PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore, Mr. POE of Georgia, asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.

Mr. POE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, our brave men and women in the military are accompanied by other brave men and women who guard our international boundaries, and they are now often serving in what amounts to a war zone.

In the fiscal year just ended, over 650 border agents reported being assaulted, the highest number since they began tracking these incidents in the 1990s. Compare that to last year’s total of 354, and you have to wonder just how secure our borders are. Even with sensors and cameras and fences, that is not enough. Incidents have increased from San Diego to Nogales, Arizona to the banks of the Rio Grande in Texas. It is clear we are not getting the job done, and our efforts need to be strengthened.

If our agents have to dodge bullets, then who is controlling our borders? Homeland Security Secretary Chertoff said last week that when it comes to illegal immigration, time is not on our side. Mr. Speaker, Congress should take action now to secure our borders. Our Nation is not secure until our borders are secure. That is the necessary and first step to any immigration reform. H.R. 3693 is legislation that America needs now.

IMMIGRANT RIOTING IN FRANCE

Mr. POE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, failure to integrate immigrants into a country’s society is evident in the 11 days of rioting, looting, arson, and lawlessness in France. With the 5 million Muslims in France, many of the youth feel disenfranchised and discriminated against by the French government. Some of these third-generation immigrants take to violence to get the attention of French authorities. Government buildings, private businesses, homes and over 1,300 cars have been burned.

It has been reported that some Muslim extremists are taking advantage of the riots and calling for jihad, or holy war. A French police official reportedly said that civil war is unfolding in France. France must find a better way to assimilate the Muslim population into its culture. USA Today states that French President Jacques Chirac must restore order to prevent a clash of civilizations that is one of the greatest threats of the 21st century.

The lesson for us to learn is that we must encourage immigrants to assimilate into America, or we too could face difficulties in the future. Immigrants have the responsibility to become Americans, and America has the responsibility to provide immigrants access to America and teach them to be Americans. That’s just the way it is.

BUDGET RECONCILIATION

Mr. OLVER of Vermont. Mr. Speaker, the Budget Committee’s reconciliation bill is a vicious example of misguided fiscal and social priorities. To pay for tax cuts that benefit almost exclusively those whose income is over $200,000 a year, the bill cuts assistance to families struggling to get by and pushes them right into poverty.

The bill guarantees that more foster children will grow up in poverty. $4.9 billion is slashed from child support services. As a result, single mothers and their children will not receive the support payments owed to them, and many of those children will grow up in poverty.

$844 million cut from food stamps will push another 300,000 children and adults in low-income and immigrant families below the poverty threshold. One in five children in this country already grow up in poverty. It is unconscionable to deliberately increase that number. For what? So that the wealthiest 3 percent of Americans can have another huge tax cut.

AMERICANS APPRECIATE FRANCE

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, Americans were saddened over the weekend to see rioters spread fire and violence across France with nearly 5,000 vehicles burned, stretching into the heart of Paris. As a person of French heritage, I am particularly shocked that 34 police officers are injured, including 10 wounded by gunshots. This outburst of violence is a chilling reminder that appeasement is a failed course which leads to greater violence. I am particularly disappointed France did not show resolve in the Cold War as defenders of freedom actively defeated Communism, and I am disappointed France has not shown resolve in the global war on terrorism, as we resist terrorists from London to Baghdad to Bali. But our hearts and our heritage are with France, which we treasure as America’s first ally. With resolve we can stop extremism at its source: peace can be restored.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September 11.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions 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.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken after 6:30 p.m. today.

RECOGNIZING THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL’S DECLARATION ON THE RELATION OF THE CHURCH TO NON-CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS

Mr. POE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H.Con. Res. 260) recognizing the 40th anniversary of the Second Vatican Council’s Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions, Nostra Aetate, and the continuing need for mutual inter-religious respect and dialogue, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 260

Whereas 2005 marks the 40th anniversary of the promulgation of Nostra Aetate, the declaration on the relation of the Roman Catholic Church to non-Christian religions; Whereas on October 28, 1965, after the overwhelmingly affirmative vote of the Second Vatican Council of the Roman Catholic Church, Pope Paul VI issued Nostra Aetate, which means “in our time”; Whereas Nostra Aetate affirmed the rejection of the Roman Catholic Church for Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, and Judaism, and exhorted Catholics to engage in dialogue and collaboration with the followers of other religions; Whereas Nostra Aetate made possible a new relationship between Catholics and Jews worldwide and opened a chapter in Jewish-Christian relations that is unprecedented in its closeness and warmth; Whereas Nostra Aetate states that the Roman Catholic Church “decrees hatred, persecution, and displays of anti-Semitism, directed against Jews at any time and by anyone”; and Whereas Nostra Aetate clearly states that “No foundation therefore remains for any foundation or theological theory or practice that leads to discrimination between man and man or people and people, so far as their human dignity and the rights flowing from it are concerned.”; Now, therefore, be it

RECOGNIZED THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL’S PROMULGATION OF NOSTRA AETATE, THE DECLARATION ON THE RELATION OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH TO NON-CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS

(1) recognizes the 40th anniversary of the Second Vatican Council’s promulgation of Nostra Aetate, the declaration on the relation of the Roman Catholic Church to non-Christian religions;

(2) appreciates the role of the Holy See in combating religious intolerance and religious discrimination;

(3) encourages the United States to continue to serve in a leading role in combating anti-Semitism and other forms of religious
It is a historic declaration, and we should remember its essential message: the need for interreligious dialogue and religious respect, and that is a message that is still vitally important today.

Seen from this perspective, today, that anyone knows all the internal politics that went into writing it, it was known to be controversial.

Why should we be talking about it here in the House of Representatives? Why should we be talking about a Roman Catholic document? Is it even appropriate here? Well, certainly not in a worshipful or a theological or an ecclesiastical way, but this is an important document in our history that says a lot to us as Americans.

Remember, there is much that we honor in our country's history. There is much genius that we see in our founding documents, in our Constitution. One of the greatest accomplishments of this country was to establish freedom of religion, freedom for religious belief and religious practice, and freedom from religion. That is rare, even today. It truly was a stroke of genius by our Founders. And, as so much in our constitutional heritage it is still a work in progress.

Freedom of religion, freedom for religion, freedom from religion are concepts that are hard to incorporate into our lives. We are not talking about simple tolerance, but a recognition that if we are a nation conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all are created equal, then it is not enough just to recognize the right of each other to exist, but as a nation we must promote the spiritual good that comes from learning from and drawing on and building up each other. So it is indeed appropriate that
we in this body, as we wrestle with the modern-day embodiment of the ideas of our Founders, that we recognize this historic document. It was a bold and courageous document.

Mr. Speaker, it is hard to face some obtrusive, obnoxious, objectionable, and offensive kind of a view, so that one might have. It is bold and courageous to say that another’s fundamental faith and belief has validity, because that can only raise questions about the meaning of one’s own belief. This was a courageous document.

None who had his confirmation, heritage, upbringings, and religious practice is neither Roman Catholic nor Jewish, but the change that this made in America certainly has improved my life and the life of every American. Anti-Semitism has been a poison that has from time to time surfaced in our country. Certainly, we see it on the rise in too many places around the world today. But this document put a check on the official sanction of intolerance, and it has led to a number of improvements.

Father John Pawlikowski, pointed out that this year Nostra Aetate has led to a cleansing of educational materials, and the removal of hateful and bigotry language that previously appeared. It has led to mutual recognition of the spiritual value of others’ religious sacred writings of others; it has led to a fundamental rethinking of the relationship between the church and other religions, a process that is still under way.

It led to Pope John Paul’s visit to the Auschwitz death camp when he spoke about the memory of the people whose sons and daughters were intended for total extermination. He said that it is not permissible for anyone to pass by the inscriptions there with indifference.

It led to his unprecedented visit to a synagogue in Rome in 1986, and to Pope John Paul’s visit to the Holy Land, including Israel and Palestine. It led to a pivotal moment when he shook hands with Prime Minister Ehud Barak. It led to the moment when he walked across the plaza at the western wall and intoned his handwritten prayer expressing Christian regret for the wrongs done to the Jewish people.

This had reverberations all around the world and certainly here in the United States, the country built on the concept of liberty and religious freedom.

