United States of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 110th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 153 WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, APRIL 17, 2007 No. 61

House of Representatives

The House met at 10:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. HOLDEN).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC, *April 17, 2007.*

I hereby appoint the Honorable TIM HOLDEN to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2007, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 30 minutes, and each Member, except the majority leader, the minority leader, or the minority whip, limited to not to exceed 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

ALTERNATIVE MINIMUM TAX REFORM

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Today, 4 million Americans are paying the price for the misplaced tax priorities of the Bush administration and the Republicans here in Congress. For the last 6 years, their obsession with assisting the top 1/10 of a percent and other favored special interests to reduce their tax burden has riddled the Tax Code with more loopholes, adding about a million and a half more words to that code. At the same time they have considered three mammoth and expensive tax bills in 2001, 2003 and 2004 that refused to address the alternative minimum tax inequity. They have made few modest additions with broad benefit like the 10-percent bracket but showered their real attention, their affection, and huge sums of money on those who need help the least. In the process, the $5.6 trillion surplus inherited by this administration has evaporated, to be replaced by $2 trillion more in additional national debt.

In the meantime, the alternative minimum tax, signed into law by Republican President Richard Nixon to ensure that the richest of Americans, who used tax shelters, pay at least some income tax, has morphed into a tax on millions of Americans who are caught because they pay their State and local taxes and are raising their families but largely leaves the most wealthy untouched.

Without extraordinary action, over the course of the next 3 years the alternative minimum tax will ensnare 32 million families, virtually every two-worker middle-class family with children. It won't bother the hedge fund manager or the NBA superstar but it will tax the teacher married to the firefighter with two kids. Because a tax shelter now means paying your local property and income taxes but does not include the tremendous tax advantage from capital gains, it won't hit the high-tech billionaire but will hit the postal worker and the nurse with three teenage kids at home.

The zeal to make permanent these tax changes has left the needs of tens of millions of Americans at risk. Indeed, the number one priority of the administration and the Republicans in Congress for taxation would not only make a true reform of the alternative minimum tax prohibitively expensive, it would rely on the ever-widening reach of the alternative minimum tax to finance their schemes.

On this day that millions of Americans are filing their tax returns and 4 million are paying the mutated, unfair alternative minimum tax, it is time to have that critical national debate on taxes in honest terms:

Should we tax people who work at jobs more than people whose money works for them?

Do we care about reducing the ability of some very privileged people to escape taxation?

What is our priority for tax reform? Is it to freeze the patchwork of special interest provisions over the last 6 years? Or to prevent 32 million families from an unjust alternative minimum tax, and then paying billions more to accountants just to calculate the damage?

I would hope that this is the last year that this unjust tax is used to provide unnecessary tax benefits for those who need them the least at the expense of those truly in need of tax relief.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 35 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until noon.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order at noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer:

All powerful God, yet so loving and merciful, be present and attentive to those most in need. A Nation tossed by violent storms and upset by tragic

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human events surrounds grieving families and young people in schools with its prayers today.

As faith-filled Abraham reveals Your own filial love as he gazed on his son Isaac, so we identify with any parent who groans in mourning over the lifeless body of a child. Bring Your love to bear upon the campus of Virginia Tech and all the families affected by the crackling sound of gunfire and then the unbearable silence that follows. Thrown by the rush of terror and anxiety, may the people of God now reach out to them in their overwhelming moment of helplessness.

You, Lord, through the prophet Isaiah have said You would care for the young: ''The Lord, our everlasting God, creator of the whole world, grows neither weary nor faint. Yet no one can fathom God with full understanding. He gives vigor to the weary, new strength to the exhausted. Even if the young and vigorous grow weary and faint, and stumble and fall, those who look to the Lord will receive new life. They will be lifted up on the wings of eagles. They will run and never tire. They will march and never grow weary.''

We believe in You and with You, Lord God, they will live in Your presence until we are all reunited, forever and ever.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House her approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. ROSS) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. ROSS led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

TAXPAYER PROTECTION ACT

(Mr. WALZ of Minnesota asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. WALZ of Minnesota. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1677, the Taxpayer Protection Act of 2007.

Every year thousands of taxpayers receive smaller refunds than they are entitled to. Our Tax Code is so inaccessible and complicated that many families do not claim all of the credits they so sorely need. The Taxpayer Protection Act of 2007 will improve communication between taxpayers and the IRS. By encouraging the Internal Revenue Service to reach out to those that may qualify for the earned income tax credit, we will save struggling families many thousands of dollars

Tax preparation is a multibillion-dollar business in America. It is useful to those who can afford it, but no one should be forced to hire an accountant or a preparer just to ensure that they can enjoy the benefits that many of us take for granted. Nor should the industry be able to prey on taxpayers with unfair refund anticipation loans.

This piece of legislation will improve the safeguards against fraud. By increasing reporting requirements on the IRS, the agency will become a vital component in the important fight against identity theft.

As many Americans rush to file their taxes on time this week, we all want to feel secure that the refund we receive is no more or less than we deserve.

TODAY IS TAX DAY

(Mr. KELLER of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. KELLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, today is tax day. Millions of Americans will write big fat checks to Uncle Sam. Who is paying the bill? The top 10 percent of households, families with incomes of $100,000 or more, pay 70 percent of all Federal income taxes. Coincidentally, 70 percent of all the new jobs in America are created by small businessmen.

The tax cuts of 2003 have created 7.8 million new jobs and have given us the lowest unemployment rate in four decades. Unfortunately, the Democrat budget proposal contemplates allowing these tax cuts to expire which will give Americans the largest tax increase in history.

Under the Democrat tax increase, small businesses will be hurt and 42 million families with children will see their tax bill go up by an average of $2,100. A married couple with two kids making $60,000 will see their taxes go up by 60 percent.

On tax day let's remember the hardworking families who are paying the bills to Uncle Sam and oppose all new taxes.

STRONG SUPPORT FOR THE TAXPAYER PROTECTION ACT

(Mr. YARMUTH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. YARMUTH. Mr. Speaker, we are all still numb from yesterday's heartbreaking tragedy in Blacksburg, Virginia. I want to take a moment to extend my thoughts and prayers and those of my constituents in Louisville, Kentucky, to the students and faculty, friends and family at Virginia Tech University. We stand with you today in outrage and mourning, seeking answers and sharing your loss.

I rise today in strong support of the Taxpayer Protection Act. Our tax system is tailor made for accountants and those who can afford to hire them. For those who must tread tax season alone, a dearth of regulation opens these citizens up to Internet scams and identity theft. A lack of easily accessible information ensures that money-saving provisions like the earned income tax credit go unnoticed and unutilized, costing Americans hundreds or even thousands of dollars.

The Taxpayer Protection Act changes that, turning a bureaucracy designed for accountants into a system made for Americans. This bill will ensure that Americans who benefit from the earned income tax credit are those who deserve it, not only those who are shrewd enough to find it.

Over the last 6 years we have seen a tax system that has worked very well for the extremely rich. I urge my colleagues to pass the Taxpayer Protection Act.

CONGRESS NEEDS TO MAKE TAX RELIEF PERMANENT

(Mr. WALBERG asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, over the past few weeks Americans across our country have taken time out of their busy schedules to complete their 1040s, 1099s and W–2s by the April 17 deadline.

They did so in many different ways. Some planned ahead and mailed in their forms well before the deadline, while others are scrambling to finish work on their taxes until late tonight.

Today, taxpayers in south central Michigan are still working to meet their tax obligation for 2007. While tax day may be today, the average Michigander will have to work until April 29 of this year just to pay his or her individual tax bill.

The $400 billion tax increase recently passed by Congress represents the largest tax increase in American history and could lead to a crippling economic recession.

Americans know best how to spend their hard-earned money, and rather than increase the tax burden, Congress needs to make tax relief permanent for hardworking American families.

By putting our fiscal house in order, this Congress can go a long way in restoring the trust of the American people and build a better, brighter future for our country.

EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE TAXPAYER PROTECTION ACT

(Mr. ELLSWORTH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. ELLSWORTH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today for two reasons. First of all, I want to extend my deepest condolences to the victims of yesterday's tragedy at Virginia Tech. The people of the Eighth District of Indiana will keep them and their families in their thoughts and prayers

I also rise today in support of the Taxpayer Protection Act. This bipartisan bill empowers middle-class Hoosier families in the fight against identity theft, and I am proud to support it.

Credit cards, on-line banking and shopping on the Internet have become a part of everyday life for many Hoosiers. These tools can make life easier for Hoosier families, but they also make Hoosiers vulnerable to criminals attempting to steal identities. With modern technology, a criminal can steal someone's credit cards, bank account and Social Security number and then proceed to spend thousands of dollars in someone else's name.

In addition to saddling families with thousands of dollars in debt, these crimes can erase years of good credit history, denying consumers the ability to buy a house or lease a car.

The Taxpayer Protection Act takes on this new threat and requires the Federal Government to notify taxpayers of any suspected identity theft. This bill is an important step in providing taxpayers the security of knowing their information is safe, and it will give Hoosiers the power to fight identity theft.

I urge my colleagues to support it.

TAX DAY

(Mr. BRADY of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, our prayers are with the Virginia Tech families as well.

Paying tax is bad enough, but the time it takes to figure them out, I think, is almost worse. You should not need an accountant to do your taxes or live in fear of making an honest mistake.

For our children's sake, we need to sunset this Tax Code and replace it with something far simpler, like a flat tax or, my choice, a retail sales tax. Can you imagine never having to fill out a tax form again in your life? Can you imagine having the IRS completely and totally out of your life?

Let's not forget we need to keep taxes low. Tax Freedom Day for Texas families is this Thursday. That is the first day since New Year's that Texas families will begin working for themselves, not for the government.

My constituents are worried that the new Democrat budget allows President Bush's tax relief to expire, which would raise taxes $2,700 a year on our families. Washington needs to tighten its belt before it demands that our families tighten theirs.

STOP THE TAX MONSTER

(Mr. PRICE of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, today, Americans will reach deep into their pockets and pay Uncle Sam. Today, they will finish slogging through the maze of Tax Code jargon, crunching numbers and filling out forms. Today, they will once again trust Washington with their money, because today, Mr. Speaker, is just like every other tax day before it.

Mr. Speaker, Americans are fed up with the status quo of today, and they deserve a different tomorrow. They deserve a tomorrow where they won't be taxed from the day they are born until the day they die and at every single point in between.

Americans deserve a tomorrow where saving and investing are virtues, not vices. Americans deserve a tomorrow where taxation brings efficient and responsible government. Americans deserve a tomorrow where doing their part and paying their fair share is enough. And they deserve a tomorrow where government respects their hard work and appreciates their sacrifice.

Only then will tomorrow be any different from today. May we all work positively for that new day.

□ 1215

THE VIRGINIA TECH TRAGEDY

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

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, with the report of rifle fire, America changed on the campus of Virginia Tech yesterday. A prestigious campus nestled in the mountains of Virginia became home to unspeakable acts of evil at the hands of a 23-year-old English major from South Korea.

The Bible tells us to mourn with those who mourn, and to pray for one another that we may be healed. I simply rise, very humbly, on behalf of the good people of eastern Indiana to assure the grieving families and community of Virginia Tech that we in Indiana are mourning with you and praying for you.

May God grant mercy to all those affected by this tragedy and grant wisdom to leaders in law enforcement and higher education as we apply the tragedy of Virginia Tech to protect our children and campuses in the future.

TAX DAY

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

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, today the tax man cometh, and the tax man taketh away on this very day. The American people circle this on our calendar. We look forward to it with dread because we know that this is the day that the money goes in to feed an inefficient and ineffective, many times, Federal Government.

The current Congress has voted for tax increases at every single turn. They voted for more spending while eliminating tax reductions for middle-class American families. They are getting rid of the deductions that have helped jump start the economy. The simple truth is that liberals want to take more money out of your pocket and put it into the Federal Government.

In my State, my fellow Tennesseans can expect to pay more than $2,600 per year in coming years, thanks to the hold-on-to-your-wallet Congress that is in action today.

My colleagues and I at the Republican Study Committee have recently proposed a taxpayer bill of rights that protects the taxpayer.

It includes:

1. The right to have a Federal Government that does not grow beyond their ability to pay for it.

2. The right to receive back each dollar that they entrust to the Government for their retirement.

3. The right to expect the Government to balance the budget without having their taxes raised.

4. And the right to have a right to a simple, fair tax code that they can understand.

WILBERFORCE

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, throughout this year we will celebrate the work to end one of humanity's worst acts of injustice. It was 200 years ago that William Wilberforce and his friends finally saw success in their attempt to end the British slave trade after 20 years of failed attempts.

To mark the anniversary of this tremendous accomplishment, a number of efforts are under way to inform people about this often forgotten hero of humanity. A wonderful movie about the life of Wilberforce entitled ''Amazing Grace'' has been released in theaters. Another documentary on his life and efforts, entitled ''The Better Hour,'' is expected to air on public television this fall.

I have introduced a resolution in this body honoring his life and accomplishments. Yesterday, a contest was announced for high school students challenging them to follow Wilberforce's example by pursuing efforts to end modern-day slavery trafficking in men, women and children, which still plagues the world.

All of these events remind us that individuals of character and integrity really can change the world by fighting to end injustice and exploitation. That truth inspired Wilberforce in his day, and it should continue to inspire us today.

THE HATE CRIMES BILL

(Mr. GOHMERT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, our thoughts and prayers, I know, from all of us here in the House go out to the

families of those harmed and the families of those who were murdered there at Virginia Tech. We do extend our sympathies.

It seems like it would be inappropriate to bring up legislation that we are going to have a hearing on today, hate crimes. The hate crimes bill we take up will say we should protect more those with gender identity issues, with homosexuality issues, things like that, than college students, because the message of the bill is this: the hate crimes legislation says the majority of the Congress says that if you are going to hurt someone, if you are going to shoot them, brutalize them, please, make it a random, senseless act of violence like in Virginia. Don't hate them while you're hurting them.

That is a ridiculous message to send with legislation and I hope we will rethink it.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ROSS). 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 later today.

WILD SKY WILDERNESS ACT OF 2007

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 886) to enhance ecosystem protection and the range of outdoor opportunities protected by statute in the Skykomish River valley of the State of Washington by designating certain lower-elevation Federal lands as wilderness, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 886

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 ''Wild Sky Wilderness Act of 2007''.

SEC. 2. ADDITIONS TO THE NATIONAL WILDERNESS PRESERVATION SYSTEM.

(a) ADDITIONS.—The following Federal lands in the State of Washington are hereby designated as wilderness and, therefore, as components of the National Wilderness Preservation System: certain lands which comprise approximately 106,000 acres, as generally depicted on a map entitled ''Wild Sky Wilderness Proposal'' and dated February 6, 2007, which shall be known as the ''Wild Sky Wilderness''.

(b) MAP AND LEGAL DESCRIPTIONS.—As soon as practicable after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture shall file a map and a legal description for the wilderness area designated under this Act with the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate and the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives. The map and description shall have the same force and effect as if included in this Act, except that the Secretary of Agriculture may correct clerical and typographical errors in the legal description and map. The map and legal description shall be on file and available for public inspection in the office of the Chief of the Forest Service, Department of Agriculture.

SEC. 3. ADMINISTRATION PROVISIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—

(1) Subject to valid existing rights, lands designated as wilderness by this Act shall be managed by the Secretary of Agriculture in accordance with the Wilderness Act (16 U.S.C. 1131 et seq.) and this Act, except that, with respect to any wilderness areas designated by this Act, any reference in the Wilderness Act to the effective date of the Wilderness Act shall be deemed to be a reference to the date of enactment of this Act.

