

payroll taxes every year since 1957. I want to say that again. The railroad retirement system has spent more than it has collected in payroll taxes every year since 1957. The cumulative shortfall since 1957 is \$90 billion. That \$90 billion has come from other taxpayers paying into this private taxpayer system.

So I think everybody can believe me, Mr. Speaker, when I say the influence of the railroad workers and the railroad system has been very influential in the United States Congress. Although railroad workers and their employers currently pay a 33.4 percent payroll tax excluding Medicare and unemployment, the railroad retirement system still spends \$4 billion more than it collects in payroll deductions each year. So every year we are subsidizing and putting money back into the railroad retirement system out of the general fund.

Despite the payroll tax shortfall, the railroad retirement system remains technically solvent thanks to these generous taxpayer subsidies. The American taxpayer has bailed out the retirement system to the extent that those retirement funds now claim a \$20 billion surplus, not a \$90 billion deficit. So this bill that is proposed to come up takes \$15 billion out of the general fund next year and gives it to a railroad retirement board investment effort where they invest it and spend it for current retirees.

But the challenge is while we are passing these bills, we are reducing the payroll tax that these workers pay in and we increase benefits. We have increased benefits for widows, and we allow those workers to retire in the railroad system, under this proposed legislation that is coming before us, to retire at 60 years old with full benefits. Of course, on Social Security what we have done over the years is we have increased that, and now we are in the mode of taking that full benefit eligibility up to 67 years old for Social Security.

So in this railroad bill, we have reduced the tax they pay; we have increased the benefits. I hope everybody will study this issue very closely because if we are going to pass this kind of legislation, we should at least take American taxpayers off the hook in the future.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. There being no further requests for morning hour debates, pursuant to clause 12, rule I, the House will stand in recess until 10 a.m.

Accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 40 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 (Mr. GUTKNECHT) at 10 a.m.

PRAYER

The Reverend Monsignor John Brenkle, St. Helena Catholic Church, St. Helena, California, offered the following prayer:

Father, Your name is indeed Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. How fitting it is to begin all of our enterprises conscious of Your guiding Spirit and to give You praise when our affairs have ended well.

As we join together to begin today the work of making this Nation a land of peace and justice, may we humble ourselves before You, acknowledging that who we are and what we do is Your gift, Your grace.

Help us always to remember that You have called us to be servants and that the greatness of our life as a nation and as individuals is to be measured by how generously and wisely we serve each other.

Let Your presence and Your blessings descend upon this Chamber and upon each of its Members as they begin this new day and may they at its end experience the rewards of a day well spent in the service of others. For this we pray. 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.

Mr. McNULTY. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. McNULTY. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas 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 THE REVEREND MONSIGNOR JOHN BRENKLE

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

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to have such a truly genuine servant and good friend lead us in today's opening prayer. Father John Brenkle—Monsignor John Brenkle—has humbly and effectively served our diocese for over 30 years and has been pastor at the St. Helena Catholic Church for nearly 20 years.

He has worked tirelessly with local, State and Federal officials, housing advocates and the wine industry within the Napa Valley to improve farm worker housing in our area.

In addition to St. Helena, Father Brenkle has served the diocese by leading two other parishes and serving as a school principal. He has been both a forceful presence and silent leader and has the respect and the admiration of our entire community regardless of their religious affiliation.

I thank my colleagues for allowing him to lead us in prayer today.

CLONING

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

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, the columnist Charles Krauthammer called legislation that we are going to consider today to permit cloning human embryos a "nightmare and an abomination." It truly is.

Some of those who support this proposal are so eager to clone human beings that they have taken to twisting the truth to promote their arguments. The latest thing they are saying is that cloned embryos are not really embryos at all. They say that if you use body cells instead of sperm to fertilize an egg, that that really is not an embryo.

Mr. Speaker, that is ridiculous. Take a look at this picture of Dolly the sheep. Everybody knows that Dolly is a clone. Dolly was made by fertilizing a sheep egg with a cell taken from the mammary gland of another sheep. It took 277 tries before they got a clone that worked. Now she is 5 years old.

Those who argue that cloned human embryos are not really embryos might as well argue that Dolly is not a sheep. That is ridiculous.

Cloning human beings is wrong. Eighty-eight percent of the American people do not want scientists to create human embryos for the purpose of experimentation, harvesting and destruction. We will be voting later today to ban all human cloning. Support the Weldon-Stupak bill.

IRS COMMISSIONER ROSSOTTI

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

Mr. TRAFICANT. The legal group Judicial Watch has charged IRS Commissioner Rossotti with conflict of interest involving a company he founded.

Rossotti still owns stock in the company, his wife works there, and Rossotti buys software from this company for the IRS.

That is right. Rossotti buys from Rossotti. If that is not enough to roast your chestnuts, the charge claims, and I quote, Rossotti got a conflict waiver from the Clinton administration in exchange for targeting and auditing Clinton's opponents.

What is the surprise? In addition, Rossotti is scheduled for another big, fat bonus from Congress.

