

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 10 a.m. today.

Accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 6 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until 10 a.m.

□ 1000

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California) at 10 a.m.

PRAYER

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

Author of eternal promise and God of mercy, You know, full well, that our human nature is fraught with limitations and wounded by sin. The result is that peace in this world is never finally established or lasts forever. The building of a peaceful society has to go on all the time, day after day.

Lord, continue Your work in us. In and through this representative democracy keep this Nation ever vigilant to secure the peace. By the outpouring of Your grace may each person of this our homeland struggle to control one's passions, be willing to trust others, as well as share human talents and riches with the less fortunate.

May our true growth in becoming Your beloved community spread around the globe and give You glory both 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 her approval thereof.

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

Mr. GINGREY 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.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed a bill of the following title in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 1347. An act to amend the Omnibus Indian Advancement Act to modify the date as of which certain tribal land of the Lytton Rancheria of California is deemed to be held

in trust and to provide for the conduct of certain activities on the land.

DEMOCRATS PRIORITIZE
VETERANS NEEDS

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

Mr. WALZ of Minnesota. Madam Speaker, as this Nation prepares to honor our veterans on Veterans Day, this new Democratic Congress has shown an unwavering commitment to those who have served this Nation so bravely.

We have passed a Wounded Warrior Assistance Act that takes the first steps to address the problems brought to light in the Walter Reed scandal by improving outpatient medical care and restoring efficiency by cutting bureaucratic red tape.

We have passed legislation that focuses on posttraumatic stress disorder by requiring a program to reduce suicide among veterans with suicide prevention counselors at all medical facilities.

And we have passed a veterans appropriation bill that provides the largest investment in veterans health care in the 77-year history of the VA. We plan on sending that funding bill to the President's desk this week after a vote on this floor today.

Madam Speaker, a budget is far more than a fiscal document. It is a reflection of this Nation's values. America's veterans bravely served this Nation and were promised health care to meet the needs to take care of them once they returned home. This new Democratic Congress is committed to fulfilling that pledge.

WORLD BANK SUBSIDIZING
AHMADINEJAD

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

Mr. KIRK. Madam Speaker, three blocks from our White House, the World Bank is subsidizing the administration of Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Last year the World Bank cut a \$220 million check to the Government of Iran. After two U.N. sanctions, the World Bank paid another \$50 million to Iran in August. According to the bank, they have another \$820 million on the way. World Bank funding is paid through Iran's Bank Mali, which the U.S. Government has now found to be a conduit for terrorist financing. Over \$5 million of World Bank funds are now frozen in Bank Mali's accounts.

It is hard enough for the United Nations to sanction a country, but it has now sanctioned Iran twice. That united voice of the United Nations should not be undercut by a \$800 million check in funding by the World Bank to Iran.

RESTORE DEMOCRACY IN
PAKISTAN

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

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Madam Speaker and Members of the House, President Bush must take a strong stand on the actions of President Musharraf in Pakistan. The constitution of Pakistan must be restored, and democratic rule must be given back to the people. If we fail to do that, then democracy fails in Pakistan and we will see the exact environment in which the Taliban, terrorists, al Qaeda and others are born. Witness Egypt and Saudi Arabia.

The restoration of democracy immediately must be high on the agenda of the Bush administration. Failure to do so turns Pakistan into an armed dictatorship with a nuclear weapon.

We have spent tens of billions of dollars in Pakistan to encourage their fight against terrorism and the Taliban. And what have we gotten in return? We now see that the military has started businesses with that money. They have used it to pad their retirement accounts. They have used it to run their private businesses rather than to defend the country and prosecute the war against al Qaeda, the Taliban, and other terrorists that are now in northern Pakistan.

The choice is this administration's. They can speak out forcefully for democracy, or they can watch it wither on the vine and we will have another failed state in exactly a region where we don't need one.

SEND MILCON-VA TO PRESIDENT'S
DESK

(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, if my grandmother were standing here today, she would say your actions are speaking so loudly I cannot hear one single word you are saying. And she would be saying that about the mistreatment of our veterans by this majority.

It has been over 140 days since the House passed the MilCon-VA appropriations bill and 8 weeks since the slow-moving Senate passed it. The bill has strong bipartisan support and the President has poised his pen ready to sign that bill.

Well, now the Democrats have decided they are going to delay it. They are going to play politics with it. They are going to pile on other things around it. And they are doing it to use it as a political tool. How very, very sad we find this situation.

We need to make certain that a political tool is not made of our veterans and our men and women in uniform. They have sacrificed so much for this country. It is imperative that we move

the bill forward as a stand-alone bill. As we go into Veterans Day, let's honor those who served by the actions they see us take.

ENSURING PROMISES MADE TO VETERANS

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

Mr. SIRES. Madam Speaker, as America prepares to honor our veterans and those who continue to wear the uniform this weekend, the Democratic Congress is proud of our record over the last 10 months that has provided real support for our troops and our veterans.