This morning on public radio, a young man presented his essay called “This I Believe.” Eboo Patel is the founder and executive director of the Interfaith Youth Corps, a Chicago-based organization fostering the international interfaith youth movement. He pointed out that when he attended high school in the western suburbs of Chicago not many years ago, he, as a Hindu, his lunch with a Jew, a Mormon, a Catholic, and a Lutheran. They were all devout to a degree, he said, but they never really talked about religion. They all knew that they had some differences in their permitted diets and certain times that they could not eat certain things. He was comfortable in his tolerance for the others. But then he went on to talk about the most painful recollection of his life, the courageous comments about his friend to go unchallenged. He quoted the great American poet Gwendolyn Brooks: “We are each other’s business; we are each other’s harvest; we are each other’s magnitude and bond.”

He said that we cannot go back in time and take away the suffering of my Jewish friend, but through action, I can prevent it from happening to others.”

Martin Luther King in a different, but related, matter said, “Through the laws that we pass, such as we pass in this body, “we cannot change a person’s heart. But,” he said, “we can restrain the heartless.”

Like Mr. Patel, none of us can go back, but we can look back and we can see the progress that has been made in the last 40 years to fulfill the spirit of Nostra Aetate; and we can continue every day to take action to ensure that it does not happen in our schools, in our communities, in our cities and towns.

Nostra Aetate was not empty sentimentality; it was historic, important, and effective. It made a difference in the history of the world. As Rabbi David Rosen, president of the American Jewish Committee’s Interreligious Department, wrote, “Even if the effect of this transformation has not fully reached the rank and file around the world, its ramifications cannot be underestimated, and there is much to give thanks for on this anniversary. The anniversary 40 years ago at the end of October is well worth recognizing.”

Nostra Aetate was the first statement on interreligious respect that had been issued in the 2,000-year history of the church. Rabbi Gary Bretton Granattoor, Director of Interfaith Affairs at the Anti-Defamation League, reminded the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) and me that the pilgrimage out of the wilderness took 40 years from Egypt to Sinai to Canaan. He said that it is not surprising that in 40 years, we have not fully achieved the vision of Pope John XXIII around the world or here in this country, but we have made enormous progress. We have demanded that the church and all people of faith examine themselves anew in relation to other peoples of faith.

We need to ensure we carry this message of religious respect to all that we do here. We can learn the spirit of Nostra Aetate and take action to check religious bigotry, religious hatred and advance the American experiment—the American Dream—of a more perfect union, built not just on respect, but on an understanding that we are indeed a nation committed to liberty, dedicated to the proposition that all are equal, and all have something to contribute to America’s success.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers at this point. I would just conclude by welcoming also the resolution’s expression of support for the United States to continue to lead the fight against anti-Semitism and other forms of religious and racial prejudice and discrimination, and that people of all faiths have a critical role to play in that matter.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SENSATE PAUL SIMON WATER FOR THE POOR ACT OF 2005 Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1973) to make access to safe water and sanitation for developing countries a specific policy objective of the United States foreign assistance programs, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Speaker then proffered the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 260, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

SENATOR PAUL SIMON WATER FOR THE POOR ACT OF 2005

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1973) to make access to safe water and sanitation for developing countries a specific policy objective of the United States foreign assistance programs, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 1973

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Senator Paul Simon Water for the Poor Act of 2005”.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress makes the following findings:

(1) Water-related diseases are a human tragedy, killing up to five million people annually, preventing millions of people from leading healthy lives, and undermining development efforts.

(2) A child dies an average of every 15 seconds because of lack of access to safe water and adequate sanitation.

(3) In the poorest countries in the world, one out of five children dies from a preventable, water-related disease.

(4) Lack of access to safe drinking water, inadequate sanitation, and poor hygiene practices are directly responsible for the vast majority of diarrheal diseases which kill over two million children each year.

(5) At any given time, half of all people in the developing world are suffering from one or more of the main diseases associated with inadequate provision of water supply and sanitation services.

(6) Over 1.1 billion people, one in every six people in the world, lack access to safe drinking water.

(7) Nearly 2.6 billion people, two in every five people in the world, lack access to basic sanitation services.