Beam me up. The Internal Rectal Service does not need bonuses, they need abolished.

I yield back the fact that if a Member of Congress did what Rossotti did, you would go straight to the slammer.

ENERGY PRODUCTION NEEDED FOR OUR FUTURE

(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, the energy crisis America is facing is still with us. Americans need our country to invest in and produce more energy from the few sites we have available on our public lands. That is the goal of the bipartisan Energy Security Act which will allow for the production of wind, solar and geothermal energies on public lands. These are clean energies, renewable energies that leave our environment untouched.

We cannot keep pretending our energy challenges will take care of themselves if we just wait long enough. When we fail to act, prices rise and our seniors and small businesses, our farmers and low-income families suffer. They suffered last winter. They suffered this spring. They are suffering now under the hot summer sun. Be assured, without a comprehensive plan they will suffer next year, and the year after that.

We need to have the courage and the vision to realize that increased energy production plays a key role in a sound national energy policy. We need to pass the Republican energy package for the sake of our future, for the sake of America.

H.R. 2540, VETERANS BENEFITS ACT OF 2001

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

Mr. SHOWS. Mr. Speaker, I am so proud to be here as a member of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs to share my strong support of H.R. 2540, the Veterans Benefits Act of 2001.

These men and women, uprooted from their families and communities, served our country with honor and dignity. Yet when it was time for the VA to serve them, thousands were categorically denied.

Earlier this year, I introduced H.R. 612, the Persian Gulf War Illness Compensation Act of 2001 with two other outstanding advocates for veterans, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. MANZULLO) and the gentleman from California (Mr. GALLEGLY). This legislation garnered strong bipartisan support from over 225 Members of the House.

The Veterans Benefits Act of 2001 will now clarify VA standards for compensation by recognizing fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue syndrome, multiple chemical sensitivity, and other ailments as key symptoms of undiagnosed or poorly defined illnesses associated with Gulf War service. Additionally, this bill extends the presumptive period for undiagnosed illnesses to December 31, 2003. This is a true victory for veterans.

Mr. Speaker, these veterans put their lives on the line to protect, defend and advance the ideals of democracy.

Vote for this bill. It is the right thing to do.

TRADE PROMOTION AUTHORITY

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

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Mr. Speaker, Congress must pass trade promotion authority. International trade is an essential part of the U.S. economy. But when it comes to trade agreements, the U.S. is lagging behind significantly. Of the 130 preferential trade agreements that exist, the U.S. is a party to only two: NAFTA and a free trade agreement with Israel. That is it. The European Union has 27, 20 of which have been negotiated in the last 10 years. While the rest of the world is moving rapidly ahead, we are not.

Canada, our neighbor to the north, has agreements throughout the southern hemisphere. There are currently over 12 million U.S. jobs that depend upon exports. American jobs that export goods pay up to 18 percent more than the U.S. national average. As we can see, trade agreements are a crucial element for the success of the U.S. economy. Remember, the jobs stay here; the products are exported overseas.

Mr. Speaker, in order to get back in the game and develop a stronger economy, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting trade promotion authority.

PROUD TO SALUTE THE HONORABLE DONNA SHALALA, NEW PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

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

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to salute the Honorable Donna Shalala who has assumed the reins as the fifth president of the Uni-

versity of Miami. Donna Shalala was U.S. history's longest serving Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. During her tenure, Dr. Shalala distinguished herself on a broad range of issues, including taking care of the needs of our elderly and our Nation's children.

She led campaigns for child immunization, for biomedical research, and played a key role in reforming our welfare system. In fact, the Washington Post described her as "one of the most successful government managers of our time."

Donna brings to UM more than 25 years of experience in education, also, including serving as President of Hunter College. As chancellor of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, she was the first woman to head a Big 10 university.

The University of Miami is already a leader in international and medical education, biomedical research and environmental sciences, but with Donna Shalala at its helm, UM will be certain to reach great new heights.

The Florida congressional delegation welcomes Donna Shalala back to Washington, D.C. today and looks forward to helping her achieve her vision for the future of the University of Miami and for our South Florida community.

MANAGED CARE LEGISLATION

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

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, some health plans systematically obstruct, delay and deny care. That is a fact.

Earlier this year, Republicans and Democrats negotiated a bill that contains the minimum protections necessary to get health insurance back on track. Ganske-Dingell reminds HMOs that they are being paid to provide coverage, not excuses. And it contains a right to sue with enough teeth in it to deter health plans from cheating their enrollees, and enough definition to preclude frivolous lawsuits.

Recourse in the courts is essential. If we tell HMOs that they are accountable, we must hold them accountable. Unfortunately, the Fletcher bill compromises away the two most important patient protections, leaving HMOs thrilled and consumers no better off. It provides a right to sue that cannot actually be exercised and a right to an external appeals process that simply cannot be trusted.

We need to enact legislation that does not just sound like it protects patients but actually does protect patients. Ganske-Dingell fits that bill. I ask for House support.

□ 1015

SUPPORT FLETCHER HEALTH CARE REFORM

(Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas asked and was given permission to address