Today, we will take a vote on a final veterans bill that increases funding for veterans health care by \$6.7 billion, making it the single largest increase in veterans funding in the 77-year history of the Veterans Administration. This bill invests \$3.8 billion more than the President requested.

The final conference report also includes \$500 million above the President's request for much-needed maintenance in VA health care facilities, and \$600 million more than the President's request for mental health, PTSD and traumatic brain injury. This investment is critically important at a time when one-third of the veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan face mental health challenges.

Madam Speaker, today let us ensure that no veteran is left behind by supporting this bill that fulfills our promises to our Nation's veterans.

FUNDING OUR VETERANS

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

Mrs. DRAKE. Madam Speaker, this is day 37. That is 37 days so far that our veterans have not had the use of increased funding for their benefits and health care. That is \$18.5 million a day not able to be used. In June this House passed this appropriation bill with a \$6 billion increase in a bipartisan manner. On September 6, the Senate completed their bill.

This work is done; yet the bill has not been sent to the President who has agreed to sign it. And why? Because the Democratic leadership has decided to use funding for our veterans as a smoke screen in an effort to pass billions in unrelated domestic spending.

Our veterans are not pawns in a political game. They are heroes. These funding issues must be considered separately and on their own merits. America expects us to get the job done. America expects us to provide the best care to our veterans. Our veterans deserve no less.

Please join me in calling upon the Democratic leadership to put our veterans first and send a clean veterans appropriation bill to the President.

DEMOCRATS IMPROVE VETERANS BENEFITS

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

Mrs. CAPPS. Madam Speaker, as we approach the Veterans Day holiday, I want to express my support for all men and women who have ever served our country. I congratulate the new Democratic Congress for making remarkable improvements to veterans benefits.

During this past year, we have already appropriated the largest increase in veterans health spending ever. We have also taken steps to increase awareness about posttraumatic stress disorder and other mental health needs among veterans.

In addition, we seek to improve our ability to prevent, to diagnose and treat these conditions. I especially would like to note a new awareness about the needs of our women veterans, and commend my colleagues in the Women's Caucus for making the needs of women veterans a priority of ours during this Congress.

As we commemorate Veterans Day this weekend, let us all make a commitment to continuing and renewing our efforts to improve benefits for all veterans.

DEMOCRATS USE MILCON-VA BILL AS POLITICAL TOOL

(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, it has been 8 weeks since the Senate passed the Military Construction-Veterans Affairs appropriations bill and joined the House in demonstrating overwhelming and bipartisan support for this legislation. Yet, for two full months, the Democrat leadership has refused to send this important piece of legislation to the floor. They refuse to give our veterans the funding they deserve.

This week the majority will bring the VA bill to the floor attached to the Labor, Health and Human Services and Education appropriations bill. Rather than send these bills to the President on a stand-alone basis, something the Democratic leadership promised they would do, they are using this VA bill as a political tool to push through other legislation.

As a veteran and military parent, I know it is time that our colleagues on the other side of the aisle stop using the military and our veterans as a political tool to help advance their other spending priorities.

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

DEMOCRATS TAKE AMERICA IN NEW DIRECTION

(Mr. WELCH of Vermont asked and was given permission to address the

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

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Madam Speaker, 1 year ago the American people went to the voting booths and voted for a new direction. This decision was not only asking for a new Congress, but asking Congress to head in a new direction. One area: Make America safer.

The last Congress ignored the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission. This Congress is implementing the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission. Our ports and skies are safer. Our first responders have better access to emergency communication. We are also recognizing very straightforward and directly that the cost of the war must include the cost of caring for the warrior, and that is why we have passed the largest increase in the veterans health care budget in the history of the Veterans Administration.

And finally, with cop-on-the-beat oversight, we have uncovered the scandal of tens of billions of dollars of waste, fraud and abuse by companies like Blackwater and Halliburton that have benefited enormously from our appropriations.

□ 1015

QUIT PLAYING POLITICS WITH OUR VETERANS

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

Mr. GINGREY. Madam Speaker, as all Members rise to salute our veterans just 5 days from now, I'm appalled that the Democratic majority is holding these veterans hostage by combining a bill that we passed in this House 5 months ago to increase funding for our veterans, as they pointed out in regard particularly to health care, \$6 billion, and the President is ready to sign that bill. But, no, the Democratic majority wants to hold that bill and our veterans hostage so they can pass a bloated-up, pork-laden, Health and Human Services-Labor bill that increases spending over the President's request by \$9 billion.

I think this is a deplorable thing, and I have called for the end of it in House Resolution 786, which would change the rules of the House so that no House could ever combine our MilCon-Veterans Administration budget again with any other appropriations bill. It would have to pass as a stand-alone bill.

Let's quit playing politics with our veterans.

DEMOCRATS HAVE PRIORITIZED THE NEEDS OF OUR VETERANS SINCE DAY ONE

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

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Madam Speaker, this weekend and next Monday we will