

sees the stands that we are taking on behalf of pregnant mothers and their families, providing justice and codifying common sense.

There is nothing in Laci and Conner's Law we should hide from. Indeed, so intuitive is the notion that an attack against a pregnant mother involves two victims, so essential to both natural law and basic human experience, that I would venture to guess that even most children in this country just assume that legislation like the Unborn Victims of Violence Act is already on the books.

This is a no-brainer, Mr. Speaker. Of course Laci and Conner's Law should be passed. Of course this House and this Nation can stand up for pregnant women and their families and acknowledge the injuries their children suffer at the hand of violent predators and set penalties accordingly.

Defending the family is part of our core agenda in this Congress, and passing Laci and Conner's Law is one of the ways we can fulfill it. After all, what kind of moral leaders would we be if, given the choice, we rejected the natural instinct of all people that they all have to recoil at news of violence against pregnant mothers?

Fortunately, Mr. Speaker, come Thursday's vote, we will not have to find out.

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#### SECRETARY OF EDUCATION SHOULD RESIGN

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

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Secretary of Education branded the 2.7 million teacher-strong National Education Association a "terrorist organization."

Mr. Paige's words were a hateful comment, beneath the dignity of any Cabinet Secretary. Rather than trying to achieve the highest standards of civility, setting the best example for American children, Mr. Paige's "teachable moment" was to stand in the White House and vilify the NEA and America's teachers by labeling them terrorists, in effect, enemies of America.

This vile language was no joke. It was not insensitive. In fact, it was a deliberate attack, an example of neo-McCarthyism at its worst.

The Secretary's words harmed public education, and they were clear in their intent to threaten the millions of American citizens that the NEA honorably represents.

It is time for Mr. Paige to resign. Resign now, sir.

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#### THANKING ERIC THOMPSON FOR 35 YEARS OF PUBLIC SERVICE

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend a South Carolinian who has been a model of public service for the last 35 years. Eric Thompson of North Augusta, South Carolina, retired this January from his post as executive director of the Lower Savannah Council of Governments, where he had worked since 1981.

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The Council is a regional planning and development organization serving 6 counties and 45 incorporated municipalities.

Mr. Thompson has helped the Lower Savannah Council secure nearly \$172 million in State and Federal grants for cities and counties in the region, which includes Aiken, Allendale, Bamberg, Barnwell, Calhoun, and Orangeburg Counties. He has worked previously as part of planning commissions for Aiken and Brunswick-Glynn County, and currently serves as a member of the Board of Directors of the National Association of Development Organizations, where he has served as president.

South Carolina is so thankful for Eric Thompson's dedication to our State, and I ask all of my colleagues to join me in commending him for his commitment to public service.

In conclusion, may God bless our troops. We will never forget September 11.

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#### BLUE DOG DEFICIT UPDATE

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

Mr. STENHOLM. Mr. Speaker, today we owe the country \$7,078 billion, being swept under the rug every day. Foreign holdings of our debt now total \$1.5 trillion. Foreign investors financed 70 percent of our record \$373 billion debt last year. In January of 2002, foreign investors held \$1 trillion of our U.S. debt; today it is \$1.5 trillion. Japan holds \$545 billion, and China holds \$149 billion of our debt. By far, the United States' largest foreign aid program is our interest payments to foreign investors, yet we continue to not want to change our economic game plan to do something about it. The largest single debt tax increase in the history of our country is being perpetrated on us today.

Mr. Speaker, \$7,078 billion, that is what we owe today.

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#### MAKE TAX RELIEF PERMANENT

(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, the economic numbers we are seeing right now do not lie. Our economy is growing and jobs are being created, but to stay on that track, we need to keep our economy growing. Growth encourages busi-

ness expansion and entrepreneurship, both of which lead to new jobs, and tax relief encourages growth. That is what we have seen this year.

When small businesses and working families keep more of their own money, they spend it far better than we do here in Washington. But many, even many here in this Chamber today, do not believe that. So we will hear lots of talk about repealing tax cuts and spending more. But, Mr. Speaker, that is the wrong way to go. Raising taxes will hurt this economy. Lower tax rates on American families will unleash the full potential of this economy.

We need to let American workers keep the reward for their hard work. We need to act this year to make the tax relief permanent. This will encourage long-term growth and allow families and small business owners to plan with confidence for the future.

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#### CONGRATULATING SENATOR JANE NELSON

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

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Texas State Senator Jane Nelson on her recent receipt of the Nathan Davis Award for Outstanding Government Service from the American Medical Association.

Senator Nelson is a Republican who represents senate district 12 in Texas. She is my senator. She was elected to the Texas Senate in 1992 after serving two terms on the Texas State Board of Education. At the board of education, future Senator Nelson led her colleagues on a fight to correct over 5,000 errors in textbooks across the State of Texas.

During all of this activity, Senator Nelson has also managed to own and operate an aircraft component manufacturing firm with her husband Mike, while raising a son and four daughters, three of whom I delivered.

Senator Nelson has made health care policy and advocacy for Texas patients a top priority. She wrote Texas' first comprehensive privacy law, she fought for HMO reform, and wrote the law returning physical education classes to help fight childhood obesity.

In the most recent session of the State legislature, Senator Nelson worked for liability reform in the health care industry and for relief of rising health care costs. She also sponsored prompt pay legislation, which simply requires HMOs to pay their bills on time.

This is definitely a high honor for Senator Nelson, as it would be for any elected official. In the years to come, hopefully, the Nation will be honoring more great leaders such as Senator Nelson for their hard work and dedication to worthy causes as health care reform.

Senator Nelson, congratulations. I regard you as a friend and mentor, and,