

human events surrounds grieving families and young people in schools with its prayers today.

As faith-filled Abraham reveals Your own filial love as he gazed on his son Isaac, so we identify with any parent who groans in mourning over the lifeless body of a child. Bring Your love to bear upon the campus of Virginia Tech and all the families affected by the crackling sound of gunfire and then the unbearably silence that follows. Thrown by the rush of terror and anxiety, may the people of God now reach out to them in their overwhelming moment of helplessness.

You, Lord, through the prophet Isaiah have said You would care for the young: "The Lord, our everlasting God, creator of the whole world, grows neither weary nor faint. Yet no one can fathom God with full understanding. He gives vigor to the weary, new strength to the exhausted. Even if the young and vigorous grow weary and faint, and stumble and fall, those who look to the Lord will receive new life. They will be lifted up on the wings of eagles. They will run and never tire. They will march and never grow weary."

We believe in You and with You, Lord God, they will live in Your presence until we are all reunited, forever and ever.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. 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. Will the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. ROSS) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. ROSS 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.

TAXPAYER PROTECTION ACT

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

Mr. WALZ of Minnesota. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1677, the Taxpayer Protection Act of 2007.

Every year thousands of taxpayers receive smaller refunds than they are entitled to. Our Tax Code is so inaccessible and complicated that many families do not claim all of the credits they so sorely need. The Taxpayer Protection Act of 2007 will improve communication between taxpayers and the IRS. By encouraging the Internal Revenue Service to reach out to those that

may qualify for the earned income tax credit, we will save struggling families many thousands of dollars.

Tax preparation is a multibillion-dollar business in America. It is useful to those who can afford it, but no one should be forced to hire an accountant or a preparer just to ensure that they can enjoy the benefits that many of us take for granted. Nor should the industry be able to prey on taxpayers with unfair refund anticipation loans.

This piece of legislation will improve the safeguards against fraud. By increasing reporting requirements on the IRS, the agency will become a vital component in the important fight against identity theft.

As many Americans rush to file their taxes on time this week, we all want to feel secure that the refund we receive is no more or less than we deserve.

TODAY IS TAX DAY

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

Mr. KELLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, today is tax day. Millions of Americans will write big fat checks to Uncle Sam. Who is paying the bill? The top 10 percent of households, families with incomes of \$100,000 or more, pay 70 percent of all Federal income taxes. Coincidentally, 70 percent of all the new jobs in America are created by small businessmen.

The tax cuts of 2003 have created 7.8 million new jobs and have given us the lowest unemployment rate in four decades. Unfortunately, the Democrat budget proposal contemplates allowing these tax cuts to expire which will give Americans the largest tax increase in history.

Under the Democrat tax increase, small businesses will be hurt and 42 million families with children will see their tax bill go up by an average of \$2,100. A married couple with two kids making \$60,000 will see their taxes go up by 60 percent.

On tax day let's remember the hardworking families who are paying the bills to Uncle Sam and oppose all new taxes.

STRONG SUPPORT FOR THE TAXPAYER PROTECTION ACT

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

Mr. YARMUTH. Mr. Speaker, we are all still numb from yesterday's heart-breaking tragedy in Blacksburg, Virginia. I want to take a moment to extend my thoughts and prayers and those of my constituents in Louisville, Kentucky, to the students and faculty, friends and family at Virginia Tech University. We stand with you today in outrage and mourning, seeking answers and sharing your loss.

I rise today in strong support of the Taxpayer Protection Act. Our tax system is tailor made for accountants and

those who can afford to hire them. For those who must tread tax season alone, a dearth of regulation opens these citizens up to Internet scams and identity theft. A lack of easily accessible information ensures that money-saving provisions like the earned income tax credit go unnoticed and unutilized, costing Americans hundreds or even thousands of dollars.

The Taxpayer Protection Act changes that, turning a bureaucracy designed for accountants into a system made for Americans. This bill will ensure that Americans who benefit from the earned income tax credit are those who deserve it, not only those who are shrewd enough to find it.

Over the last 6 years we have seen a tax system that has worked very well for the extremely rich. I urge my colleagues to pass the Taxpayer Protection Act.

CONGRESS NEEDS TO MAKE TAX RELIEF PERMANENT

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

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, over the past few weeks Americans across our country have taken time out of their busy schedules to complete their 1040s, 1099s and W-2s by the April 17 deadline.

They did so in many different ways. Some planned ahead and mailed in their forms well before the deadline, while others are scrambling to finish work on their taxes until late tonight.

Today, taxpayers in south central Michigan are still working to meet their tax obligation for 2007. While tax day may be today, the average Michigander will have to work until April 29 of this year just to pay his or her individual tax bill.

The \$400 billion tax increase recently passed by Congress represents the largest tax increase in American history and could lead to a crippling economic recession.

Americans know best how to spend their hard-earned money, and rather than increase the tax burden, Congress needs to make tax relief permanent for hardworking American families.

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.

EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE TAXPAYER PROTECTION ACT

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

Mr. ELLSWORTH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today for two reasons. First of all, I want to extend my deepest condolences to the victims of yesterday's tragedy at Virginia Tech. The people of the Eighth District of Indiana will keep them and their families in their thoughts and prayers

I also rise today in support of the Taxpayer Protection Act. This bipartisan bill empowers middle-class Hoosier families in the fight against identity theft, and I am proud to support it.

