

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

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PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

Mr. BROWN of Ohio 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.

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WASTE, FRAUD AND ABUSE AT DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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

Mr. PITTS. Madam Speaker, in poll after poll, the American people have made it clear that the number one issue on their minds is education.

Americans want to make sure their children are well prepared for tomorrow. Americans want to know that their education tax dollars are being spent on their children, not on bureaucracies or needless studies.

Why is it, then, that this administration's Education Department got a D-minus from Ernst and Young, a private auditing firm? If a private company had gotten that rating, the Securities and Exchange Commission would suspend their stock from trading.

Why is it that the Department of Education's own employees are bilking the Department and sticking the taxpayers with the tab?

Madam Speaker, we need to reform the Federal education bureaucracy. We need to make sure our tax dollars are being spent in classrooms, not in Washington. We need to prepare our children to be tomorrow's leaders.

We need to pass the Republican Dollars to the Classroom Act.

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READ FINE PRINT ON GOP MEDICARE PRESCRIPTION DRUG PLAN

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

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Madam Speaker, in a "Dear Colleague" he circulated today, the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS) shared some exciting news about the GOP Medicare prescription drug plan. If only it were true.

He asserts that the Republican plan, which relies on private insurers to offer individual prescription drug coverage, would cut prices twice as much as the Democrat's Medicare-based plan. That is a strong selling point. It is also complete rubbish.

The Congressional Budget Office says the GOP drug plan may cut costs by 25 percent, not through lower prices, but by restricting access to medically necessary drugs.

It is an important distinction. I will say it again. The Republican plan saves

money, not by miraculously convincing the drug makers to lower their prices, but by limiting access to medically necessary prescription drugs.

It cuts costs by decreasing the value of the drug benefit. The insurers win, the government wins, senior citizens lose.

The Republican plan gives insurance companies carte blanche to do what they are doing today; that is, put price tags on treatment decisions and then deny coverage for medically necessary treatments. Sound familiar?

The President's plan is explicit in requiring coverage for any medically necessary drug prescribed by a doctor, which makes sense since it is the doctor, not the insurer, who is actually treating the patient.

I ask my colleagues to read the fine print of the Thomas proposal.

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SECURITY FAILURE AT LOS ALAMOS

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

Mr. GIBBONS. Madam Speaker, once again, our national security has been endangered by the incompetence of the Department of Energy. It seems that the DOE cannot keep track of our Nation's most sensitive and top-secret information.

After nuclear weapons information was stolen last year from the Los Alamos lab, the American people were promised, they were promised that the lab security would be enhanced and such a security breach would never again occur.

Well that was 1999, Madam Speaker. So much for the Clinton-Gore administration promises.

It seems that the enhanced security did not take into consideration the human element. The human element is not one's pet dog.

Perhaps the DOE thought that the potential threat aliens from Mars posed to our national security needed to be addressed before ensuring that our top-secret information was secure from real-life human beings.

It is time that this administration wake up and make our national security a top priority.

I yield back the administration's so-called security policies which fail to protect our Nation's secrets.

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TIME TO PASS SIMPLE 15 PERCENT FLAT TAX; ABOLISH IRS

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

Mr. TRAFICANT. Madam Speaker, the Lord's prayer is 66 words; the 10 Commandments, 179 words; the Gettysburg Address, 286 words; the Declaration of Independence, 1,322 words; the United States Tax Code, 2 million 8 hundred thousand plus words. It is out of control.

In America, if a dog urinates in a parking lot, the EPA deems it a wetland. What is even worse, the IRS slaps on a hazardous waste tax. Beam me up here.

It is time to pass the simple flat 15 percent national sales tax and abolish the IRS.

I yield back all elements of the "Internal Rectal Service".

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FLOYD D. SPENCE NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2001

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

Mr. SKELTON. Madam Speaker, each year, the legislative process consistently yields a particularly important authorization bill, and each and every year that authorization bill is signed into law by the President. I am speaking of the annual Defense authorization bill.

A month ago on May 18, the Floyd D. Spence National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2001, aptly named for our distinguished chairman in his last year at the helm of the committee, passed the House by a strong bipartisan margin of 353 to 63.

The \$310 billion that this bill would authorize in the coming fiscal year represents the blueprint for defense policy and spending priorities as it does every year. Not only does it set the troop strength levels and extend expiring authorities, it goes to the heart of what our troops need to do the job. This bill will directly improve their quality of life, their readiness to fight, and the pace of the modernization of their equipment.

I am especially pleased that this bill contains several important new initiatives, including a comprehensive package of military health care reforms that would significantly improve access to quality health care for all military beneficiaries, particularly for over-65 military retirees.

But, Mr. Speaker, I am sorry to note that progress on the Defense Authorization bill, after passage in the House, has come to a sudden standstill in the other body. As I look about the legislative landscape, I see no other issue that I believe should take precedence over the authorization of the funds that our troops need. I hope that this situation can be dealt with quickly, and that we can get about the business of going to conference on a Senate bill and a House bill in the very near future.

The Congress needs this bill. The troops need this bill. The country needs this bill.

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APOLOGY FOR SLAVERY

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

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Madam Speaker, today, on a date African Americans celebrate as their second Independence Day, I am introducing a resolution.

This bill would put Congress on record as apologizing for all of our country and this institution and what they did to promote and sustain slavery and its terrible legacy.