(2) To fulfill the purposes of this Act and the Wilderness Act and to achieve administrative efficiencies, the Secretary of Agriculture may manage the area designated by this Act as a comprehensive part of the larger complex of adjacent and nearby wilderness areas.

(b) NEW TRAILS.—

(1) The Secretary of Agriculture shall consult with interested parties and shall establish a trail plan for Forest Service lands in order to develop—

(A) a system of hiking and equestrian trails within the wilderness designated by this Act in a manner consistent with the Wilderness Act (16 U.S.C. 1131 et seq.); and

(B) a system of trails adjacent to or to provide access to the wilderness designated by this Act.

(2) Within two years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture shall complete a report on the implementation of the trail plan required under this Act. This report shall include the identification of priority trails for development.

(c) REPEATER SITE.—Within the Wild Sky Wilderness, the Secretary of Agriculture is authorized to use helicopter access to construct and maintain a joint Forest Service and Snohomish County telecommunications repeater site, in compliance with a Forest Service approved communications site plan, for the purposes of improving communications for safety, health, and emergency services.

(d) FLOAT PLANE ACCESS.—As provided by section 4(d)(1) of the Wilderness Act (16 U.S.C. 1133(d)(1)), the use of floatplanes on Lake Isabel, where such use has already become established, shall be permitted to continue subject to such reasonable restrictions as the Secretary of Agriculture determines to be desirable.

(e) EVERGREEN MOUNTAIN LOOKOUT.—The designation under this Act shall not preclude the operation and maintenance of the existing Evergreen Mountain Lookout in the same manner and degree in which the operation and maintenance of such lookout was occurring as of the date of enactment of this Act.

SEC. 4. AUTHORIZATION FOR LAND ACQUISITION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Agriculture is authorized to acquire lands and interests therein, by purchase, donation, or exchange, and shall give priority consideration to those lands identified as ''Priority Acquisition Lands'' on the map described in section 2(a). The boundaries of the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest and the Wild Sky Wilderness shall be adjusted to encompass any lands acquired pursuant to this section.

(b) ACCESS.—Consistent with section 5(a) of the Wilderness Act (16 U.S.C. 1134(a)), the Secretary of Agriculture shall ensure adequate access to private inholdings within the Wild Sky Wilderness.

(c) APPRAISAL.—Valuation of private lands shall be determined without reference to any restrictions on access or use which arise out of designation as a wilderness area as a result of this Act.

SEC. 5. LAND EXCHANGES.

The Secretary of Agriculture shall exchange lands and interests in lands, as generally depicted on a map entitled ''Chelan County Public Utility District Exchange'' and dated May 22, 2002, with the Chelan County Public Utility District in accordance with the following provisions:

(1) If the Chelan County Public Utility District, within ninety days after the date of enactment of this Act, offers to the Secretary of Agriculture approximately 371.8 acres within the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest in the State of Washington, the Secretary shall accept such lands.

(2) Upon acceptance of title by the Secretary of Agriculture to such lands and interests therein, the Secretary of Agriculture shall convey to the Chelan County Public Utility District a permanent easement, including helicopter access, consistent with such levels as used as of date of enactment, to maintain an existing telemetry site to monitor snow pack on 1.82 acres on the Wenatchee National Forest in the State of Washington.

(3) The exchange directed by this Act shall be consummated if Chelan County Public Utility District conveys title acceptable to the Secretary and provided there is no hazardous material on the site, which is objectionable to the Secretary.

(4) In the event Chelan County Public Utility District determines there is no longer a need to maintain a telemetry site to monitor the snow pack for calculating expected runoff into the Lake Chelan hydroelectric project and the hydroelectric projects in the Columbia River Basin, the Secretary shall be notified in writing and the easement shall be extinguished and all rights conveyed by this exchange shall revert to the United States.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GRIJALVA) and the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. PEARCE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 886, introduced by the gentleman from Washington State, Representative RICK LARSEN, would designate a 106,000-acre wilderness on national forest lands in the State of Washington. The proposed wilderness, to be known as the Wild Sky Wilderness, has probably been more studied and reviewed than any recent wilderness considered by the Natural Resources Committee.

This is not a new matter. Nearly identical legislation was approved by the committee in the 107th Congress. This message was subject to a hearing in 2004, at which time the administration testified they do not object to its passage.

Further, similar legislation has passed the Senate in each of the last three Congresses. The proposed wilderness includes significant low-level elevation wilderness that is home to important fish and wildlife populations. This new wilderness would link with previously designated wilderness in the national forest and would be within a few hours' distance from half of the population of Washington State.

The Wild Sky Wilderness has significant State and local support in Washington. State officials, local elected officials, businesses, and church groups have all gone on record supporting the wilderness designation.

Mr. Speaker, the time has come to designate this wilderness. I would like to commend my colleague, Representative LARSEN, and other Members of the Washington delegation for their perseverance in seeking a wilderness designation for this magnificent area.

We support passage of H.R. 886 and urge its adoption today.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I would like to begin by complimenting Representative LARSEN for the hard work he has put into this legislation and for proposing wilderness only in his district. This would seem to be a basic sensible courtesy, but seems to be lost on some of his fellow Democrats.

With that said, the minority is opposed to this bill. During the markup in the Natural Resources Committee, the minority pledged its willingness to work with the majority, but this offer must have fallen upon deaf ears. In the future, we hope the majority can at least contact us after we make such a gesture.

Much of the area that would be designated by this bill does not qualify as wilderness. The 1964 Wilderness Act states explicitly that wilderness areas should be primitive and untrammeled by man. Yet the Wild Sky Wilderness Act includes several roads, a bridge, numerous culverts, and other man-made developments.

The proposal also includes areas with mining patents and lands identified by the Forest Service for timber harvest. Moreover, according to the Forest Service, road corridors within the wilderness are too narrow to ensure proper road maintenance and safe passage by travelers. Without sufficient corridors, landslides or other natural disturbances could permanently block or destroy the road.

Restrictions associated with the wilderness areas prohibit the use of mechanized or motorized activities, which would surely be needed to prepare a road. It is disingenuous for the majority to tout the public's ability to visit the Wild Sky area without protecting one of the main roads that would allow access to the Wild Sky area.

We are willing to work with the majority and have indicated our willingness to do so. In the future we hope that the majority would work with us.

Wilderness areas affect local communities, are permanent, and many times have ramifications or unintended consequences. We ask the majority to take these bills seriously and study them in good faith before hurriedly passing them on to the House floor.

Mr. Speaker, I have no additional speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to my colleague, the sponsor of this legislation before us today, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. LARSEN).

Mr. LARSEN of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of creating the first wilderness area for Washington State in over 20 years. The Wild Sky Wilderness will be unique, protecting 106,000 acres of the most pristine forests and streams in my district, while providing a clean and accessible place to hike, hunt, and fish.

The Wild Sky Wilderness Act has been carefully crafted, and it reflects years of community input. It will protect the peaks, forests and lakes of the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, as well as thousands of acres of lower-elevation forest and salmon-bearing streams. Wild Sky will protect more lower-elevation acres than any other wilderness area in Washington State, bringing wilderness closer to our communities and benefiting Washington families and businesses for generations to come.

Congress passed the last national forest wilderness act in 1984 when a bipartisan effort brought a bill to President Ronald Reagan for signature that created, among other areas, the Henry M. Jackson Wilderness. This Wild Sky Wilderness Act has strong bipartisan support as well. This bill has received strong support from local Republican and Democratic legislators, former Republican Governors, and our current Democratic Governor, Christine Gregoire. Additionally, State legislators and the Snohomish County Executive have expressed their support.

The Wild Sky Wilderness Act has local support. The former mayor of the town of Index, the closest local government to the proposed wilderness, has said that ''the Wild Sky Wilderness will be the best thing that ever happened in the valley.'' The cities of Monroe and Snohomish, both located on Highway 2 on the way to the Wild Sky, have passed resolutions of support.

The Wild Sky Wilderness Act has strong business support. REI, Inc., the Nation's largest consumer cooperative with its focus on the outdoor adventure, is an endorser, as are David and Lynn Meier, co-owners of A Stone's Throw Bed and Breakfast and A Cabin in the Sky vacation rental just down the way from the wild Skykomish wilderness. Additionally, the Snohomish County Economic Development Council supports this proposal.

This bill again marks the summit of a 5-year process of inclusiveness and compromise. My staff and the staff of Senator PATTY MURRAY, who is the bill's prime sponsor in the Senate, have worked over the last 5 years to address local concerns. As a result of this community input, the original idea of a 120,000-acre proposal has been whittled down to the 106,000-acre bill that we are voting on today.

The spirit of compromise has been a constant in this bill's development over the last 5 years. This past winter, as an example, massive floods altered the path of the Skykomish River, displacing and destroying parts of the primary road that snakes through the proposed wilderness area. Immediately, Senator MURRAY and I brought together Snohomish County, the Forest Service and local advocates to responsibly adjust the boundaries of the proposed wilderness to ensure that the road could be repaired and remain open in the future.

The spirit of compromise has earned the support of groups such as the Washington Sea Plane Pilots Association, local tribes, the Wild Steelhead Coalition, the Back Country Horsemen and the Washington Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities. Additionally, my office has received approximately 4,000 letters and e-mails in support of the Wild Sky and a petition with over 10,000 names in support. Over 5 years of collaboration and compromise has resulted in a bill that has gained broad support in the best tradition of past Washington State wilderness areas. It is time to create the next generation of Washington State wilderness.

Finally, I want to thank Chairman RAHALL and his staff, Jim Zoia and Rick Healy, for their tremendous help and unwavering support for the Wild Sky Wilderness Act.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, I would like to submit the following names for the RECORD. These people conceived, fine-tuned, negotiated, along with many other people, the boundaries of the Wild Sky. Without their tireless effort, we would not be here today, and we owe them our thanks as well.

Mike Town, John Leary, Larry Romans, Tom Uniack, Rick McGuire, Mark Lawler, Harry Romberg, Norm Winn, Don Parks, Charlie Raines, Jon Owen, Michael Carroll, Jill Mckinnie, Brandon Hall, Christian Gunter, Jasper MacSlarrow, Louis Lauter, Doug Clapp, Abbey Levenshus, Charla Newman, Amanda Mahnke, Kim Johnston, Jeff Bjornstad, Jaime Shimek, Karen Waters, John Engber, Rachelle Hein, Cindy Lewis, Christy Gullion, Nalani Askov, Michelle Ackerman, Jennifer Ekstrom, Doug Scott, Bill Arthur, Doug Walker, Bill & Sue Cross, Bob Hubbard, Conway Leovy, Mark Heckert, Kem Hunter, Aaron Reardon, Peter Jackson, Tracy Nagelbush, Brian Bonlender, Michelle Koppes, Dave Sommers, Amit Ronen, Carrie Desmond.

Finally I would like to thank the late Karen M. Fant, 1949–2006. Throughout her adult life Karen spurred thousands of citizens across the State of Washington to speak up for the protection of wild places and wilderness. Early on Karen recognized the need to bring together and involve local people in efforts to protect wilderness. To do so she cofounded

and directed the Washington Wilderness Coalition. She was instrumental in forming an effective statewide community of wilderness advocates. To those who knew her, she provided never-ending inspiration and enthusiasm to keep working for the goal of protecting wilderness and wildlands in Washington State. Above all, Karen saw the potential and opportunity in everyone to be involved, play an important role, and make a difference.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Washington, a member of the committee, Representative JAY INSLEE.

(Mr. INSLEE asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, this is wilderness the way wilderness is supposed to be done. I want to compliment Congressman LARSEN and Senator PATTY MURRAY for their efforts to shepherd and to fine-tune this bill. If anyone wants to see how to do a wilderness bill, come see how this one is done to take into consideration all of the local comments to pare this down to where we have the muscle and bone in this wilderness right now.

Boy, is it the right place to do it. I have a picture here of Gunn and Merchant peaks looking north from Baring Peak. I climbed Baring Peak, that is really just a little scramble, a couple of summers ago. What is so amazing about the Wild Sky Wilderness, it is both wild, and it is in the sky. It is only about 55 minutes from downtown Seattle.

□ 1230

About 2 million people can drive to this incredible Wild Sky Wilderness in about an hour, and it is a hidden gem. What you can say is that we have a new hidden gem that has been protected in the State of Washington to join the other jewels in the crown of our wilderness and our National Park System in the State of Washington, and we invite people to come out and see it. And if you come, what you will see is a very virgin country very close to an urban area.

Millions of people drive by these mountains on Highway 2 and don't even realize how wild this country is right to their left as they are going east towards eastern Washington. There are hardly even any marked trails in there. So if you want wild close to an urban area, come to the Wild Sky Wilderness. It is a very, very wonderful place to go.

But there is a second reason I want to point out why this wilderness is so important. The day I went up to the Baring Peak, I just happened to meet a father and two of his sons he was taking for a hike. He told me this is one of the earliest hikes going into Baring Lake. And if you could see the smile on this dad and the sort of interesting looks on these two kids, you know what wilderness is about, because today when we establish the Wild Sky Wilderness, we are giving a gift to these kids and their kids and their grandkids. So these kids could be in the same position as dad has been, sometime, to have a wilderness to take their kids and their grandkids to, and they will have the same smile on their faces 100 years from now as this family did that summer day up on Baring Peak.

I want to thank the people who have been involved in this, Mike Towns specifically, a fellow who has been working on this for over 10 years. He is a teacher in Redmond, Washington. I know he will have a big smile on his face today, too. This is a great day for the continuation of wilderness in the State of Washington. It is just south of the Jackson Wilderness Area. It is a tradition that Congressman LARSEN has followed and Senator Jackson, and a proud tradition of wilderness in the State of Washington. Congratulations.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Washington State, Representative BAIRD.

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Speaker, I simply rise to congratulate my dear friend and colleague, Congressman LARSEN, for his tireless efforts on this.

This bill has been around for several Congresses. It has had wide bipartisan support. And as my friend, Mr. INSLEE, said, this was done the right way. Mr. LARSEN held countless hearings, met with virtually every imaginable interest group. There were compromises, sometimes difficult, sometimes painful compromises. But in the end, we have a truly remarkable area of land set aside. And, Mr. LARSEN, our friends in the other body, Senator MURRAY and Senator CANTWELL, worked very vigorously on this, and I congratulate them. And, as Mr. INSLEE did, I also want to congratulate the many citizen groups who worked so hard on this.

I encourage my friends on the other side to recognize that no bill will be perfect, but this is about as good as you are going to get. This is an area definitely worth preserving, and the people on the ground support it, by and large. It is one thing to say that it is nice for people to set aside wilderness in their own area and not other areas, but doesn't that converse also apply in not opposing an effort of someone to set aside a wilderness in his own area? I would think the reasoning would suggest that it would, and I urge support from both sides of the aisle on this.

I would just finally conclude with this. It is not possible for us to construct or build new wildlands. We can't do that; it is not within our power. What is within our power is to protect the small remaining areas of wildlands for all the future generations. This legislation does an admirable job of achieving this. I urge its passage, and I commend my friend and colleague, Mr. LARSEN, and the entire committee for working on this.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California, Representative MCNERNEY.

Mr. MCNERNEY. Mr. Speaker, before I give my remarks, I first want to say that our thoughts and prayers today are with the students of Virginia Tech and their families.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Wild Sky Wilderness Act of 2007, and I thank my colleague, Mr. LARSEN, and other members of the Washington delegation for their hard work in moving this bill forward. The Wild Sky Wilderness Act shows what we can accomplish when small businesses, concerned citizens, and elected officials work to preserve the environment.

The bill allows us to protect more than 100,000 acres of environmentally sensitive land that includes habitat for species such as the spotted owl and the bald eagle. Hikers, skiers, and fishermen of future generations will enjoy the same pristine natural environment. As we protect our country's great outdoors, we also protect some of the greatest traditions.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is good for the economy, good for the environment, and good for families. I hope my colleagues will support this legislation.

