

May we walk in love, humility, gentleness, patience and peace, which are the attributes that the Apostle Paul described as worthy of our vocation or calling. By faith, we receive these blessings and glorify You.

In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

#### 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.

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

The SPEAKER. The question is on the Chair's approval of the Journal.

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

Mr. GIBBONS. 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. Pursuant to clause 5 of rule I, further proceedings on this question are postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

#### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. NORTON 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.

#### TRIBUTE TO REVEREND THOMAS F. GULBRONSON

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I do not know when it was that Pastor Tom Gulbranson realized what a gift from God and a calling for God that he had. It may have been when he was serving in the United States Air Force. I do know that since serving his country in the Air Force, Pastor Tom has been a pastor for 40 years. In fact, 20 of those years he has been Pastor at the First Assembly of God Church in Alexandria, Virginia.

Now, during that period of time he has gotten all kinds of awards, and I could list all of them, and he has spoken on the 700 Club and he has become nationally known, both for his sermons and his books and his leadership. But we know him because he is a dynamic figure in our community. People gather together under his leadership and are inspired by his commitment to God and to the principles that he has dedicated his life to.

So it is a particular pleasure to have him address this body this day. I thank the majority leader for arranging it. I thank Pastor Tom for all of the many, many years that he has served our community and our country. Thank you, Tom.

#### U.S.-LAOS BILATERAL RELATIONS JEOPARDIZED BY RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION

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

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, this Member comes before the body to alert his colleagues to a troubling situation in the Southeast Asian country of Laos. While the Laotian Constitution guarantees religious freedom for its citizens, in reality the government restricts freedom of religion, especially for Christian denominations. Recently, 40 Laos citizens and 5 foreigners, 3 of whom were Americans, were arrested and imprisoned. The official reason given for their arrest was "illegal assembly;" however, the real cause was related to their practice of the Christian faith.

The record of Laos in this regard is troubling. According to the State Department's Country Reports on Human Rights for 1997, the Lao government has harassed, arrested and jailed clergy members. Members of the Lao Christian community are often looked upon with distrust by their government as having connections to "foreign influences." There are also unconfirmed reports that Christians have been barred from joining the Lao People's Revolutionary Party or from securing government employment.

As chairman of the Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific, this Member sincerely hopes that the United States and Laos can develop warm and cordial relations. The potential is there. However, Mr. Speaker, this Member, through this forum, now urges the government of Laos to stop the growing trend of religious persecution within their borders.

#### NO FEAR OF GOVERNMENT FOR AMERICANS

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

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, the IRS says, do not change the law. Taxpayers should remain guilty in a civil tax case. Unbelievable.

Let me remind Members of the recent testimony of an IRS employee before the other body about IRS reform. She demanded that she be behind a screen to hide her identity and she said she must have a voice scrambler to disguise her voice. I want to quote what she said, Mr. Speaker. "I am afraid. I am afraid of retaliation by the Internal Revenue Service" that she worked for.

Beam me up, Mr. Speaker. No American should fear their government, and let me say this to Congress. There can be no true substantive reform of the Internal Revenue Service without shifting the burden of proof to the government in a civil tax case. We know it, the IRS knows it, I know it, and by God, the American people know it, and the American people demand it.

#### GOVERNMENT THAT GOVERNS LEAST GOVERNS BEST

(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, everyone outside of the bloated Federal bureaucracy knows that government that governs least governs best.

Never was this more apparent than on Friday when California reached a historic agreement with local Indians regarding Indian gaming in California. In fact, the tribal chairman there is quoted as saying "a turning point in tribal-state relations" has been reached.

The real significance of this agreement, however, lies more in its origin than in its content. Despite numerous attempts by Secretary Babbitt to backdoor his way into negotiations and the approval process, California has rightly asserted its sovereign status and jurisdiction. This compromise between California and sovereign Indian nations is proof that Federal intervention was not necessary, nor would it have been appropriate in this issue. California correctly and repeatedly told the Interior Department to butt out, that they do not need to be told by the Federal Government what is best for their State. Now we have proof. The Tenth Amendment works.

I urge my colleagues to cosponsor H.R. 3094, a bill which will ensure that no State must sit back while the Federal Government tramples the Constitution and blatantly disregards their sovereignty.

#### IN HONOR OF WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

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

Ms. DEGETTE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of women's history month to recognize the achievements of business women in my community and across the country. In my State of Colorado, women have had a dramatic impact on the economy. There are over 160,000 women-owned businesses in my State, which account for 40 percent of all firms in Colorado. Women employ over 350,000 people in Colorado and were responsible for generating \$39 billion in sales in 1996.

While many of the businesses owned by Colorado women are traditional, such as service and retail, the greatest

increase in women-owned firms has been in industries like transportation, communications, construction, and mining. Women are making significant contributions to the economy in Colorado and across the country. I am pleased to recognize not only the advancements made by women in business, but also the vital role they play as employers and investors in today's economy.

Despite challenges and initial setbacks, women-owned businesses are at the forefront of many new and innovative ideas.

#### WE MUST WIN THE WAR AGAINST DRUGS

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

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, heroin has claimed another young life in my hometown of Plano, Texas. A total of 13 young people have died from heroin there within the past year.

The local police are doing their very best to stop drugs in our schools, but they are being stretched beyond their limits. They need our help now.

I have been working with members of the North Texas delegation to have the Dallas-Fort Worth area designated as a HIDTA, a High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area, but this administration has been dragging its feet. This is a real war, and we need the resources and armor of our Federal law enforcement agencies to stop drug flow now. I urge General McCaffrey to approve the HIDTA designation as soon as possible.

Speaker GINGRICH said just yesterday our first goal ought to be to win the war against drugs. We must win this war. The survival of our children depends on it.

#### INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

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

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I choose today, International Women's Day, to call to the attention of this body that women business owners are proving to be a major factor in the most robust economy since World War II. Women business owners are showing remarkable staying power. Three-quarters of the women businesses that were in existence in 1991 are still in existence, compared to the overall American average of two-thirds of all firms.

What does this signify? What does it tell us about women? What we have already known: that the stability and hard work for which women have been known in the home, they are bringing now not only to the workplace but to owning businesses themselves.

The bipartisan Women's Caucus has put special emphasis on women-owned business. I salute the bipartisan team

leaders in our caucus, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD) and the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. KELLY) for their leadership on women-owned business issues. They have introduced House Resolution 313, which I invite all Members to sign on. The Federal Government has a goal of 5 percent women-owned businesses. We are only at 2 percent.

#### TIME FOR TAX REFORM

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

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, today the average American will work 2 hours and 49 minutes of an 8-hour work day just to pay his or her taxes. Many of them will go home not to spend quality time with their families, but to tackle a complicated maze of IRS rules and forms simply so they can figure out how much of their hard-earned money they will send to Washington this year.

Mr. Speaker, this is not what America should be about. The tax burden of this country is far too high, both in the size of the checks that taxpayers must write to the IRS each year and in the amount of time and money: 5 billion hours and \$225 billion annually they must spend complying with the lengthy and complicated Tax Code.

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The American people want, need and deserve a fairer, simpler tax system. I hope my colleagues in this Congress will join a bipartisan effort to provide them with the very critical tax relief they deserve.

#### DUE PROCESS

(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, I try to watch the network news every day. I watch some of the political talk shows that cover the strange world of Washington, D.C. I keep waiting to see some discussion of 18 U.S. Code, section 1503.

Most people are not lawyers, but there are a lot of lawyers out there, including a lot of journalists, who know perfectly well what 18 U.S. Code, section 1503 means. It is a criminal statute that absolutely prohibits government employees from interfering in a Federal investigation. Government employees may not attempt to influence, obstruct or impede a Federal investigator.

This is not a controversial law. It is obvious that one may not impede or interfere in any way with a Federal investigation. Mafia dons may try it, but a person conducting a smear campaign to intimidate or discredit judicial officials is in violation of the law. It is not even a debatable issue.

Due process must proceed without interference immediately, period.

#### SURPLUS? WHAT SURPLUS? WATCH THE DEBT MOUNT

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

Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, for the first time since 1969, 29 years ago, the Federal Government is supposed to balance its budget and have a surplus. But will we really? Here is a lesson in government accounting.

In 1998, the Congressional Budget Office, CBO, projects there will be a surplus of \$8 billion, and the national debt will be \$5.5 trillion. Remember, the national debt is the total from accumulated deficits and interest payments.

In 2002, after 5 years of balanced budgets, CBO projects the surplus will be \$67 billion, and the national debt will be \$6.4 trillion. Let me repeat, the national debt in 1998 will be \$5.5 trillion; after years of surpluses, the national debt in 2002 will be \$6.4 trillion.

What is wrong with this picture? How can the government say the Federal budget will be in surplus at the same time that the national debt will increase by nearly \$1 trillion? It is easy, if we do not count billions spent every year from government trust funds like Social Security.

Clearly there is no surplus. If the debt continues to go up, the budget is really not balanced, now is it?

#### JUDGE KENNETH STARR

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

Mr. WELDON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, what is happening right now to Judge Kenneth Starr is absolutely disgraceful. The amazing thing about it is that the smear campaign directed at Judge Starr is happening right before our eyes. Attorney General Janet Reno, the Attorney General of the United States, not some right-wing partisan, appointed Judge Starr to investigate the allegations of perjury and obstruction of justice.

Judge Starr was appointed by Attorney General Janet Reno because he had a track record of distinguished and honorable service and because he had a record of integrity, honesty and fairness. If Judge Starr has acted improperly in any manner, Attorney General Janet Reno should remove him immediately as Independent Counsel. If Judge Starr has shown himself to be conducting his investigation in an unfair, partisan manner, the Attorney General must act immediately to replace him. But if Judge Starr has done nothing wrong or improper, Attorney General Janet Reno should make a statement demanding that friends of the White House stop interfering with his investigation and stop the campaign to destroy him.

All Federal prosecutors must be free of outside interference.