



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 111th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 155

WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2009

No. 144

House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker.

PRAYER

Rev. Dr. Vaughn Baker, Christ United Methodist Church, Fort Worth, Texas, offered the following prayer:

Gracious God and Loving Lord, we, Your people, call to mind the scriptures which remind us, saying, "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord." You are our God, and we are Your people, the sheep of Your pasture. Lead us this day, O Gentle Shepherd, in the paths of righteousness for Your name's sake.

Send upon us this day the gifts that can only come from You. Grant us understanding, grant us wisdom, and grant us courage for the facing of these days. Give us as well the gift of unity, as we are reminded that a house divided against itself cannot stand. May we strive to be of one heart and mind as we seek to accomplish Your divine purpose, here on Earth, as it is in heaven.

We ask all of this in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. 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 Alabama (Mr. ROGERS) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama 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 DR. VAUGHN BAKER, CHRIST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, FORT WORTH, TEXAS

The SPEAKER. Without objection, the gentlewoman from Texas, Congresswoman GRANGER, is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Ms. GRANGER. Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to welcome Dr. Vaughn Baker, his wife, Jacqueline, and his daughter, Amanda, to the House of Representatives this morning to lead us in prayer. Dr. Baker is the senior pastor of Christ United Methodist Church in Fort Worth, Texas, and has various churches around Texas and the Republic of Ireland.

Dr. Baker earned his undergraduate degree from Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, and worked on his postgraduate degrees at the Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University. Dr. Baker is also finishing his doctorate of theology dissertation from the University of South Africa in the field of missiology, the area of practical theology that investigates the mandate, message, and work of the Christian missionary.

Dr. Baker's family has also made service a core part of their lives. Dr. Baker's wife, Jacqueline, is a special education teacher in Weatherford, Texas, and his daughter, Amanda, is currently finishing two degrees at the University of Texas in Austin. Amanda has been involved in overseas education programs and has also been involved with mission work in Turkey. Dr. Baker and his wife currently live in Weatherford, Texas.

We thank Dr. Baker very much for leading us in prayer this morning.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to 15 further requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

HEALTH INSURANCE REFORM

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

Mr. BACA. Reforming health insurance must be our duty and responsibility. The vast majority of Americans have health insurance. The question is what does our health insurance reform mean for them.

It means that insurance companies no longer will decide to deny your coverage or jack up your insurance rate because of preexisting conditions.

It means that it will be against the law for insurance companies to drop your coverage when you get sick or water it down when you need it the most.

It means that there will be a yearly limit on how much you can be charged for out-of-pocket expenses, because no one should go broke because they get sick.

It means that premiums will stop growing three times faster than your wages, because more competitiveness in insurance markets will hold premiums down.

It means that if you lose your job or change your job, you'll be able to get affordable coverage.

In short, what health insurance reform means for millions of Americans who are insured today is more security and stability. Americans should not have to wait longer for this reform. Congress must act this year.

CONGRATULATING THE CENTER FOR DOMESTIC PREPAREDNESS

(Mr. ROGERS of Alabama asked and was given permission to address the

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

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the dedicated employees at the Center for Domestic Preparedness in Anniston, Alabama. This Friday, they will graduate their 500,000th trainee through the first responder training program.

As many of us here know, the CDP is a valuable training facility operated by the Department of Homeland Security. This facility is one of a kind in its mission as the only weapons of mass destruction training facility that provides hands-on training to civilian emergency responders, which includes the use of live agent training.

This graduation ceremony is a tremendous feat that we should all be proud of, not only because of this important milestone, but also for the unique and cutting-edge training that the CDP continues to provide to our Nation's first responders to this day.

To all the proud employees at the CDP in east Alabama and on behalf of all of us, congratulations.

A TRIBUTE TO RAY CLIFTON

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

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment today to pay tribute to my very good friend Ray Clifton. Ray is the executive director of the Colorado Rural Electric Association, a position he has held since 1986. However, he will soon be retiring.

Ray is a graduate of the University of Georgia and began his career in the utility industry, working with the Georgia Statewide association of cooperatives, the Georgia Electric Membership Corporation. From there, he came to Colorado to take on the job of running the CREA.

