For example, on average, it takes a State 30 days to approve permits for drilling. The Federal Government's Bureau of Land Management takes an average of 228 days.

Subjecting States to this is senseless, harmful, and unnecessary. H.R. 2728 will prevent this and many other destructive regulations from stifling energy production and job creation.

IRAN AND DIPLOMACY

(Mr. McDERMOTT asked and was given permission to address the House

for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, as the diplomats gather in Geneva today, I applaud their hard work in moving toward an interim agreement on the Iranian nuclear challenge.

After years of confrontation, today marks an important moment for all of us who support a diplomatic solution. We have spent a great deal of time to get to this place: taxpayer dollars, political capital, and global influence. We must not turn back now.

Right now, we have the maximum amount of leverage for a deal vis-a-vis Iran without fracturing the international coalition. Therefore, we should focus 100 percent on reaching a deal in Geneva under the P5+1 framework. It is absolutely critical.

Like using a wrench to tighten a nut, you can strip it if you push too hard. We have pushed to exactly the right point, and I hope that we will be successful.

We must, however, remember Mr. Reagan said, "Trust, but verify." It is possible to prevent nuclear problems if we trust, but verify. That is what these diplomats are doing.

SEQUESTRATION

(Mr. TURNER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Speaker, over the past year, I have heard from thousands of people in the Dayton area who have been affected by the unilateral and irresponsible spending cuts known as sequestration, which I have strongly opposed. Among those are numerous business owners who have contacted my office with details about the need to cut hours and eliminate full-time jobs in an effort to keep their doors open in this time of budgetary uncertainty.

Because of this continued uncertainty in contracts and the military's ability to make commitments, thousands of jobs in the Dayton area are at risk as we head into the second year of sequestration. Many of these subcontractors are critical to the training and further education of our military personnel. As a result of these cutbacks, our readiness and the ability to deal with global conflicts are greatly diminished.

Hundreds of hardworking civilian employees are struggling to pay their personal bills as a result of furloughs, and many more will suffer in 2014 as reductions in force will be necessary if the burdens of sequestration are not lifted.

I encourage those members of the Budget Committee to find targeted and meaningful spending cuts that will alleviate the pressure that sequestration is having on Dayton and similar communities across the country that serve as strong supporters of our military.