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, today I rise as a cosponsor of H.R. 886, the Wild Sky Wilderness Act of 2007 to commend the House for taking long overdue action on legislation to designate the Wild Sky Wilderness. Today's approval of this well-drawn, meritorious environmental legislation is long overdue. I want to thank Congressman RICK LARSEN and Senator PATTY MURRAY for their tireless persistence on behalf of their constituents as well as Chairman RAHALL for his long standing support for the Wild Sky and for bringing this bill to the floor.

As a Member of the House Natural Resources Committee, I have been supportive of Congressman LARSEN's attempts to designate this area as wilderness and was continually frustrated at the failure of the previous Chairmen of that Committee to move this legislation and disappointed at the reasons given for inaction. Those arguments were without merit.

One of the benefits of working on this legislation was learning of the steadfast support from my constituents, the new Wild Sky Wilderness will be a popular and well-loved addition to my state's heritage of protected wild landscapes. It is overwhelmingly supported by my constituents, who live nearby. Indeed, the new Wild Sky Wilderness is within easy access of the people in the entire Puget Sound region.

This wilderness area, which is located in Snohomish County, enjoys enthusiastic support from the county council as well as our elected county executive. It also has the support of an overwhelming number of local elected leaders throughout the county, Democrats and Republicans alike, as well as a long list of local Snohomish County business owners. Over the years that the Wild Sky Wilderness has been before Congress it has earned enthusiastic editorial support from the local newspaper, the Everett Herald, as well as the major newspapers in Seattle and across the state.

I want to emphasize to my colleagues that in my State this is as popular and non-controversial a proposal as it could possibly be. I am pleased to mention the support this legislation enjoys from the Administration, including

the Agriculture Under Secretary, who in response to my questioning said that the President will sign this bill into law.

On top of its stunning wild character, the 106,577-acre Wild Sky Wilderness is particularly noteworthy because it embraces lower elevation lands than most of the existing Federal wilderness areas in our State. As a result, the new wilderness will afford statutory protection to headwaters streams and watersheds vital to the survival and restoration of healthy runs of salmon and steelhead in the Skykomish River, for which the area is named.

Passage of this legislation contributes to the important goal of protecting a greater diversity of biological communities in our National Wilderness Preservation System—including deep, forested valleys as well as towering, ice-clad mountain peaks. This lower elevation wilderness land will provide greater opportunities for year-round recreational adventures for Washington State residents.

During the congressional consideration of this wilderness proposal, our committee has dealt with a question that all too easily can mislead those who are not familiar with the 1964 Wilderness Act and of the consistent approach Congress has followed over four decades now in applying the protection of that historic conservation law to additional portions of our Federal lands.

As Congress acts on wilderness proposals such as this Wild Sky Wilderness legislation, it is important that we take care to follow the legislative history of the Wilderness Act of 1964, which was a bipartisan product of our committee, and the precedents consistently laid down over the subsequent more than four decades as Congress has enacted more than 130 laws under both Democratic and Republican leadership that have designated new wilderness areas across our country.

It is clear that the Wilderness Act reserves to Congress alone the decision as to what Federal lands are "suitable" for designation as wilderness. Subsection 2(a) of the Wilderness Act specifies that ". . . no Federal lands shall be designated as 'wilderness areas' except as provided for in this Act or by a subsequent Act." Subsection 3(c) further specifies that the President may make recommendations, but that "A recommendation of the President for designation as wilderness shall become effective only if so provided by an Act of Congress."

Despite this full history of Congressional action, some tried to question the inclusion of certain lands in the Wild Sky Wilderness because these lands showed fading evidence of past logging, old roads, and similar evidence of human use and impact. This objection, sometimes referred to as the "purity theory" of wilderness, is not based on an accurate understanding of the Wilderness Act and the intent of those who enacted it.

The new Wild Sky Wilderness includes some evidence of past human uses and impacts, including evidence of logging, old logging roads and logging railroad grades, and some culverts installed along those roads and railroad grades. In this way, it is no different than many wilderness areas Congress has previously designated as wilderness.

During a debate here on the House floor in 1969, Representative Morris K. Udall, the former chairman of our committee and himself one of the architects of the Wilderness Act, explained this practical approach intended by the authors of the Wilderness Act to the House:

> It would be nice to have our national wilderness system absolutely pure and completely free of any sign of the hand of man. But the fact is that we are getting a late start in this business of preserving America's wilderness. Logging has occurred; wood roads have been opened and later abandoned; cabins have been built which in time have decayed and fallen down; in the interest of public health and safety and to protect the natural resources there may sometimes be lookout towers and patrol cabins. All of these are imperfections within the wilderness. Yet how often is man able to create or to establish anything which is truly perfect? Very, very rarely—if ever. [Congressional Record, September 24, 1969]

Mr. Speaker, these remarks by Rep. Udall perfectly explicate the practical approach that Congress has always followed as we choose lands for protection in our National Wilderness Preservation System. He went on to further explain that:

> Congress has declared it is our national policy to preserve America's wilderness resource. Whether some prior existing imperfection—something less than absolutely purity—is to be accepted into the national wilderness system should be determined by whether its inclusion will significantly contribute to the implementation of this national policy of wilderness preservation or whether its omission will significantly obstruct this policy. [CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, September 24, 1969]

In keeping with the practical approach he has so cogently summarized, I want to emphasize that some of the low elevation lands within the Wild Sky Wilderness show evidence of past human use and impacts. We have made a careful judgment that inclusion of these lands is important to serve the overall purpose of wilderness protection. As chairman Udall would have put it, every acre in the proposed Wild Sky Wilderness exhibits "substantially all the value of wilderness." We should preserve it.

I would also like to take a moment to pay tribute to Ms. Karen Fant, who devoted her life to preserving wilderness and wildlife in Alaska and the Pacific Northwest. She spent four decades organizing for conservation, working for groups including the Alaska Coalition, Sierra Club, Olympic Park Associates, Wild Sky Working Group, Washington Wilderness Coalition, and Save Our Wild Salmon Coalition. Her activism spanned many years, crossed state lines, and extended as far as Chongqing, China, where she dedicated herself to developing a strategy to address environmental degradation in Asia as a board member of the Seattle-Chongqing Sister City Association.

Karen was instrumental in passing the 1984 Washington State Wilderness Act, which sets aside over one million acres of new wilderness. She also initiated the efforts to preserve Wild Sky. I cannot imagine a better way to honor Karen's conservation legacy than for my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 886, the Wild Sky Wilderness Act of 2007. Passage of this legislation is the perfect tribute to Karen's legacy.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GRIJALVA) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 886.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCERNING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FLOODING OF CELILO FALLS

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 217) expressing the sense of the House of Representatives concerning the 50th anniversary of the flooding of Celilo Falls.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 217

Whereas Celilo Falls, located near The Dalles, Oregon, was a great fishing and trading location for Indian tribes and has been called the "Wall Street of the West" by historians;

Whereas artifacts suggest tribes as far as Alaska, the Great Plains and the Southwest United States came to trade and fish at Celilo for over 10,000 years;

Whereas the Umatilla, Nez Perce, Yakama and Warm Springs tribes reserved their fishing rights at their usual and accustomed places, including Celilo, when they signed treaties with the United States;

Whereas on March 10, 1957, to provide hydroelectricity and irrigation, The Dalles Dam was constructed;

Whereas the completion of the dam inundated Celilo in six hours, quickly changing the way of life for tribes that fished at Celilo; and

Whereas tribes still live and fish along the river, exercising their treaty rights agreed with the Congress of the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives recognizes the 50th anniversary of the flooding of Celilo Falls and the change of life it imposed upon tribal peoples.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GRIJALVA) and the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. PEARCE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

The purpose of House Resolution 217, introduced by our colleague from Oregon, Mr. DAVID WU, is to express the sense of the House of Representatives concerning the 50th anniversary of the flooding of Celilo Falls. Celilo Falls was a unique natural feature formed as the Columbia River carved a path

through the hard volcanic rock east of the Cascade Mountains. On March 10, 1957, the Dalles Dam was completed, flooding the historic fishing and trading area around Celilo Falls.

