At 8:54 a.m., the chair announced that the house would stand at ease pending arrival of guests.

(Speaker in the chair)

MEMORIAL DAY TRIBUTE FOR OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM
(The House of Representatives and the Senate in Joint Session)

In accordance with the provisions of HCR 252, providing for a joint session of the senate and the house of representatives at 9 a.m. today, for the purpose of a Memorial Day tribute to fallen soldiers of Operation Iraqi Freedom, the Honorable David Dewhurst, lieutenant governor of the State of Texas and the honorable senators were announced at the door of the house and were admitted.

The senators occupied the seats arranged for them.

Lieutenant Governor Dewhurst called the senate to order.

A quorum of the senate was announced present.

The Honorable Tom Craddick, speaker of the house, called the house of representatives to order.

A quorum of the house was announced present.

The Honorable Rick Perry, governor of the State of Texas, was announced at the door of the house and was admitted. Governor Perry was escorted to the speaker's podium by Representative Frank Corte and Senator Leticia Van de Putte.

Speaker Craddick stated that the house and senate were in joint session pursuant to HCR 252, in honor of all Texans killed during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The joint session and gallery rose for the posting of the colors.

Speaker Craddick presented the Lone Star Girl Scout Council and Billy Russell, eagle scout from Troop 405, who led the pledge of allegiance.

The "Air Force Band of the West" from Lackland Air Force Base played the national anthem.

Speaker Craddick presented Father Bill Davis, Immaculate Heart of Mary Church, Houston, who offered the invocation.

Speaker Craddick requested the reading clerk to read HCR 261, commemorating Memorial Day 2003.

HCR 261

WHEREAS, This Memorial Day, the Texas Legislature and citizens across America pause to honor those whose patriotism called them to active duty in our nation's armed forces, and we also join in solemn remembrance of those Texans who have been killed during Operation Iraqi Freedom; and
WHEREAS, The date we now know as Memorial Day was first observed on May 30, 1868, when flowers were placed with reverence on the graves of Union and Confederate soldiers; exactly one century later, the United States Congress declared the last Monday in May to be Memorial Day; and

WHEREAS, Throughout our nation's history, Texas servicemen and servicewomen have distinguished themselves as individuals of remarkable courage, dedication, and determination; today we are proud to honor the men and women from our state, as well as those posted to military bases within our state, who have left behind their loved ones and the comfort and security of their homes to heed our country’s call to arms; during the Iraqi campaign, the members of the 78th Legislature have felt deep sorrow as a number of our fellow Texans have laid down their lives during the course of serving our country; and

WHEREAS, To date the United States Department of Defense has confirmed the deaths of more than 140 American soldiers and airmen who served in Operation Iraqi Freedom, including at least two dozen individuals with immediate ties to Texas; and

WHEREAS, Our state and our nation are fortunate to have men and women whose love of their country leads them to military service, yet the death of these heroic Texans is a sobering reminder that armed conflict is not without great and terrible cost; their deaths represent a tremendous loss to their families, friends, fellow soldiers, and the State of Texas, and their sacrifice in the meritorious service of our nation will not soon be forgotten; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the 78th Legislature of the State of Texas hereby pay special tribute to the memory of those Texans who died while serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom and those who came before them for their steadfast devotion to securing those freedoms all Americans hold dear; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the Texas Legislature also express its heartfelt appreciation to all the brave men and women who have served, and who currently serve, in the United States armed forces.

Lieutenant Governor Dewhurst introduced Governor Perry.

Governor Perry addressed the joint session speaking as follows:

We gather today in remembrance of 29 brave souls from Texas towns and Texas bases who gave their lives in service to freedom. They represented the best America had to offer. They came from our border towns, our urban centers, our rural communities. They shared a dedication to the mission, a devotion to their country, a determination to see their duties to their completion.

To the loved ones they leave behind—parents who gave them life and direction, children whom they loved without condition, spouses with whom they shared their hopes and dreams—we offer our deepest sympathy. We cannot feel as you do, the full impact of this loss, but our hearts are heavy with grief, and our thoughts and prayers are with you every day. May God grant you comfort in your time of sorrow and, with the passage of time, may you find solace and peace.
Though they are no longer here, you will continue to feel their presence in your life when a favorite song comes on the radio, during news reports of their comrades, in the laughter of their children. And this you can always know: Your loved one fought and died for a great cause—to free an oppressed people and to defend the cause of freedom.

America will always be indebted to them for their willingness to serve, for their bravery in the face of danger, and for their supreme sacrifice described by the book of John as the greatest form of love. Generations upon generations of Americans have learned through tragedy and triumph that freedom is not free. It comes at a great cost, measured in human lives. The lives we commemorate today are part of an enduring American legacy—those who loved freedom so much that they would pay any price and bear any burden on its behalf.

Many of them paid that price in the dawn of their lives, sacrificing their future for ours. In the words of Lawrence Binyon, the author of Poems for the Fallen, "They shall not grow old, as we that are left grow old. Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn. At the going down of the sun and in the morning we will remember them."

We gather here today to affirm that their heroic deeds will never be forgotten. We will remember always the lives they lived, the heroic deeds they performed, the gift they gave so we may be free. May they rest in eternal peace. May God comfort the loved ones they leave behind. And may the freedom they died for live on as a lasting tribute to their lives.

Senator Van De Putte and Representative Corte read the names of the fallen soldiers.

Governor Perry presented flags flown over the Capitol to family members of the fallen soldiers.

The joint session and gallery observed a moment of silence.

A cannon salute was offered by the Texas Army National Guard Salute Battery.

Taps was played by the "Air Force Band of the West".

Lieutenant Governor Dewhurst introduced Pastor Greg Matte, Breakaway Ministry, College Station, who offered the benediction as follows:

May God be our strength in times of trouble and grief. May we turn to him to fill our sense of loss. May your tears be seeds of faith that blossom in the tomorrows to come. We can trust that sorrow may last for the night, but joy comes in the morning because blessed are those who mourn for they will be comforted.

May we remember with a proud smile our brave soldiers who have fallen, and may we look forward with a deep trust in the future ahead. Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory and guard us with his peace that passes understanding.
"The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace."
(Numbers 6:24-26) Amen.

SENATE AT EASE

At 9:46 a.m., Lieutenant Governor Dewhurst stated that the purpose for which the joint session had been called had been completed, and that the senate would, in accordance with a previous motion, stand at ease until 11 a.m.

HOUSE AT EASE

At 9:46 a.m., the speaker announced that the house would stand at ease pending the departure of guests.

(Edwards in the chair)

The chair called the house to order at 10:30 a.m.

CAPITOL PHYSICIAN

The chair recognized Representative Hartnett who presented Dr. T. Dale Ragle of Dallas as the "Doctor for the Day."

The house welcomed Dr. Ragle and thanked him for his participation in the Physician of the Day Program sponsored by the Texas Academy of Family Physicians.

(Berman in the chair)

HR 1665 - ADOPTED
(by Giddings)

Representative Giddings moved to suspend all necessary rules to take up and consider at this time HR 1665.

The motion prevailed without objection.

The following resolution was laid before the house:

HR 1665, Commending Dr. Craig Thomas of Dallas for his service as optometrist of the day for the Texas House of Representatives.

HR 1665 was adopted without objection.

INTRODUCTION OF GUEST

The chair recognized Representative Giddings who introduced Dr. Craig Thomas.

HR 1180 - ADOPTED
(by Eissler)

Representative Eissler moved to suspend all necessary rules to take up and consider at this time HR 1180.

The motion prevailed without objection.

The following resolution was laid before the house: