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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. SOLIS).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
March 15, 2007.

I hereby appoint the Honorable HILDA L. SOLIS to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

PRAYER

Rabbi Shea Harlig, Chabad of Southern Nevada, Las Vegas, Nevada, offered the following prayer:

Almighty God, the Members of this prestigious body, the U.S. Congress, convene here to fulfill one of the seven Noahide commandments: the commandment to govern by just laws which are based in the recognition of You, God, as the sovereign ruler of all people and nations.

We the citizens of this blessed country proudly proclaim this recognition and our commitment to justice in our Pledge of Allegiance—"one Nation under God, with liberty and justice for all."

Grant us, Almighty God, that those assembled here be aware of Your presence and conduct their deliberations accordingly. Bless them with good health, wisdom, compassion, and good fellowship.

On the eve of Passover, the Festival of Freedom, I beseech You, Almighty God, to bless and protect our troops and our entire Nation whom our esteemed spiritual leader, The Lubavitcher Rebbe, labeled "a nation of kindness" with freedom from terrorism.

Indeed "God Bless America."

THE JOURNAL

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

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

Mr. WALBERG 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 RABBI SHEA HARLIG

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

Ms. BERKLEY. It gives me great pleasure to introduce a spiritual leader in Las Vegas, Nevada. Rabbi Shea Harlig was ordained in March of 1988 from the Central Chabad Yeshiva in Brooklyn, New York, and since December of 1990 serves as the spiritual leader of Congregation Chabad in Las Vegas, Nevada.

He is the founder and regional director of Chabad of Southern Nevada, a major Jewish outreach organization in Las Vegas with five locations. Its programs include daily services, nightly adult education classes, Hebrew school and day camps, chaplain at the State and county prisons, bimonthly column for the Las Vegas Israelite, crisis counseling and financial assistance to members of the community. Rabbi Harlig is the kosher supervisor of five local kosher restaurants, markets and catering facilities. He is also the founder and dean of the Desert Torah Academy Day School, which has an enrollment of 175 children, preschool through eighth grade.

On a personal note, I have known the Rabbi since he came to Las Vegas. He has made an extraordinary contribution to the spiritual life of Las Vegas, Nevada. His impact is felt throughout the community. I am absolutely delighted to welcome him to our Nation's capital, Washington, D.C.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain up to five 1-minute notices on each side.

IRAN

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

Mr. KUCINICH. This House cannot avoid its constitutionally authorized responsibility to restrain the abuse of executive power. The administration has been preparing for an aggressive war against Iran. There is no solid, direct evidence that Iran has the intention of attacking the United States or its allies. The U.S. is a signatory to the U.N. Charter, a constituent treaty among the nations of the world. Article II, section 4, of the U.N. charter states, "All members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state." Even the threat of a war of aggression is illegal. Article VI of the U.S. Constitution makes such treaties the supreme law of the land. This administration has openly threatened aggression against Iran in violation of the U.S. Constitution and the U.N. Charter.

This week, the House Appropriations Committee removed language from the Iraq war funding bill requiring the administration under Article I, section 8, clause 11 of the Constitution to seek permission before it launched an attack against Iran. Since war with Iran is an option of this administration and such war is patently illegal, then

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impeachment may well be the only remedy which remains to stop a war of aggression against Iran.

THE BUDGET

(Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina, Madam Speaker, while Democrats are talking about fiscal discipline, their actions say otherwise. Time and time again, the Democrat "plan" is to chase increased spending with increased taxes.

In less than 3 months, Democrats have called for immense new spending. Their agenda for the 110th Congress calls for throwing billions more at entitlements that are already growing at unsustainable rates. At the same time, they have not proposed a dollar of savings or a single reform—just more spending, financed by higher taxes.

The American people want reductions in spending, they want reforms to our overburdened and unsustainable programs, and they want their elected leaders to be held accountable for the plans they put forth and the funding they approve.

Republicans have a responsible plan that balances the budget by encouraging economic growth and reforming entitlement programs—without raising taxes. Increasing the tax burden on the American people has never led to economic prosperity.

Madam Speaker, my constituents don't want to see a return of tax-and-spend politics.

IMMIGRATION REFORM

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

Ms. GIFFORDS, Madam Speaker, I rise today once again to state my strong support for comprehensive immigration reform. Last week, Federal agents from Immigrations and Customs Enforcement raided businesses in my district in southern Arizona because employers were suspected of employing illegal immigrants. For years, we have known that employers in Arizona and across the country have been breaking the law by illegally employing undocumented workers. Let me be clear: any company that knowingly hires illegal immigrants should be prosecuted and punished to the fullest extent of the law.

