

operated as they would like to see and that justice demands.

The President of Sri Lanka started talks with the Tamil National Alliance, the party that has won all elections in the northeast since the end of the war more than a year ago. Unfortunately, these talks seem to have bogged down and are not progressing as was anticipated. Sri Lanka is a highly centralized state. The lack of control over areas that we take for granted, such as the police, the use of land, and the education system, are often cited as being one of the causes of the civil war. It is reported that even areas not affected by the war suffer from neglect by Colombo and distant government officials who make arbitrary decisions, as is frequently noted by the World Bank and others. Tensions continue to exist between the Sinhalese, who control the government, and the Tamils, who consider the north and east as their traditional homeland. It is unfortunate that after hostilities ended on the battlefield, they still seem to exist in many of the same ways that occurred before the war actually broke out.

It is my hope that Sri Lanka will be able to work through its difficulties so that this beautiful country can experience the peace and stability its citizens rightly deserve.

RECESS

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

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 12 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker.

PRAYER

Reverend Dr. Ken Chroniger, Alfred Station Seventh Day Baptist Church, Alfred Station, New York, offered the following prayer:

Heavenly Father, in this moment, we wait on You. We take a deep breath and try stopping the rush and the hurry of life. For an instant, we ask You to lift the weight of government and the burdens of our role in it from our hearts, minds, and souls. We accept what we read, "Come unto me all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

With the pressures of living in the House fishbowl, give grace and mercy to receive favors. Limit the mistakes made simply because we are human. Like those who have preceded within these Chambers, give wisdom to govern. Fill us with faith and hope that what we do here is not running on a treadmill but encouragingly touching the lives of the people at home. Teach us as we serve to care for one another.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

THE JOURNAL

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

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from New York (Mr. REED) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. REED 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 REVEREND DR. KEN CHRONIGER

The SPEAKER. Without objection, the gentleman from New York (Mr. REED) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. REED. Today, I welcome to the House Chamber a great individual from our district, Pastor Ken Chroniger. Pastor Ken is the spiritual leader of 70 in my district in Alfred Station, New York, for the Seventh Day Baptist Church there. It is an honor to have Pastor Ken with us.

I have great respect for Pastor Ken, not only for what he does for his congregation, but for what he does for the community, in particular, the baseball games that we have attended together for the youth as they have participated in their summer leagues in Alfred Station.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I welcome Pastor Ken as we from the Southern Tier and the Finger Lakes, the beautiful area of New York, join him in starting off our deliberations here today.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Mr. Brian E. Pate, one of his secretaries.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. MILLER of Michigan). The Chair will entertain 15 further requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

HELPING OUR VETERANS FIND JOBS

(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, for the past 39 months, our Nation's unemployment rate has remained above 8 percent due to the administration's failed policies. Sadly, the average unemployment rate for our veterans is even higher.

Congress has developed a pilot program to help veterans find jobs. Veterans should be prepared to simultaneously meet the same standards and perform the same tasks in the military and industry as in the workplace.

In order to address this issue, Congressman JOE WALSH of Illinois has proposed an amendment for today's National Defense Authorization Act, providing for the Department of Defense to reform the pilot program, helping servicemembers apply the skills learned during their military service to the civilian workplace.

I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this amendment for servicemembers, military families, and veterans.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

20TH ANNIVERSARY OF NAGORNO-KARABAKH INDEPENDENCE

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

Mr. CICILLINE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to join the people of Nagorno-Karabakh in recognizing the 20th anniversary of the independence of Nagorno-Karabakh and of the formation of the Republic's army.

Twenty years ago, the people of Nagorno-Karabakh fought and died for their independence from Soviet Azeri repression and discrimination. From the earliest days of its formation, the Republic's freely elected governmental bodies have built an open democratic society through free and transparent elections. Over the next few days, families of Armenian descent throughout my home State of Rhode Island will honor the 20th anniversary of the formation of the Republic's army and the liberation of Shushi.

Today, the Rhode Island General Assembly will be joined by Mr. Robert Avetisyan, the Permanent Representative of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic to the United States, as they adopt a resolution supporting the Republic's efforts to develop as a free and independent Nation—a fact that many Rhode Islanders take great pride in.

CELEBRATING NORWAY'S CONSTITUTION DAY

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

Mr. PAULSEN. Madam Speaker, it was nearly 200 years ago that the people of Norway proclaimed their independence as a free nation, and each year on May 17, Norwegians all over the world celebrate the day that their

constitution was signed—with parades, traditional food, and other festivities.

The United States and Norway have a very special bond. Our traditions of human rights and freedom and also of democracy are woven into the very fabric of our shared history, and over the last two centuries, the people of Norway have contributed greatly to the success and prosperity of our global community.

As cochair of the House Friends of Norway Caucus, I would like to send our best wishes to the people of Norway as they celebrate this year's Syttende Mai today, and I would like to reaffirm the friendship between our two nations as we work together on important issues ahead.