This building we work in and revere as one of the world's monuments to freedom and democracy, it is a place where much good has been done, but it is also one of the sites of one of the history's great wrongs, and that is slavery.

Mr. Speaker, this building we revere was partly built by slaves, people who suffered terrible wrongs, people I believe our Nation owes an apology.

I was surprised to learn that, despite the Civil War and despite the landmark civil rights legislation, despite all that has happened in the 135 years since the last slaves learned they were free, our Nation has never apologized for the savage institution of slavery.

I urge all of our colleagues to look in their hearts and support this bill.

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COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, June 16, 2000.

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,
*The Speaker, House of Representatives, Wash-
ington, DC.*

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted to Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on June 16, 2000 at 9:12 a.m.

That the Senate passed without amendment H.J. Res. 101.

With best wishes, I am
Sincerely,

JEFF TRANDAHL,
Clerk of the House.

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COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, June 16, 2000.

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,
*The Speaker, House of Representatives, Wash-
ington, DC.*

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted to Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on June 16, 2000 at 1:45 p.m.

That the Senate agreed to Conference Report S. 761.

With best wishes, I am
Sincerely,

JEFF TRANDAHL,
Clerk of the House.

APOLOGY FOR UNWARRANTED TERM USED IN COMMITTEE HEARING LAST THURSDAY CON- CERNING MERGER OF UNITED AND US AIRWAYS

(Mr. OBERSTAR asked and was given permission to address the House for 5 minutes and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. OBERSTAR. Madam Speaker, last Thursday, the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure held a hearing on the proposed merger of United Airlines and US Airways. In the course of that hearing, I used an inappropriate and unwarranted term to describe the status of the spin-off carrier DC Air that would be created if the merger were to be approved.

Mr. Robert Johnson, CEO of Black Entertainment Television and proposed owner of DC Air, took justifiable exception of that characterization of the proposed new carrier. In a letter to me late Friday, Mr. Johnson said he is personally hurt and offended and called upon me to change my attitude.

I take the well today to apologize to Mr. Johnson and to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure for my careless, inappropriate, and offensive remark.

Madam Speaker, in my years of Congress, I have staunchly maintained an attitude of support for civil rights in the United States and human rights abroad. I will not detail that history today except to say that, in the most recent civil rights issue before my committee, TEA 21, I championed the inclusion of language to give a fair share of Federal transportation accounts to disadvantaged businesses. Before coming to Washington, I spent 3½ years working in Haiti. During my time of Congress, I worked to bring economic and political stability to that first black republic in the world.

I cannot let that record of 40 years be tarnished by one ill-chosen, inappropriate, offensive word.

In the spirit of Psalm 51, verse 19, "My sacrifice, O God, is a contrite heart. A heart contrite and humbled, O God, you will not spurn."

Madam Speaker, it is further my responsibility and that of my colleagues in Congress to stay focused on the main issue here, the effects of this proposed merger of United Airlines and US Airways on air service in Washington and throughout the country.

I have reviewed DC Air's business plan and am concerned it would be tied too closely to the newly merged United and not be an effective competitor. The concern is not based on Mr. Johnson's ownership of the airline, for I have great respect and appreciation for Mr. Johnson's abilities as a businessman and his success as an entrepreneur, but on the new carrier's dependence on its much larger partner. If the Justice Department sees fit to approve this deal, I would hope that it would require the merging airlines to divest additional assets to DC Air to make the start-up carrier a stronger, more viable competitor.

I am opposed to the United-US Airways merger on its merits. I believe it will diminish competition, spur additional consolidation in the airline industry, and result in fewer choices and poorer service to the flying public. It is a bad deal for aviation and for the consumer.

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ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the provisions of clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair announces that she will postpone further proceedings today on each motion to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Any record votes on postponed questions will be taken after debate has concluded on all motions to suspend the rules, but not before 6 p.m. today.

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ABRAHAM LINCOLN INTERPRETATIVE CENTER

Mr. SOUDER. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3084) to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to contribute funds for the establishment of an interpretative center on the life and contributions of President Abraham Lincoln, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 3084

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARD ESTABLISHMENT OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN INTERPRETIVE CENTER.

(a) GRANTS AUTHORIZED.—Subject to subsections (b) and (c), the Secretary of the Interior shall make grants to contribute funds for the establishment in Springfield, Illinois, of an interpretive center to preserve and make available to the public materials related to the life of President Abraham Lincoln and to provide interpretive and educational services which communicate the meaning of the life of Abraham Lincoln.

(b) PLAN AND DESIGN.—

(1) SUBMISSION.—Not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the entity selected by the Secretary of the Interior to receive grants under subsection (a) shall submit to the Secretary a plan and design for the interpretive center, including a description of the following:

(A) The design of the facility and site.

(B) The method of acquisition.

(C) The estimated cost of acquisition, construction, operation, and maintenance.

(D) The manner and extent to which non-Federal entities will participate in the acquisition, construction, operation, and maintenance of the center.

(2) CONSULTATION AND COOPERATION.—The plan and design for the interpretive center shall be prepared in consultation with the Secretary of the Interior and the Governor of Illinois and in cooperation with such other public, municipal, and private entities as the Secretary considers appropriate.

(c) CONDITIONS ON GRANT.—

(1) MATCHING REQUIREMENT.—A grant under subsection (a) may not be made until such time as the entity selected to receive the grant certifies to the Secretary of the Interior that funds