

Tuesday, February 17, 2009.

Met according to adjournment, at eleven o'clock A.M., in an Informal Session, with Ms. Reinstein of Revere in the Chair (having been appointed by the Speaker, under authority conferred by Rule 5, to perform the duties of the Chair).

Prayer was offered by the Reverend Robert F. Quinn, C.S.P., Chaplain of the House, as follows:

Eternal God, the Ultimate Source of Goodness and Truth, we look to You for guidance and direction as we address our legislative responsibilities and our personal daily tasks and routine. We pray for Your assistance as we make our choices and select our options in these difficult and uneasy economic times. Grant us the ability to build confidence, trust and goodwill in the minds and the hearts of the people we serve. Teach us to work together in our common effect to make our communities and neighborhoods safe, civil, drug free and conducive to family life.

In making decisions inspire us to base our choices on accurate data, sound principles and on promoting the common good. In celebrating the birthdays of two great presidents, Lincoln and Washington, may we carry on their spirit of patriotism, their concern for the freedom and the dignity of each individual.

Grant Your blessings to the Speaker, the members and employees of this House and their families. Amen.

At the request of the Chair (Ms. Reinstein), the members, guests and employees joined with her in reciting the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

Resolutions.

The following resolutions (filed with the Clerk) were referred, under Rule 85, to the committee on Rules:

Resolutions (filed by Ms. Peake of Provincetown) congratulating Conor Benoit on receiving the Eagle Award of the Boy Scouts of America;

Resolutions (filed by Mr. Scaccia of Boston) congratulating the Honorable Milton L. Wright, Jr. upon the occasion of his retirement from the Roxbury District Court; and

Resolutions (filed by Ms. Wolf of Cambridge) congratulating Oylan Dong of Cambridge on receiving the 2009 Prudential Spirit of Community Award;

Mr. Binienda of Worcester, for the committee on Rules, reported, in each instance, that the resolutions ought to be adopted. Under suspension of the rules, in each instance, on motion of Ms. Story of Amherst, the resolutions (reported by the committee on Bills in the Third Reading to be correctly drawn) were considered forthwith; and they were adopted.

Paper from the Senate.

The following order, adopted by the Senate, was considered forthwith, under suspension of the rules, on motion of Ms. Wolf of Cambridge, and it was adopted, in concurrence:

Whereas, Leaders of the United States Congress have announced agreement on an economic recovery bill that contains significant federal funding for Massachusetts; and

Whereas, Massachusetts is well-poised to utilize these funds quickly and efficiently to stimulate the local economy and create jobs; and

Whereas, It is anticipated that some of the funding will be available to spend at the discretion of the Governor for infrastructure projects, and that the disposition of other federal funds, such as enhanced Medicaid money, would be determined by the General Court through the budgetary process; and

Whereas, No matter the path that the federal stimulus money takes in Massachusetts, it is essential that there is proper oversight by state government to ensure that federal taxpayer dollars are being used effectively and appropriately for the short-term and long-term benefit of the citizens of the Commonwealth; therefore be it

Ordered, That the General Court establishes a special standing committee on Federal Stimulus Oversight. This temporary legislative committee will: perform on-going review of federal stimulus spending in Massachusetts; coordinate efforts with the Administration to maximize federal assistance for Massachusetts; ensure compliance with federal requirements on stimulus spending; and review current state laws, regulations and policies in order to make recommendations that will allow Massachusetts to access additional funding or to spend money more quickly to stimulate the economy; and it is further

Ordered, That the committee will have the ability to hold hearings on federal stimulus plans, audit expenditures, and will report back periodically to the House and Senate, while also working collaboratively with the Governor, the Attorney General, the Inspector General, and the Auditor to ensure transparency and accountability for federal stimulus spending; and it is further

Ordered, That the committee will consist of 18 persons. The committee shall be chaired by the chairs of the House and Senate committees on Post Audit and Oversight and shall be vice-chaired by the assistant vice chairs of the House and Senate committees on Ways and Means. Other members of the committee shall include: the chairs of the House and Senate committees on Bonding, Capital Expenditures and State Assets; the chairs of the joint committees on Economic Development and Emerging Technologies, Transportation, Education, State Administration and Regulatory Authority, Labor and Workforce Development; and an appointment by the respective Minority Leaders.

Order.

On motion of Mr. DeLeo of Winthrop,—
Ordered, That when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet on Thursday next at eleven o'clock A.M. Next sitting.

At ten minutes after eleven o'clock, A.M., on motion of Mr. Spellane of Worcester (Ms. Reinstein of Revere being in the Chair), the House adjourned, to meet the following Thursday at eleven o'clock A.M., in an Informal Session.