Pakistan is a sick state. Democratic elections will not cure what ails Pakistan. However, the healing process cannot begin without them.

## EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take the time of the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LIPINSKI).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF ADDRESSING THE ISSUE OF H1B VISAS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DOGGETT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, I joined a number of colleagues this morning, some of whom will be speaking here this afternoon, about the importance of addressing the issue of H1B visas.

As I visit with local business leaders in central Texas, I know that the number one high technology issue in our community, and I think across this country, is work force development, the fact that we could have and do have already some serious shortages of skilled workers that can slow down the expansion that has fueled our economic growth throughout the country.

From offices regularly assisting our local high-tech companies in securing H1B visas, I also know that this is one of the answers that can assist us in addressing this worker shortage.

One of the reasons that central Texas prospers is that we live the lyrics of a great Lyle Lovett song: Oh, no, you are not from Texas, but Texas wants you anyway. And it is because we have been able to reach out and bring the best and brightest, not only from all over the country but from all over the world, that we have been able to keep our high-tech economy booming.

I support this bipartisan effort to get increases in the number of visas for highly-skilled high-tech workers to address this problem of worker shortage. It is a stopgap measure, however. We are only at March and we are already running out of the H1B visas. We need to solve the problem for our high-tech companies now, but we need to realize that this is not a permanent solution.

That is why this legislation also increases the fees for getting these visas, and then will plow that money back into developing our domestic work force and helping our teachers and our young people pursue careers in technology.

I believe that it is important also that we not only focus on the amount or the number of visas, or the amount of the money that will be charged to get them, but on the entire system that the Immigration Service and the Department of Labor use in addressing this issue.

I find it a system that is so plagued with bureaucracy that it is almost a daily problem for my office in Austin, as well as for the many companies with whom we work. It is time that that bureaucracy move into the electronic age in which our businesses operate at present.

□ 1630

So a principal focus of this bill is to see that the Immigration Service and the Department of Labor recognize that many people search for jobs now over the Internet and recognize those postings to fulfill the statutory requirements, and that we move to a system where one can file for an application on-line, where one can track an application on-line, and we reduce the level of bureaucracy in this entire process.

I am pleased to join in this bipartisan effort. I believe that it will be successful. There is already some legislation moving in the Senate. The White House has recently announced an interest in this topic. With good bipartisan support here, there is no reason that we should not be able to act and fulfill this very definite need in the very near future.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SHIMKUS). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

## H–1B VISAS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. SMITH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I rise also to talk about the H–1B visa issue. I think it is of critical importance that we expand those visas. But that is only part of the solution to that problem.

The bill we introduced this morning that the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DOGGETT) referenced has a package of ideas that I think will help deal with the larger issue, which is basically filling the high-tech jobs that we have a crushing need for in this country.

If we talk to any tech business, they will tell us their number one biggest concern is finding the people to do the work that they have to be done. We have to understand that the technology sector of our technology is the faster growing sector out there. It is generating jobs and generating a strong economy. If we can find the scientists and the engineers and the biologists to fill these jobs, we could grow our economy even more and secure our economic future. We need the people to fill these jobs.

The H–1B visa bill that we introduced this morning attacks this in two different directions. One, we go out and try to attract the best and the brightest from around the world. That is just common sense. Why would not we want the best, brightest, and most capable minds in the world here in the U.S., growing our economy and generating jobs for us. We need to expand those numbers and bring those folks in.

But we also increase the fee for those H–1B visas and will, therefore, generate $200 million in money to invest in educating our own population to fill those jobs as well. Because this is a long-term problem. Bringing in people from other countries is a short-term solution. We heed to educate our own workforce so that they want to be scientists and engineers and have access to those jobs so they start filling them as well.

This is absolutely critical to the future of our economy. I think we should support this bill in the House and in the Senate and hopefully move forward with our economic situation so that we can fill those jobs that need to be filled.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. DOOLEY).

Mr. DOOLEY of California. Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to be joining the gentleman from Washington (Mr. SMITH) and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. MORAN), the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. ROEMER), the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DOGGETT), the gentlewoman from California (Ms. ESHOO) and a number of other Members in the new Democrat coalition that are advancing a policy we think is very, very important, to allow the United States to maintain its relative advantage in terms of clearly being the leader in the world in technology.

This is absolutely critical for the United States, because when one looks at that technology sector, it is an area where we have created more jobs, where we have created more wealth, where we are creating more opportunities for our families.

What the H–1B legislation that we are introducing today is, in many ways, is going to ensure that the United States has the top 200,000 draft choices, the top 200,000 draft choices for the brightest, the most intelligent, the most capable engineers throughout the world.

We should feel fortunate as a country that these bright minds are interested in coming and investing their time and energy in creating jobs, in creating opportunities which are so important to the longer term future of this country.

We have also have made the commitment to ensure that we are investing in education and job training programs, which are going to ensure that we are developing the domestic talent that can eventually fill these positions.

We have come forth with a balanced approach, one which will continue to ensure that the United States is providing the leadership in the technology sector and also a commitment to provide up to $200 million, in education for