As executive director, he has helped guide the CREA through exciting and challenging times, as the needs of supplying energy to Colorado homes and businesses has grown exponentially. He has been a leader and an innovator. His work has earned him awards and accolades, not to mention the many people who call him friend. I can proudly say that Ray is, indeed, my friend.

Since my election to Congress in 2004, I have had many occasions to call upon Ray for advice and help as we deal with the difficult energy issues facing our State and our Nation. I always knew that Ray would tell it like it is and that his years of experience would be of great benefit to me as we in Congress wrestled with ensuring that our constituents had access to a reliable supply of electricity.

What I really want to say today is thank you. Thank you for your years of service. Thank you for your always excellent and sage advice, and more importantly, thank you for your friendship and for the kindness you have shown me. Ray, I wish you the best in your retirement.

THE STATUE OF HELEN KELLER

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

Mr. BONNER. Mr. Speaker, in a few minutes over in the Rotunda of the United States Capitol, America will be introduced to the newest statue to grace this historic old building. The statue is unlike any other. It's not of a man or a woman, of a general or a President, but it's a statue of a little girl and how one person helped change the world for the better.

Left deaf and blind from an illness in her infancy, many saw Helen Keller as a wild and disorderly little girl. For Helen, she would see it very differently. Fueled by a passion for interaction and a hunger for knowledge, Helen Keller's life is a tremendous example of overcoming even the most disabling of situations.

Her determination soon overpowered her deafness, and her belief in herself prevailed over her blindness. Her intellectual cravings were but slightly inhibited by her disabilities. Helen learned to communicate and interact in a world that she would never see nor hear; yet through her works, wisdom and passion, Helen Keller still stands not only as a symbol of hope and determination for the deaf and blind, but for all of us who seek a more just and peaceful world.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Alabama are proud to bring one of our most beloved, favorite daughters to this grand old building for the world to see and know and hear.

HONORING SERGIO VELAZQUEZ

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

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Hispanic Heritage Month, and I would like to recognize Sergio Velazquez, the publisher of *Miniondas* Newspaper and *Farandula USA*.

Sergio is a Hispanic American who has given so much to the Orange County community, exemplifying the principles of this month.

Sergio immigrated to the United States in 1961, and he established Velazquez Publications Incorporated in 1975. Today, his newspapers have a combined readership of over 100,000 people, and its focus is on politics, education, sports, and entertainment.

As a small business owner, Sergio has encouraged other entrepreneurs to seek business opportunities, and he serves as a board member on the Santa Ana Merchants Association. He is also an international first-place winner of the Boat Racers International competition, and he is a cancer survivor.

I'm very proud of Sergio's achievements and his work in fostering success in the Latino community.

HONORING SPECIALIST JOSEPH WHITE

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

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a fallen soldier from my district, Specialist Joseph White from Bellevue, Washington. Joseph, recently married in 2009, was killed in action in Afghanistan on September 24.

Joe's mom talked about her son's dedication to his country in this way: "Joe was not happy to be leaving his bride to go to Afghanistan, but he did not complain. Rather, he went with a strong sense of duty and desire to maintain freedom and safety for others."

This body, this House of Representatives, this government and the people of this country could not exist without the dedication and sacrifice from the soldiers that serve, soldiers like Joe; soldiers who, above all else, want to honor this country and those who have gone before to protect our freedom and the freedom of their families.

There is nothing we can say or do that will take away the pain, the suffering, and the sense of loss that the family feels at the loss of their son Joe. But Joe's family must always remember, the memory of Specialist Joe White will remain, we will never forget, and we will continue to honor his sacrifice each day.

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MENTAL HEALTH PARITY

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

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. Speaker, I want to implore my colleagues to support the House reform bill with respect to the mental health parity provisions. The mental health provisions in the House support complete coverage for mental illness.

The AMA in the 1950s recognized alcoholism as a disease. In the House bill, we have full health care coverage for alcoholism and substance abuse coverage and for schizophrenia and all biological mental health disorders. The Senate doesn't have those strong provisions. I implore my colleagues to accede to the House with respect to these provisions.

Suicide is the third leading cause of death for young people 15 to 35. It is a tragedy in this country that mental illness is the single leading cause of lost workdays and lost days of quality of life in this country.

It's time that we treat mental illness as the physical illness that it is.

KEEP THE INTERNET OPEN AND FAIR

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