Credit cards, on-line banking and shopping on the Internet have become a part of everyday life for many Hoosiers. These tools can make life easier for Hoosier families, but they also make Hoosiers vulnerable to criminals attempting to steal identities. With modern technology, a criminal can steal someone's credit cards, bank account and Social Security number and then proceed to spend thousands of dollars in someone else's name.

In addition to saddling families with thousands of dollars in debt, these crimes can erase years of good credit history, denying consumers the ability to buy a house or lease a car.

The Taxpayer Protection Act takes on this new threat and requires the Federal Government to notify taxpayers of any suspected identity theft. This bill is an important step in providing taxpayers the security of knowing their information is safe, and it will give Hoosiers the power to fight identity theft.

I urge my colleagues to support it.

TAX DAY

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

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, our prayers are with the Virginia Tech families as well.

Paying tax is bad enough, but the time it takes to figure them out, I think, is almost worse. You should not need an accountant to do your taxes or live in fear of making an honest mistake.

For our children's sake, we need to sunset this Tax Code and replace it with something far simpler, like a flat tax or, my choice, a retail sales tax. Can you imagine never having to fill out a tax form again in your life? Can you imagine having the IRS completely and totally out of your life?

Let's not forget we need to keep taxes low. Tax Freedom Day for Texas families is this Thursday. That is the first day since New Year's that Texas families will begin working for themselves, not for the government.

My constituents are worried that the new Democrat budget allows President Bush's tax relief to expire, which would raise taxes \$2,700 a year on our families. Washington needs to tighten its belt before it demands that our families tighten theirs.

STOP THE TAX MONSTER

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

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, today, Americans will reach deep into their pockets and pay Uncle Sam. Today, they will finish slogging

through the maze of Tax Code jargon, crunching numbers and filling out forms. Today, they will once again trust Washington with their money, because today, Mr. Speaker, is just like every other tax day before it.

Mr. Speaker, Americans are fed up with the status quo of today, and they deserve a different tomorrow. They deserve a tomorrow where they won't be taxed from the day they are born until the day they die and at every single point in between.

Americans deserve a tomorrow where saving and investing are virtues, not vices. Americans deserve a tomorrow where taxation brings efficient and responsible government. Americans deserve a tomorrow where doing their part and paying their fair share is enough. And they deserve a tomorrow where government respects their hard work and appreciates their sacrifice.

Only then will tomorrow be any different from today. May we all work positively for that new day.

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THE VIRGINIA TECH TRAGEDY

(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, with the report of rifle fire, America changed on the campus of Virginia Tech yesterday. A prestigious campus nestled in the mountains of Virginia became home to unspeakable acts of evil at the hands of a 23-year-old English major from South Korea.

The Bible tells us to mourn with those who mourn, and to pray for one another that we may be healed. I simply rise, very humbly, on behalf of the good people of eastern Indiana to assure the grieving families and community of Virginia Tech that we in Indiana are mourning with you and praying for you.

May God grant mercy to all those affected by this tragedy and grant wisdom to leaders in law enforcement and higher education as we apply the tragedy of Virginia Tech to protect our children and campuses in the future.

TAX DAY

(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, today the tax man cometh, and the tax man taketh away on this very day. The American people circle this on our calendar. We look forward to it with dread because we know that this is the day that the money goes in to feed an inefficient and ineffective, many times, Federal Government.

The current Congress has voted for tax increases at every single turn. They voted for more spending while eliminating tax reductions for middle-

class American families. They are getting rid of the deductions that have helped jump start the economy. The simple truth is that liberals want to take more money out of your pocket and put it into the Federal Government.

In my State, my fellow Tennesseans can expect to pay more than \$2,600 per year in coming years, thanks to the hold-on-to-your-wallet Congress that is in action today.

My colleagues and I at the Republican Study Committee have recently proposed a taxpayer bill of rights that protects the taxpayer.

It includes:

1. The right to have a Federal Government that does not grow beyond their ability to pay for it.

2. The right to receive back each dollar that they entrust to the Government for their retirement.

3. The right to expect the Government to balance the budget without having their taxes raised.

4. And the right to have a right to a simple, fair tax code that they can understand.

WILBERFORCE

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

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, throughout this year we will celebrate the work to end one of humanity's worst acts of injustice. It was 200 years ago that William Wilberforce and his friends finally saw success in their attempt to end the British slave trade after 20 years of failed attempts.

To mark the anniversary of this tremendous accomplishment, a number of efforts are under way to inform people about this often forgotten hero of humanity. A wonderful movie about the life of Wilberforce entitled "Amazing Grace" has been released in theaters. Another documentary on his life and efforts, entitled "The Better Hour," is expected to air on public television this fall.

I have introduced a resolution in this body honoring his life and accomplishments. Yesterday, a contest was announced for high school students challenging them to follow Wilberforce's example by pursuing efforts to end modern-day slavery trafficking in men, women and children, which still plagues the world.

All of these events remind us that individuals of character and integrity really can change the world by fighting to end injustice and exploitation. That truth inspired Wilberforce in his day, and it should continue to inspire us today.

THE HATE CRIMES BILL

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

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, our thoughts and prayers, I know, from all of us here in the House go out to the