MANDATE FUNDING TO BRING OUR TROOPS HOME FROM AFGHANISTAN

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

Ms. HAHN. Last October, on the 10th anniversary of the war in Afghanistan, I visited Arlington West—a moving memorial to Americans who have died in that war.

Every Sunday, on the sands of Santa Monica Beach, volunteers have put up a cross for every soldier who has lost his life in that war. As the number of dead has grown, they have only been able to put up one cross for every 10 soldiers. 1,843 U.S. soldiers have lost their lives in Afghanistan. We've had 17,000 casualties.

The defense bill today, in its current form, slows down the effort to withdraw our troops when we should be speeding it up. That's why I have co-sponsored legislation with BARBARA LEE that would mandate that any Afghanistan funding be used only to bring our troops home. Without such a change, I cannot vote for this bill. I don't want to go back to Arlington West only to see them adding more crosses.

INTERESTS IN FINANCIAL ASSETS OF IRAN

(Mr. TURNER of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. TURNER of New York. Madam Speaker, there are no greater reminders of how dangerous Iran is to America than the Iranian-backed 1983 Beirut and 1996 Khobar Towers bombings in which 260 Americans lost their lives.

There was no military or economic retaliation towards Iran for their involvement in those bombings. The only type of recourse the families had of those who died was a financial reward given to them by the Federal courts—an award they still have not seen.

This is why I have introduced H.R. 4070, a legal necessity which revokes sovereign immunity from the Iranian central bank and allows a Federal court to attach frozen funds. Thus, the

families who have been impacted by those bombings can receive the financial compensation they deserve and were previously awarded.

Today, 15 family members who lost their loved ones are on Capitol Hill, asking for two things: that we do everything we can to prevent Iran from killing more Americans, and that we hold them accountable for their actions.

I would like to say that I stand with them. I will continue to remind Americans about what Iran has done and what they continue to do.

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THE NDAA AUTHORIZES WAR AGAINST IRAN

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

Mr. KUCINICH. The NDAA authorizes war against Iran. It calls for a new policy—military action—which puts U.S. aircraft and munitions into position for air- and sea-based missions and the bolstering of U.S. capabilities to launch a sustained sea and air campaign against a range of Iranian nuclear and military targets. It authorizes war under the pretext that Iran is threatening to launch a nuclear attack, even though Iran does not have nuclear weapons, does not have nuclear-weapons capability, and is not building a bomb.

Beyond the obvious political and military questions here, there is a profound spiritual question: What is happening to the spirit of America that we can embrace war or waging war so casually? What happens to our souls when we authorize an attack on a nuclear facility in another country? What happens to the souls of those who perish when radiation is released from such an attack?

The Golden Rule states: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. It does not say: Do unto others before they do unto you.

HONORING MEMORY OF FORMER SOUTH DAKOTA CONGRESSMAN AND SENATOR JIM ABDNOR

(Mrs. NOEM asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. NOEM. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of former South Dakota Congressman and U.S. Senator Jim Abdnor, who passed away yesterday at the age of 89.

Jim Abdnor dedicated his life to serving the State of South Dakota and our country in whatever capacity he was serving. As Lieutenant Governor, as Congressman, U.S. Senator, even administrator of the United States Small Business Administration, Jim was a man who constantly put others first.

South Dakotans who knew him remember Jim as an incredibly decent man who worked tirelessly for the

State that he loved. In my personal interactions with Jim, I was always impressed by what a man of humility and integrity he was.

A born and raised South Dakotan, he left a legacy of hard work, commitment, and selfless sacrifice that every resident of the Rushmore State can be proud of.

I ask the South Dakotans and all those who knew him personally or of his legacy to keep his family and loved ones in their thoughts and prayers.

PROTECTING OUR VETERANS

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

Ms. FUDGE. Madam Speaker, today I rise on behalf of the millions of veterans who have returned home from Iraq and Afghanistan.

From joblessness to hopelessness, the readjustment to civilian life has been extremely difficult for many of our brave men and women. It is our responsibility to do all we can to lighten their already heavy load.

Today, my colleagues and I sent a letter to the Education and the Workforce Committee urging Chairman KLINE to address the aggressive and deceptive targeting of servicemembers, veterans, and their families by educational institutions, particularly for-profit career colleges.

I've read reports of schools steering our vets and family members into expensive loans, rather than directing them to less expensive Federal student loans. This is egregious and appalling, and it must be stopped. Join me in calling for hearings and for the movement of legislation.

BIRTHDAY OF FREDERICK COUNTY, MARYLAND

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

Mr. BARTLETT. Madam Speaker, I would like to invite America to join me in celebrating a belated birthday party in Frederick County, Maryland.

Just 100 years ago on the 22nd of last month, William Howard Taft convened 700 business leaders in the United States, and they established the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Just 1 day later, through the miracle of communication by wire, delegates from Frederick County asked to be chartered as the first county chamber of commerce in the United States.

Please join me in celebrating this very important belated 100th birthday celebration in Frederick County, Maryland.

INVESTING IN EDUCATION

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