For over 10,000 years, the falls had been an area of intense trading and commerce for Indian tribes from as far away as Alaska, the Great Plains, and the Southwest. The falls were also noted as an extremely abundant fishery, where tons of Columbia River salmon were caught, dried, and traded.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution simply seeks to recognize the 50th anniversary of the flooding of the falls, and to remember Celilo Falls as an important area of fishing and trading for many tribal peoples.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting House Resolution 217, and I offer my congratulations to Congressman WU for his leadership on this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

H. Res. 217 recognizes the flooding of Celilo Falls in Oregon. In 1957, the U.S. Corps of Engineers constructed the multipurpose Dalles Dam to provide much needed hydropower and irrigation for the Pacific Northwest. As a result of the dam, the falls were inundated, changing the way four tribes fished at the location.

This resolution recognizes the 50th anniversary of that change.

It is my understanding that this resolution will not be used for future litigation claims and legislative purposes, so we have no objection.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I yield as much time as he may consume to the sponsor of this resolution, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WU).

Mr. WU. I thank the gentleman from Arizona.

Mr. Speaker, for thousands of years, a village stood at Celilo Falls on the Columbia River, which today is the boundary between the States of Oregon and Washington.

Celilo Falls was known to Native Americans as a center for gathering and trade in the Pacific Northwest. It was so important that some have even called Celilo Falls the Wall Street of the West. Lewis and Clark described it as a great emporium where ''the neighboring nations assemble.''

Artifacts suggest that tribes as far away as Alaska, the Great Plains, and the Southwest of the United States came to trade at the falls for salmon and other goods. The trade was so extensive and the number of tribes who came to Celilo was so extensive that the number of languages spoken developed into a trade jargon known as Chinookan, and it was used among the people conducting business at Celilo.

Celilo Falls was also known as a great salmon fishery. Salmon were both sacred to and provided economic wealth for the tribes who fished in the area. Thousands gathered to fish and trade along the river.

Fifty years ago, Celilo Falls changed forever. In 1957, the Dalles Dam was completed a few miles downriver from Celilo. Once the dam was completed and the flood gates closed, Celilo Falls was inundated in just 6 hours.

The Dalles Dam was constructed to provide hydroelectricity, irrigation, and to enable navigation. The dams along the Columbia and other rivers created numerous benefits for the Pacific Northwest. The slack water created by the dams provided easy and safe river navigation upriver to deliver goods to the inland Northwest. Today, barges can travel as far as Lewiston, Idaho, because of the navigable waters created by the dams.

However, the benefits created by the dams changed a way of life for the tribal peoples who were the first inhabitants of the Columbia River Basin. While some may not remember Celilo Falls before the Dalles Dam was completed, its effects remain fresh in the minds of many of the tribes of the Pacific Northwest. Recently, the 50th anniversary of the flooding of the falls was acknowledged by these tribes. This event both mourned what was lost and celebrated what remains today, tribal stories and culture, a way of life. Attendees included tribal officials and tribal members throughout the Pacific Northwest, nontribal members, and various Federal, State, and local governmental officials. The attendees reflect the relationship of the various groups who now work together to manage the river for all those who live in and visit the region today.

This resolution seeks to acknowledge and commemorate the flooding of Celilo Falls. I urge my colleagues to support the resolution.

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. WU. I yield to the gentleman from New Mexico.

Mr. PEARCE. I would appreciate engaging in a brief colloquy regarding H. Res. 217.

Is it the understanding of the gentleman from Oregon that the enactment of this resolution will not be used for litigation or legislative purposes?

Mr. WU. The gentleman is correct. The purpose of the resolution is commemorative, and limited to an expression of the sense of the House of Representatives.

Mr. PEARCE. I thank the gentleman for that clarification.

Mr. WU. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, I would yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WALDEN).

(Mr. WALDEN of Oregon asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WALDEN of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, colleagues, today we memorialize and remember the events of more than 50 years ago when the gates closed for the first time on the Dalles Dam, and within 6 hours another wild and noisy stretch of the mighty Columbia River fell silent and serene in the name of progress.

Celilo Falls was also known as Wyam, which means echo of falling water, or sound of water upon the rocks. And, indeed, what a sound it must have been to hear the fourth largest river in America as it crashed over basalt rocks and cliffs. Lewis and Clark's journals refer to the falls as a place where ''the river turned on edge.''

This photograph here to my left is actually one my father took as a colorized slide before the falls was inundated. It shows the tribal members fishing from these wooden platforms, roped to the edge with ropes around their waist. They would spread sand out on the platforms because all the water made the platforms so slick, and then they would engage with the dip nets to hoist 40-pound, 50-pound, 60-pound salmon out of the river. The trick was not to get more than two fish in your net because that might be more than you weighed, and you ran the risk of being dragged into the river. Indeed, there was a young man who fell in the river, and later was rescued and saved because he ended up in a net and was able to be pulled out.

What a river it was and what a river it is. As the Columbia River passed over these falls, the sound could be heard from miles away. During periods of high water, nearly 1 million cubic feet of water per second would pass over these falls. Now, let me put that in comparison: Niagara Falls in New York, 200,000 cubic feet of water passes over those falls.

□ 1245

A million would have passed over these. But it wasn't just these falls, because you see the basalt rapids continued on toward the Dalles for 11 miles. So not only were there these falls, but there were other rapids and falls along the way. And it was more than just a roaring falls or an historic and bountiful fishing area. It was, as some historians noted, ''the Wall Street of the West.''

In his book, ''The Columbia River Salmon and Steelhead Trout, Their Fight for Survival,'' author Anthony Netboy described the scene this way:

''Here came Indians from the interior who had no fishing grounds of their own or whose fishing was poor, to trade for dried salmon, offering peltries from Montana, jade axes from the Fraser River area, horn of mountain sheep, baskets, rabbit or bearskins. The Klamath and Modoc peoples from Klamath Lake brought slaves and dentalia shells, their medium of exchange. Trade connections with the Dalles, says the anthropologist Philip Drucker, in 'Cultures of the North Pacific Coast,' stretched across the Rockies and into the Great Plains.''

This was one of the most significant fisheries of the Columbia River. In

''Recalling Celilo,'' author Elizabeth Woody writes:

''Historically, the Wyampum lived at Wyam for over 12,000 years. Estimates vary, but Wyam is among the longest continuously inhabited communities in North America. The elders tell us we have been here from time immemorial.

''Today we know Celilo Falls as a lost landmark. It was a place as revered as one's own mother.''

Woody goes on to write:

''What happened at Wyam was more significant than entertainment. During the day, women cleaned large amounts of finely cut fish and hung the parts to dry in the heat of the arid landscape. So abundant were the fish passing Wyam on their upriver journey that the fish caught there could feed a whole family through the winter. Many families had enough salmon to trade with other tribes or individuals for specialty items.

''No one would starve if they could work. Even those incapable of physical work could share other talents. It was a dignified existence.''

The tribes called themselves ''salmon people.'' And it is easy to understand why. In 1805, Lewis and Clark estimated seeing five tons of dried salmon stacked in a single village near the Dalles.

The dawn of the 20th century brought change to the area with the construction in 1913 of the Dalles-Celilo Canal, providing the first safe passage around the falls. Then in the 1930s and 1940s, more pressures built as down-river communities suffered from floods, river traffic increased, and a Nation at war needed more electricity to power its industry.

In 1950, Congress authorized the construction of the Dalles Dam, and on March 10, 1957, the gates of this river-blocker closed and within hours, silence overtook Celilo Falls, Wyam and the way of life known for centuries.

Now, plans for construction of the dam were battled by Chief Tommy Thompson as he and the tribal members knew that the end of the falls would mean the end of life as they had known it. But they could not stop the effort. Their village was relocated. The government paid tribal members in one-time sums of nearly $4,000, and promised sustained fisheries and access to new fishing sites.

