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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m.

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

Lord God, Who brings us to the re-creation of a new day, by Your spirit, You breathe hope into the hearts of Your people.

Hope, Lord, is born out of promise. It brings a freshness to every work and every new day because each is a step to the unfolding of what was once only a promise into the reality of fulfillment. As long as people have hope, they are fixed on the brightness of another tomorrow.

Building on the past, people of hope seize the present moment, make the most of a variety of possibilities, and set in motion deliberate actions that will shape the future.

Today, Lord, give to the Members of Congress a consolidated vision. Marshal within them a discipline that will make them a force of trusted promise which will instill in people across this Nation, true and lasting hope, now and forever. 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 Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. MCGOVERN 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.

HOUSE REPUBLICANS STILL WANT TO PROVIDE THE PRESIDENT A BLANK CHECK ON IRAQ WAR

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

Mr. CLEAVER. Madam Speaker, I was home last week, and although there was a great deal of discussion about gas prices, still the number one issue among the people of my district in Missouri is the military action in Iraq. And one of the things they are confused about is the fact that this is the most unpopular war in the history of our Republic and yet nothing seems to change. Over 70 percent of the American public is against the war, and we continue to travel down the same road over and over again.

One of the reasons I believe we have two ears and just one mouth is that we are to listen more than we speak. Therefore, it seems to me that the people of this country are speaking but we are simply not listening.

It is my hope that all blank checks and rubber stamps will be put away. And while we are waiting to discuss this, the Democrats are moving forward with our commitment to make serious changes in Iraq.

LEADERSHIP

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

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak on leadership.

The American people have entrusted us with a great responsibility to represent their interest in this great House. The people of the Seventh District of Tennessee work hard and represent what is good about America, and it is my honor to speak on their behalf.

In my district there are farmers, bankers, truckers, accountants. My

district is as diverse as America itself. One thing they believe in is the goodness and strength and perseverance of our country. They entrust us to do the right thing, no matter the circumstances.

They want lower taxes and believe that they, not the Federal Government, should have first right of refusal on their paycheck. They believe that if 10 percent is good enough for God, it should be good enough for the government when it comes to taxing that paycheck. And they think that government should learn to live within its means.

Most importantly, they want action, not political grandstanding. They want results, not rhetoric. They want and expect us to solve problems. They expect us to stand in the gap, stand up for them, and do our jobs.

They expect us to lead.

DAY TWO OF THE FOOD STAMP CHALLENGE

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, yesterday I spoke on the floor of this House about the Food Stamp Challenge, an initiative where public officials live for 1 week on a food stamp budget in order to raise awareness of the Food Stamp program. Three of my esteemed colleagues, Representatives JO ANN EMERSON from Missouri, TIM RYAN from Ohio, and JAN SCHAKOWSKY from Illinois, are also taking part in the Food Stamp Challenge. We started yesterday.

It is not easy eating on \$3 a day. But it is nothing compared to the hardship faced by millions of Americans every single day. I urge my colleagues to read more about our experiences on the Food Stamp Challenge blog at foodstampchallenge.typepad.com.

This week my colleagues will be joining me in talking about the Food

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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Stamp program and how we can better meet the needs of low-income Americans.

PROMOTING ADOPTION TAX RELIEF

(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. Madam Speaker, in January I introduced a bill to make permanent the \$10,000 adoption tax credit which is set to expire in 2010. Four months later this bill has garnered 125 bipartisan cosponsors, including Ways and Means Committee Chairman CHARLES RANGEL.

As the grateful father of an adopted son and a member of the Congressional Coalition on Adoption, I know all too well the challenges and rewards adoption brings. The adoption process can be mentally and physically exhausting. Families should not be overwhelmed with the financial burdens as well. We should offer incentives, not penalties, for making this commitment.

I urge my colleagues on the Ways and Means Committee to move forward with this legislation and make the dream of a family a permanent reality by promoting adoption.

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

DEMOCRATS WANT TO BETTER CARE FOR AMERICAN FAMILIES BUT FACE RESISTANCE FROM BUSH

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

Mr. ELLISON. Madam Speaker, the new Democratic House has been busy passing a wide range of measures to help our Nation's economy grow. Unfortunately, we are having a difficult time finding support from the White House.

We began by increasing the minimum wage for the first time in 10 years. The bill was overwhelmingly supported by this House, and yet President Bush has already vetoed it once.

