

about steady growth, tame inflation, climbing wages and falling interest rates. This increasingly stable and healthy economic environment has helped Mexico become, and I quote from the Business Week article, a middle-class nation where millions have access to mortgages, solid jobs provide security, and a class of strivers saves to put its kids through college.

Mr. Speaker, Mexico's middle class has grown to over 10 million families or 40 percent of all the households in Mexico. Business Week also credits home ownership as another key factor in the emergence of a robust middle class. Strong economic fundamentals have slashed mortgage rates in half in just 2 years. The growing ranks of Mexican homeowners buttresses middle-class growth by allowing families to build equity, plan for their financial futures and move further up the economic ladder.

The middle class has also been able to afford additional consumer goods. Last year, auto sales in Mexico were up 33 percent from 2000 as a record 1.3 million cars and trucks were purchased. Home appliance sales have tripled in the past decade. Even extras like concert tickets and sporting events tickets are increasingly accessible to the average working family.

Mr. Speaker, most of us would not consider refrigerators or baseball games to be major luxuries. But for a country that has struggled greatly with poverty and deep economic crises, these are signs of tremendous economic progress. They are proof that our policy of economic engagement through agreements like the North American Free Trade Agreement are working to bring new opportunities for the people in Mexico and also for the people right here in the United States.

They are an important step forward in ensuring that the swollen ranks of illegal immigrants are losing their incentive to come here illegally to find opportunity. Mexican officials are demonstrating the fact that they recognize the reality of the problem of illegal immigration as well. On February 16th, the Mexican Congress adopted a resolution that acknowledged the graveness of the illegal immigration issue and outlined the principles of its agenda to combat the problem. This resolution cited economic opportunity as critical to a successful campaign to prevent illegal immigration to the United States and to encourage the return of migrants to their homes in Mexico.

I am encouraged by the Mexican Parliament's bold language in accepting responsibility for action, and putting forth the outline of a plan. I am heartened that economic growth is central to Mexico's long-term strategy, because we know a growing Mexican middle class is a shrinking illegal immigrant class.

With greater hope for the future, there is a greater incentive to stay and build a life at home. Mexico is pledging to remain committed to a pro-growth

agenda. We must remain equally committed to an open trade agenda that helps our southern neighbor to continue down a path of economic growth and greater opportunity.

#### RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 45 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until 2 p.m.

□ 1400

#### AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PUTNAM) at 2 p.m.

#### PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer:

Lord our God, around the upper part of this Chamber are profile medallions which recall the personal history of lawmaking. In the center, full-faced and bold before us, is the image of Moses, the great lawgiver of the Hebrew scriptures.

May the people of this Nation and, in particular, those elected to the 109th Congress, who gather here to protect and guide this Nation, be faithful to Your commands.

Your revelation, Lord, gives us nothing less than the lessons we need to address the issues of the day. Your commandments are the foundations on which we build hope. They are the supports which strengthen faith in public action and the food which nourishes the human heart.

By obeying Your laws, those in representative government inspire those they represent, the governed. To internalize Your commands and live according to Your Word is to lead to fulfillment and bring promise to a disillusioned world, when left on its own.

Therefore, in the midst of everything, from You, Lord our God, we choose to draw wisdom and strength, now and forever.

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 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

#### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Texas (Mr. THORNBERRY) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. THORNBERRY 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.

#### COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
Washington, DC, March 6, 2006.

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,  
Speaker, House of Representatives,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on March 6, 2006, at 11:05 am:

That the Senate Passed with an amendment and requests a conference with the House on H.R. 2830.

With best wishes, I am,  
Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS,  
Clerk of the House.

#### PRIVILEGED REPORT ON RESOLUTION OF INQUIRY TO THE PRESIDENT

Mr. THORNBERRY, from the Committee on Armed Services, submitted an adverse privileged report (Rept. No. 109-384) on the resolution (H. Res. 645) requesting the President and directing the Secretary of Defense to transmit to the House of Representatives all information in the possession of the President or the Secretary of Defense relating to the collection of intelligence information pertaining to persons inside the United States without obtaining court-ordered warrants authorizing the collection of such information and relating to the policy of the United States with respect to the gathering of counterterrorism intelligence within the United States, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

#### PRIVILEGED REPORT ON RESOLUTION OF INQUIRY TO THE PRESIDENT

Mr. THORNBERRY, from the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, submitted an adverse privileged report (Rept. No. 109-385) on the resolution (H. Res. 641) requesting the President to provide to the House of Representatives certain documents in his possession relating to electronic surveillance without search warrants on individuals in the United States, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

#### THE BARE FACTS ON THE ECONOMY

(Ms. FOXX asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I am getting a bit tired of hearing some of my colleagues in the Democrat Party mislead the American people into thinking our economy is in poor shape. Here are the facts, plain and simple.

Our economy has been growing for 17 straight quarters. The National Association for Business Economics predicts the economy will grow at a 4.5 percent rate in the first quarter of 2006. After inflation, disposable incomes increased 2.2 percent in the last 12 months. The Federal Reserve reported that the median net worth of U.S. households increased 1.5 percent between 2001 and 2004. January's unemployment rate fell to 4.7 percent, which is the lowest monthly rate since 2001 and lower than the average of the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. There have been 29 consecutive months of job gains.