I recognize the humanitarian concerns that are involved when raids on businesses occur, especially regarding families. The problems of immigration are extensive. These raids make clear that in my district in Arizona we continue to bear the brunt of a national crisis. Approximately 4,000 illegal immigrants pass into Arizona each and every day. That is unacceptable.

We need to rise to the challenge and address a national crisis. We need to do it now. Democrats and Republicans working together must pass comprehensive immigration reform.

PUTTING OUR FISCAL HOUSE IN ORDER

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

Mr. WALBERG, Madam Speaker, a recent analysis by the Mackinac Center for Public Policy compared Michigan's per capita income to the national average and revealed the Great Lakes State reached its lowest level in 75 years. At the end of 2006, Michigan had the second highest unemployment rate in the Nation and since January of 2001, Michigan has lost over 205,000 jobs.

Certainly many of Michigan's problems have been caused by State policies, but the men and women of my district continue to stress to me they want Congress to put our fiscal house in order on a Federal level.

Right now, taxpayers in south central Michigan are making tough choices every day to ensure their family budgets are balanced. They do it by cutting spending and having fiscal discipline. It's time we make these same hard choices on a Federal level. Congress needs to pass a balanced budget bill without raising taxes. We need to make tax relief permanent for hard-working American families and reform unsustainable entitlements.

By putting our fiscal house in order, this Congress can go a long way in restoring the trust of the American people and build a better, brighter future for our country.

"SMOKING MEMO"

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

Mr. EMANUEL, Madam Speaker, in a memo sent to the White House, the Justice Department laid out a plan to replace seven U.S. Attorneys who were cracking down on public corruption. This "smoking memo" seems to confirm that this administration targeted U.S. Attorneys involved in ongoing public corruption cases.

Today, as we learn more about the Attorney General's failure of leadership, many are eager to debate the future of Attorney General Gonzales and whether he will remain in office. But as we examine how these U.S. Attorneys were fired, we must not lose sight of the real story. What is happening to these ongoing public corruption investigations, from southern California to Nevada to Arizona to New Mexico?

The fired U.S. Attorneys were aggressively investigating public corruption cases and they were fired ostensibly for job performance, which in this White House means you're guilty of doing your job. I don't suppose any of these U.S. Attorneys will receive the Presidential Medal of Freedom award.

The question some of us want to know is where are these public corruption cases today? As Washington debates whether Alberto Gonzales, the Attorney General, survives by the weekend, some of us want to know whether we can bring back to life these

public corruption investigations in these five jurisdictions.

THEFT FROM CRIME VICTIMS

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

Mr. POE, Madam Speaker, crime victims are once again being victimized, not by the hands of offenders but by the robber baron bureaucrats who are putting their hands in the pockets of American crime victims.

Let me explain. Under a law called VOCA, Victims of Crime Act, crime victims receive money from a fund that criminals pay into as a part of their sentence. This wonderful idea makes criminals literally pay for their crimes and give compensation to injured and brutalized victims. Make criminals pay rent on the courthouse. Make them pay for the system they created. This fund is now over \$1.2 billion.

But now the insensitive Federal budget boys want to pick-pocket victims and take this money and put it into the abyss of the Federal Treasury. This is not taxpayer money. It doesn't belong to the Federal Government. The Feds should keep their sticky fingers off this victim money and Congress needs to protect victims from this bureaucratic theft.

And that's just the way it is.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND OVERSIGHT—DEMOCRATS DELIVER WITH LEGISLATION THIS WEEK

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

Mr. ELLISON, Madam Speaker, the appalling conditions at Walter Reed captured the Nation's attention this month and finally spurred this administration to begin taking action. But reports on the poor conditions at Walter Reed date back 2 years ago. The President and the Congressional Republicans did nothing. In fact, Lieutenant General Kiley, former head of Walter Reed, knew for years about the horrible conditions at the facility, but he claimed the problems "weren't serious and there weren't a lot of them."

We now know that that was not true, thanks to The Washington Post and hearings held by the Democratic House. Oversight by the former Republican Congress could have stopped these problems long ago. But lack of oversight didn't begin or end with Walter Reed. Republicans also failed to look at the President's policies in Iraq, the administration's actions during Hurricane Katrina, or the firing of numerous U.S. Attorneys for political reasons.

Madam Speaker, this Democratic Congress has already held 91 oversight hearings on these issues and others, and we will continue to uphold our legislative duty to oversee the actions of the executive branch.