



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 105th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 144

WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 1998

No. 129

House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. NEY).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
September 24, 1998.

I hereby designate the Honorable ROBERT W. NEY to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NEWT GINGRICH,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

PRAYER

The Reverend A. David Agro, Capitol Hill United Methodist Church, Washington, D.C., offered the following prayer:

O God of Abraham and Sarah, Hagar and Ishmael, Isaac and Rebekah, Esau and Jacob, Leah and Rachel, Zilpah and Bilhah, we ask for Your faithful presence in this place with these Your people who like our forebears chart the way for many. Enable these servants to follow Your call like Abraham and Sarah to a new land that You will show in order that we too may be a great nation. Hear, O God, the voice of those in the wilderness as You did Hagar and Ishmael and speak Your words of reassurance even as You guide decisions for the sake of those who are outcast and crying for justice. Grant courage that the wrestling in this Chamber will be marked by the fortitude of Rachel and Jacob in their struggle for new life and with familiar issues. May Your face be seen, O God, like Jacob, in the face of our brother and sister as we give thanks for the blessings received from Your hand. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

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

Mr. WELLER 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 Mr. Lundregan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed with an amendment in which the concurrence of the House is requested, a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 3150. An act to amend title 11 of the United States Code, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the Senate insists upon its amendment to the bill (H.R. 3150) "An Act to amend title 11 of the United States Code, and for other purposes," requests a conference with the House on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses thereon, and appoints Mr. HATCH, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. LEAHY, and Mr. DURBIN to be the conferees on the part of the Senate.

WELCOME TO REV. A. DAVID AGRO

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

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, we welcome this morning the Reverend

David Agro, who is the pastor of the Capitol Hill United Methodist Church just four short blocks from the Capitol here. Reverend Jim Ford, who is the House chaplain, is in surgery this morning and will be back with us next week. We wish him well and expect his speedy recovery.

Often on occasions we spend weekends here in Washington, and it is a pleasure to have the opportunity to attend services on Sunday morning. My wife and I have attended the Capitol Hill United Methodist Church on many of those occasions. It is a congregation that makes you feel welcome, has beautiful music and very inspirational sermons, so it is a pleasure to have the Reverend David Agro with us this morning and to have him share those inspirational words with us.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain 15 one-minutes from each side.

OPPOSING ANY DEAL TO SHORT-CIRCUIT THE CONSTITUTIONAL PROCESS REGARDING THE PRESIDENT

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

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, let us dispense with the notion that Congress can punish the President, punish either by a so-called censure, a fine, or any other punishment. Such a deal is unconstitutional, and anyone who believes in that kind of deal believes not in the rule of law but the rule of man, and needs to read the Constitution.

Impeachment is a process of deciding whether a President is fit for office.

□ 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.



Printed on recycled paper.

H8535

The Founding Fathers did not give Congress the authority to punish the President. That is for the judicial system to decide. The question before the House is, is this President fit for office? Has he disqualified himself to continue to lead this Nation?

The decision for the House is whether to impeach or not to impeach. The decision for the Senate is to remove from office or not to remove. Any action to punish this President, any deal cut that short-circuits the constitutional process, is unconstitutional, and I will fight for the Constitution.

Mr. Speaker, this is not the time to abandon our Constitution. I urge my colleagues to read the Constitution, to support the process, and resist the temptation to cut a deal with the President.

TRIBUTE TO THE HONORABLE VIC FAZIO

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

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the gentleman from California (Mr. VIC FAZIO), who has been a very effective Member of this institution, both as a leader and as a member of the Committee on Appropriations, and as a great Californian.

We have been very lucky in California to work with the gentleman from California (Mr. FAZIO), someone who has always been helpful in securing funding for our State, particularly for water projects. I know, because I have called on him for assistance many times in his role on the Committee on Appropriations. I thank the gentleman from California for being so respectful to all of our needs, for being receptive, hardworking, dedicated and fair in making sure our requests are fulfilled.

I thank him, too, for his hard work in fighting for women's rights. He has been a staunch defender on many fronts, supporting the Equal Rights Amendment, arguing for women's reproductive rights, and opposing discrimination against women in the work force, the military and the courts. As a member of the Democratic leadership, the gentleman's outspoken activism has brought needed attention to these causes.