Mr. Speaker, no amount of spin from the left can change the fact that our economy is growing stronger every day under Republican leadership.

#### RENEWAL OF U.S. PATRIOT ACT

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

Mr. KELLER. Mr. Speaker, reauthorizing the PATRIOT Act today is literally a matter of life or death because it is helping us to win the war on terrorism.

Since we passed the PATRIOT Act in 2001, we have convicted 212 terrorists, and we have frozen \$136 million in terrorists' assets.

Reauthorizing the PATRIOT Act is purely a matter of common sense. Is it not common sense that we give law enforcement the same tools to go after terrorists as they now have to go after Mafia dons and drug dealers? Is it not common sense that we can now share data between the intelligence community and the law enforcement community? Is it not common sense that we track deadly terrorists, even though they cross jurisdictional lines or switch cell phones?

I am pleased that the Senate recently voted 89-10 to reauthorize the PATRIOT Act. This legislation provides 30 new civil liberty safeguards and strengthens our port security by providing law enforcement authorities with new authority to secure our ports.

I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on the PATRIOT Act.

#### TALIBAN AT YALE

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

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, the leftward drift of American higher education has been well documented. On the modern-day campus, nothing is too extreme and all ideas and political philosophies are declared equal in the name of tolerance, often producing ridiculous results.

The most recent example comes from Yale University. In the name of tolerance and diversity, administrators there have enrolled a member of one of the most radically intolerant and non-diverse groups in recent history, the Taliban.

A few years ago, Sayed Rahmatullah Hashemi was a spokesman for Afghanistan's Taliban regime, the same regime that provided safe haven for the 9/11 terrorists and brutally oppressed women and non-Muslims. Today, he is in the Ivy League, a student at Yale.

Rahmatullah said it best himself: "I could have ended up at Guantanamo Bay. Instead, I ended up at Yale."

Mr. Speaker, we have come to a point where elite universities like Yale will tolerate the Taliban on their campus but will not tolerate the ROTC, political correctness in the extreme.

#### ECONOMY AND FISCAL RESTRAINT

(Mrs. BLACKBURN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, there are some days that it probably is a little depressing to be a mainstream media reporter.

In their world, our economy is sinking and the war on terrorism is absolutely hopeless.

Thankfully, in the real world, Americans know that we have drastically impacted al Qaeda's ability to attack us, and our economy is booming. Yes, it is booming.

We are expecting growth this quarter somewhere around 4 percent or more, and that means jobs. We have created almost 5 million new jobs and had 3 years of strong, solid economic growth.

When you compare our economy to Europe, to most nations, we are in an amazing era. Unemployment is below 5 percent. That is outstanding, and it is a shame that the mainstream reporters just cannot get the story right.

Our tax policies reduced the burden of taxation on Americans, and they have responded as they always do, by creating new jobs.

#### WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

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

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Women's History Month.

As we remember the great women of past generations, we must also salute those women who are serving as role models and leaders today.

One such woman is Tammy Cohen of Marietta, Georgia, my district. Tammy is cofounder and president of InfoMart, and under her guidance, InfoMart has grown from a small startup business to the largest female-owned background checking company in the world.

Mr. Speaker, Tammy's success as a female entrepreneur is inspiring, and

while she is deeply respected for her business know-how, she is equally praised for her compassion and willingness to help.

When Hurricane Katrina struck the gulf coast last year, Tammy led a group of InfoMart employees who rented vans, gathered supplies and drove to New Orleans to rescue 15 children and 20 caretakers from a boys' home in Louisiana. Tammy then worked with community groups and local businesses in Marietta to house, feed and clothe these hurricane victims.

Mr. Speaker, during Women's History Month, it is important to honor those women who are making a difference in the lives of others. Tammy Cohen is undoubtedly one of these women.

I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating her accomplishments.

#### SUPREME COURT DELIVERS A VICTORY FOR NATIONAL SECURITY

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, as a member of the Armed Services Committee and a father of three sons serving in the military, I frequently have an opportunity to meet with the dynamic young men and women of the U.S. military. I am always encouraged to hear them describe their pride as Americans and their strong sense of duty to their country. After witnessing the horrific attacks of September 11, these young people understand that their generation will protect our freedoms in the future.

Yesterday, the Supreme Court ruled unanimously to ensure that men and women at colleges and universities will continue to have an opportunity to learn about serving in the United States military. America's Armed Forces have created the broadest spread of freedom in the history of the world, which protects American families. By allowing military recruiters to visit college campuses, the Court has ensured that the United States will remain the best military in the world.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September 11.

#### REAUTHORIZING OF PATRIOT ACT

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

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, today the Congress will send to the President of the United States the reauthorization of the PATRIOT Act. Chairman JIM SENSENBRENNER and other members of the Judiciary Committee and the conference committee are to be commended for their effort in putting together a bill that balances the liberty and security interests of the American people.

This is an issue that is not just theoretical for me, Mr. Speaker. I not only