Layfee Foster, of the Dalles, took this famous photograph of Chief Tommy Thompson and his wife, Flora, and their granddaughter, Linda George, whom I met at the ceremony at Celilo Falls last month.

I would like to read from Mr. Netboy's book again, as he eloquently states the last of the first salmon rites that were held in April of 1956. He writes:

''On Sunday, April 20, 1956, when the Dalles Dam was about to be enclosed and the Celilo fishery, dating back to a long forgotten time would be inundated, I witnessed the last of the first salmon rites at Celilo village. The day was warm and sunny, and hundreds of tribesmen gathered for this sad occasion on the banks of the Columbia, the women wearing multi-colored flowing dresses and scarves, and the men awkward-fitting store clothes. Emissaries of Tommy Thompson, chief of the host band, the Wyams, said to be over 100 years old, had to seek elsewhere than the Columbia for salmon because an early spring thaw in the mountains made it impossible to use the historic site to catch enough fish for the festival. They bought 400 pounds of salmon in Portland, and members of Warm Springs Reservation who had fishing rights at Celilo helped out with donations of venison and roots for the occasion.

''The stolid, bronze-colored chief sat at the head table in the longhouse, surrounded by silent and respectful tribesmen squatting on mats on the earthen floor. Outside, slabs of salmon were being smoked over log fires tended by women, just as when Lewis and Clark camped here in 1805 and smoked a pipe of peace with the chief.

''Chief Thompson blessed the first fish caught a few days before and made a speech in his native language that was charged with emotion. Before it was over, the vigorous old man was weeping. Although I did not understand a word, I could imagine the feelings that inspired him as he saw the last bit of land held by the tribe about to go underwater and the ancient picturesque fishery disappear. He had seen the white settlers pour into the valley, and the baleful impact they made on the natives' culture. The churning river where he had fished as a youth, from rickety platforms, would become a placid lake. There were tears in the eyes of many who listened to him.

''When the First Salmon rites were concluded, the chief permitted newsmen to photograph him with his younger wife, Flora. Usually the festival lasted a few days, but this time it was confined to one. There were bone games in the afternoon and dances in the evening. The next morning the Portland Oregonian reported an interview with Henry Thompson, son of the chief, who said, and I quote, 'When the dam is finished and there are no more fish at Celilo, my father will still live here and will die here. I too will die here. Both of us were born at Celilo, and here,' pointing to the Indian cemetery on a bluff of the village, 'amid the rimrock, we will be buried.'

''Tommy Thompson died 3 years later, and without him, without the roaring falls, and with salmon caught elsewhere, the First Salmon ceremonies held occasionally at the new Celilo village built by the Corps of Engineers on the bluff lost their flavor and meaning and were eventually abandoned.''

Today the Dalles Dam employs 150 people, generates enough electricity to power two cities the size of Portland, Oregon, helps control run-off in the spring. The power it produces makes no carbon emissions and is 90 percent efficient.

Today the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is rehabilitating the Celilo village, spending $13 million to build a new sewer plant, new houses, a playground, school and update the water and electrical system. A new longhouse was completed last year.

Today we memorialize the situation at Celilo, the loss of that great falls and the work that remains ahead.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) as much time as he may consume.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman's courtesy, and I am pleased to join with my colleagues from Oregon in recognizing the importance of the anniversary of the flooding of Celilo Falls.

Mr. Speaker, we have, in the Northwest, I think, in recent years, started to re-evaluate our relationship to native peoples and to the special sites that are holy for them.

I remember in my youth Celilo Falls when it was a site of the native fishing, going by on a train, watching the dip netting, pulling these fish from the falls. It was something that I didn't properly appreciate at the time. People in my own family were talking about the great dam that was about to be constructed, and using it as a metaphor for progress in our community.

Well, transforming the mighty Columbia River into a machine that has aided navigation and electric generation has had many positive aspects for the Pacific Northwest, but it has been devastating for the Native Americans.

Sadly, our history, since the treaty of 1855, has been one where we have not always honored even the provisions in those treaties to Native Americans. And particularly the site at Celilo, where we are talking about over 10,000 years of history, strikes special significance. It is an unparalleled meeting point for people of native tribes that, slowly but surely, now we are starting to recognize, starting to appreciate, the Federal Government is starting to invest in working with them to restore the heritage. I hope that this recognition of the significance of the 50th anniversary of the flooding of the falls might be another signal that we are appreciating our responsibility in partnership with native people, the need to work with them in terms of first foods, in terms of historic sites, in terms of restoring the spirit of partnership in those treaties too often that has not been observed.

I appreciate my colleague, Congressman WU, bringing this forward. I appreciate the Congress focusing attention on it today, but I hope it is the beginning of a more sustained effort to keep faith with our native people.

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, I cannot enhance or extend the word pictures given by my colleague from Oregon and would, therefore, reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, let me, if I may, inquire of the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. PEARCE) if he has any additional speakers.

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, I do not have other speakers and would yield back the balance of my time.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GRIJALVA) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 217.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

CENTRAL TEXAS WATER RECYCLING ACT OF 2007

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 609) to amend the Reclamation Wastewater and Groundwater Study and Facilities Act to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to participate in the Central Texas Water Recycling and Reuse Project, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 609

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 ''Central Texas Water Recycling Act of 2007''.

SEC. 2. PROJECT AUTHORIZATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Reclamation Wastewater and Groundwater Study and Facilities Act (Public Law 102–575; 43 U.S.C. 390h et seq.) is amended by inserting after section 16___ the following new section:

''SEC. 16___. CENTRAL TEXAS WATER RECYCLING AND REUSE PROJECT.

''(a) AUTHORIZATION.—The Secretary, in cooperation with the City of Waco and other participating communities in the Central Texas Water Recycling and Reuse Project is authorized to participate in the design, planning, and construction of permanent facilities to reclaim and reuse water in McLennan County, Texas.

''(b) COST SHARE.—The Federal share of the costs of the project described in subsection (a) shall not exceed 25 percent of the total cost.

''(c) LIMITATION.—The Secretary shall not provide funds for the operation and maintenance of the project described in subsection (a).

''(d) SUNSET OF AUTHORITY.—The authority of the Secretary to carry out any provisions of this section shall terminate 10 years after the date of enactment of this section.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections in section 2 of Public Law 102–575 is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 16___ the following:

''Sec. 16___. Central Texas Water Recycling and Reuse Project.''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GRIJALVA) and the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. PEARCE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

We support the passage of H.R. 609 and commend our colleague, Representative CHET EDWARDS, for his persistence and hard work to secure authorization for this important project.

The purpose of this legislation is to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to participate in the Central Texas Water Recycling and Reuse Project. This project would treat and recycle waste water generated by the City of Waco and six neighboring communities. Recycling and reuse of this water would decrease the strain on older treatment plants in the area and help meet future demands, providing reclaimed water for golf courses, landscaping, and other industrial uses.

The water recycling project identified in this bill will be eligible for limited financial assistance from the Bureau of Reclamation's title 16 water recycling program. Water recycling and desalination projects are proven technologies that can help stretch limited water supplies in areas such as Texas. The City of Waco is keenly aware that additional sources of water will be required to meet future water demands and should be commended for looking for sustainable solutions.

In the 109th Congress, the Subcommittee on Water and Power held a hearing on almost identical legislation. This legislation was subsequently passed by the House under suspension of the rules.

I want to express our full support for this legislation. I offer my congratulations to Congressman EDWARDS for his leadership.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

This bill authorizes Federal participation in a water reuse project in McLennan County, Texas. As central Texas cities experience rapid population growth and increased water demand, these communities are being proactive to better utilize their existing water supplies. We have no objection to this well-intended bill.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1300

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. EDWARDS), the sponsor of this legislation.

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, let me first begin by thanking Mr. GRIJALVA for his leadership and for his kind comments about our work together on this. Let me also thank Mr. PEARCE for his cooperative, bipartisan effort. These are the kinds of bills that don't fill up the press galleries, but they are certainly important to the folks in our communities throughout the country.