I do not know what we will do without the gentleman from California (Mr. VIC FAZIO). He will be missed.

THE BEST USE OF THE BUDGET SURPLUS

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

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, according to my colleagues, Republicans want to waste the budget surplus on tax cuts. But let us take a closer look.

The President announced in his State of the Union Address that every penny

of the surplus is to be dedicated to saving Social Security. But what the President said does not appear to be what he is really doing.

In fact, the President has proposed to spend billions of dollars on more government programs and services with dollars from the budget surplus. He wants our troops in Bosnia paid with surplus dollars. He wants to replenish the IMF and address the Y2K problem with surplus dollars. He also wants to address embassy security with surplus dollars.

Mr. Speaker, I thought when the President pledged "every penny" of the surplus to Social Security he meant it. I guess his pledge really depends on his definition of the word "penny."

Republicans want to give the American people a tax cut, and we tell them our plan up front. Why cannot the President tell the American people the real funding source of his agenda? For those who think character does not matter, think again.

THE BUDGET SURPLUS SHOULD GO TO SOCIAL SECURITY

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, the Republicans are moving full steam ahead with their plan to raid the budget surplus to pay for tax cuts, instead of putting that money where it rightly belongs, into Social Security.

Make no mistake about it, Mr. Speaker, the Republican tax bill is a direct assault on Social Security. The budget surplus the Republicans want to use to pay for their tax cuts do not exist. The only portion of the Federal budget that is in surplus is the Social Security Trust Fund. In fact, without Social Security, the Federal budget would still be in deficit this year.

Mr. Speaker, hardworking American families deserve tax relief, there is no doubt, but we should not be gambling with the Social Security Trust Fund to pay for it. Let us put every penny of this surplus back where it came from and keep it there until we are sure we have protected Social Security for the long haul.

Let us show seniors and future generations that we will be disciplined with the money Congress has been charged with managing for their retirement years. Let us stop the GOP's \$80 billion assault on Social Security dead in its tracks. I would urge all my colleagues to vote no on this irresponsible Republican tax plan.

AN HISTORIC OPPORTUNITY FOR CONGRESS TO ABOLISH THE MARRIAGE TAX PENALTY

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

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, this Congress has an historic and exciting op-

portunity to do something it should have done a long time ago, abolish the marriage tax penalty. Many young couples are surprised to learn that government actually penalizes people for getting married; yes, an average of \$1,400 per year for middle class income earners.

People have long known that government does not do a lot of smart things. In fact, it does a lot of dumb things. Even liberals have to admit that government has thousands of stupid regulations, programs that actually make things worse instead of better, and inefficiencies that seem to be immune from reform.

But the marriage tax penalty is just plain wrong. It stands as an ugly symbol of everything that is wrong about government that has gotten too big, too arrogant, and too out of touch with what it is like for an average person who struggles every day to get ahead, to make ends meet, to build a better life for themselves and their families.

Why does the government make it so much harder for people who want to get married? I urge Members on both sides of the aisle to do what is right to correct this wrong.

SOCIAL SECURITY TRUST FUNDS DIVERTED

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

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, with the national news media focused on "all Monica all the time," any attempt here in Washington to address some of the real problems American families are facing is disdainfully disregarded as a mere diversion.

This week we actually have a diversion underway, a very real diversion. It is the diversion of Social Security trust funds to pay for Republican electioneering. With the Nation distracted, our Republican friends are seizing the moment to seize Social Security trust funds in order to provide election eve tax breaks. When will they learn that the Social Security trust fund is not a slush fund?

Let us keep the faith with the people that paid into the trust fund their payroll taxes and are paying in today, and apply any surplus that is finally generated after almost 30 years to save Social Security first.

Let us act to protect those who have paid into this trust fund, and avoid a Republican campaign ploy.

THE 90-10 PLAN SAVES SOCIAL SECURITY AND ENDS THE MARRIAGE TAX PENALTY

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

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, we have an opportunity this week to focus on the people's business. We have an opportunity to adopt what has already