This House also voted to support the Employee Free Choice Act, which helps all Americans share in our Nation's economic growth by supporting the basic right of workers to choose their own representative. But the President has threatened a veto.

The Congress also overwhelmingly supported a bill that invests in hiring 10,000 new science and math teachers so that we can better compete in the new global economy. Unfortunately, the Bush administration opposes this legislation in its current form.

Madam Speaker, the new Congress is passing legislation that will grow our economy. Now we just need support from the White House to make it a reality.

ATTACK ON FORT DIX

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

Mr. POE. Madam Speaker, recently six foreign-born extremists, inspired by al Qaeda and its preachers of hate, planned to murder U.S. troops with semiautomatic weapons and rocket-propelled grenades. The place, not in Iraq, but the United States Army base at Fort Dix in New Jersey.

They were knowledgeable and cunning, using one member who delivered pizzas on the base to gain intimate knowledge of the fort. They were also planning to attack a U.S. Naval installation in Philadelphia.

Before the attack could be unleashed on U.S. troops, the FBI was tipped off to their plans, and they were arrested. Not surprisingly, three of these terrorists were in the country illegally. Two others had green cards.

We are no longer a safe nation. The dangers of our security are real. We discuss in Congress the war against extreme radicals, but it starts with securing the borders. Because crossing unsecured U.S. borders is very easy. It brings the good, the bad, and the ugly. Because all three groups know that, for political reasons, the Federal Government refuses to protect American citizens by securing our sovereignty.

And that's just the way it is.

□ 1015

DEMOCRATS' LONG RECORD OF ACHIEVEMENT

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

Mr. ALTMIRE. Madam Speaker, we are now 4½ months into the new session of Congress, and the Democratic Congress has a long record of achievement. We have already passed 37 pieces of key legislation, many, I am proud to say, with bipartisan support.

We have passed bills to strengthen our military, increase funding for our veterans, restore accountability, promote energy independence, lower the cost of prescription drugs and student loans, balance the budget and grow our economy. But unfortunately, not everyone got the loud and clear message the American people delivered for change last November. President Bush opposes two-thirds of those bills that we passed this session. I hope that the President will join us in moving this country in a new direction.

GSE REFORM

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

Mrs. BACHMANN. Madam Speaker, promoting homeownership, especially homeownership for low and moderate income families, is a high priority for Republicans in this United States Con-

gress. The GSEs, the Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, have played a very important part in that goal. We ought to preserve that system, Madam Speaker, we ought to protect that system. However, Congress also has a responsibility to limit the risks that the GSEs pose to the United States taxpayers and their burden to that market.

Many of my colleagues have been working for years to enact meaningful reform of the GSEs and their regulator. That's a good thing. But this year's bill goes far beyond improving the safety and the soundness of the GSEs by now taxing those portfolios to create an affordable housing fund.

I agree with the Congressional Budget Office, Madam Speaker. This new assessment on the GSEs will be passed along to customers in the form of higher fees. It will raise the cost of purchasing a home or refinancing a mortgage. That is exactly the opposite direction that we want to go.

I urge my colleagues to join me in opposing this fund.

HOUSE WORKS IN STRONG BIPARTISAN FASHION TO ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF OUR ARMED FORCES

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

Mr. WILSON of Ohio. Madam Speaker, today the House begins debate on the Defense authorization bill, a bill that was passed out of the Armed Services Committee 58-0, unanimously. The legislation received the support of the entire committee because it focuses on our Nation's immediate threats and the benefits our soldiers need today.

The Defense bill authorizes substantial resources to improve the protection of our troops, including \$4 billion for Mine Resistant Ambush Protected Vehicles. These vehicles have been shown to dramatically reduce the injuries of our soldiers. We want to ensure that our troops have access to the best equipment that will protect them while they are in battle.

In his budget earlier this year, the President proposed giving our troops a 3 percent pay raise. This Congress believes they deserve more, and consequently they will receive a 3.5 percent raise.

Madam Speaker, this Defense bill shows our dedication to the troops on the front lines, and it deserves strong bipartisan support.

WELCOMING GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN SCHOOL

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

Mr. SHIMKUS. Madam Speaker, I would like to welcome Good Shepard Lutheran School and all the visitors that we have in our Nation's Capital today.