Mr. Speaker, our communities and Nation have a responsibility to be good stewards of our water resources. And that is why I introduced H.R. 609, the Central Texas Water Recycling Act of 2007.

This bill will authorize an innovative water recycling program in partnership with my hometown of Waco, Texas, and several neighboring communities. It supports efforts to manage water resources efficiently in McLennan County by strategically locating regional satellite treatment plants that will not only provide for conservation of our community's water supply, but by doing so efficiently, will help reduce costs to taxpayers.

The initial projects under this legislation can provide up to 10 million gallons of water per day, reuse water, thereby reducing the water demand on Lake Waco. Instead of wasting valuable drinking water for use in factories and on golf courses in the July and August heat of my district, we will be able to use lower-cost recycled wastewater for those purposes and save enough drinking water to supply 20,000 households in central Texas.

The bottom line is this: Being good stewards of our water supply, we will reduce water costs for businesses, save central Texas taxpayers millions of dollars, and encourage economic growth in our area.

I want to thank Chairman RAHALL and Ranking Member YOUNG for their support of this measure; and the subcommittee chairman, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, and the ranking subcommittee member, Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS, for their key role on this bill's passage. This is the kind of bipartisan effort, as I mentioned earlier, that shows what Congress can do when we work together on a bipartisan basis.

I also want to thank the mayors, city council, and staff from the cities of Waco, Lorena, Robinson, Hewitt, Woodway, Bellmead, and Lacy-Lakeview for their cooperative efforts that brought us here today.

Finally, I want to extend special credit to Waco's city manager, Larry Groth, a very special friend of mine, for his extraordinary leadership on this bill. Without Mr. Groth's leadership, hard work, and professionalism, we would not be here today. And as a citizen of Waco, I am grateful for his outstanding service to my hometown.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GRIJALVA) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 609.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

AUTHORIZING PARTICIPATION IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY WATER SUPPLY AUGMENTATION DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 786) to amend the Reclamation Wastewater and Groundwater Study and Facilities Act to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to participate in the Los Angeles County Water Supply Augmentation Demonstration Project, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 786

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

SECTION 1. AUTHORIZATION OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY WATER SUPPLY AUGMENTATION DEMONSTRATION PROJECT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Reclamation Wastewater and Groundwater Study and Facilities Act (Public Law 102–575, title XVI; 43 U.S.C. 390h et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"SEC. 16____. LOS ANGELES COUNTY WATER SUPPLY AUGMENTATION DEMONSTRATION PROJECT.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of the Interior, in cooperation with the Los Angeles and San Gabriel Rivers Watershed Council, is authorized to participate in the planning, design, construction, and assessment of a neighborhood demonstration project to—

''(1) demonstrate the potential for infiltration of stormwater runoff to recharge groundwater by retrofitting one or more sites in the Los Angeles area with features designed to reflect state-of-the-art best management practices for water conservation, pollution reduction and treatment, and habitat restoration; and

''(2) through predevelopment and postdevelopment monitoring, assess—

''(A) the potential new water supply yield based on increased infiltration; and

''(B) the value of the new water.

''(b) COST SHARING.—The Federal share of the cost of the project described in subsection (a) shall not exceed 25 percent of the total cost of the project.

''(c) LIMITATION.—No Federal funds shall be used for the operation and maintenance of the project described in subsection (a). For purposes of this subsection, pre- and post-development monitoring for not more than 2 years before and after project installation for project assessment purposes shall not be considered operation and maintenance.

''(d) SUNSET OF AUTHORITY.—- The authority of the Secretary to carry out any provisions of this section shall terminate 10 years after the date of the enactment of this section.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections in section 2 of Public Law 102–575 is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 16____ the following:

''Sec. 16____. Los Angeles County Water Supply Augmentation Demonstration Project.''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GRIJALVA) and the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. PEARCE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

The purpose of H.R. 786, sponsored by our colleague from Lakewood, California, LINDA SÁNCHEZ, is to authorize the Secretary of Interior to participate in the Los Angeles County Water Supply Augmentation Demonstration Project.

The legislation will authorize Federal financial assistance for a unique water reuse and conservation project in the Los Angeles area. The initiative will demonstrate that small-scale neighborhood projects can be built to increase local water supplies and reduce urban runoff pollution. Projects like this can help residents of southern California increase local water supplies, reduce our dependence on imported water from northern California and the Colorado River.

This is an innovative project and a good bill that deserves our support. I congratulate my colleague, Congresswoman SÁNCHEZ, for championing this legislation.

In the 109th Congress, the Subcommittee on Water and Power held a hearing on similar legislation. This legislation was subsequently passed by the House under suspension of the rules.

We strongly support H.R. 786, and I would like, once again, to thank and commend my friend, LINDA SÁNCHEZ, for her work on this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

H.R. 786 authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to participate in the design, planning, and construction of a water recharge demonstration project in southern California. To meet the needs of future population growth in this arid region, capturing storm-water runoff and recharging groundwater could substantially increase local water supplies.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from California, LINDA SÁNCHEZ.

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, let me begin by thanking Mr. GRIJALVA for being so generous with time. And I would also like to thank Natural Resources Committee Chairman NICK RAHALL and Ranking Member DON YOUNG, as well as Water and Power Subcommittee Chairwoman GRACE NAPOLITANO, for recognizing the importance of this bill, H.R. 786, the ''Southern California Water Augmentation Study.''

I would like to especially thank Chairwoman GRACE NAPOLITANO for her support on this bill and her leadership in moving it through the Natural Resources Committee.

I became interested in this effort because California and other parts of the country need to move forward on two very important issues. First, we must increase our groundwater drinking supplies. We can do this by improving the safe infiltration of surface water which seeps into the ground. Second, we must reduce urban storm-water runoff that can carry trash and contamination to our beaches and oceans. This water augmentation study addresses both of those issues.

Storm-water currently becomes contaminated by running off rooftops and roads and carrying that pollution into our oceans. Our study is assessing ways to safely absorb that water into the ground where natural purifying processes can take place. This will stem the flow of polluted water into the ocean and safely recharge our groundwater supplies. Simply put, this project is about taking the water that we lose and turning it into water we use.

This study will assess the potential of urban storm-water infiltration to augment our water supplies. It will determine the benefits, costs, and risks of infiltration. It will help us understand what conditions we need to make infiltration work and assess its potential for increasing our drinking water supply. At the same time, it will show us how to reduce water pollution, creating additional environmental and social benefits.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is designed to make southern California more water-self-sufficient and less reliant on imported water from our neighbors in the central and northern parts of our State.

This is a bipartisan effort in which there is agreement on the merits of the project throughout our government. I am very pleased that President Bush has included funding for the water augmentation study in his last four budgets, including this year.

Also, the Bureau of Reclamation has been extremely supportive of this project. In fact, they helped create it in the year 2000 because they see it as helping to solve the real problem we face in California and other, shall I say, ''water-challenged'' areas of the country.

Again, I would like to thank Chairman RAHALL and Ranking Member YOUNG, as well as the great staff on the

House Resources Committee; and to thank Representative NAPOLITANO for her unyielding support of this bill.

In 1907, Theodore Roosevelt said, ''The conservation of natural resources is the fundamental problem. Unless we solve that problem, it will avail us little to solve all others.'' With your help, Southern California can make significant progress toward improving its water resources management.

I urge approval of this legislation.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GRIJALVA) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 786.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ESTABLISHING DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM TO FACILITATE LANDSCAPE RESTORATION PROGRAMS WITHIN CERTAIN UNITS OF NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 309) to direct the Secretary of the Interior to establish a demonstration program to facilitate landscape restoration programs within certain units of the National Park System established by law to preserve and interpret resources associated with American history, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 309

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

SECTION 1. PURPOSE.

The purpose of this Act is to establish a demonstration program to facilitate landscape restoration programs within those units of the National Park System established by statute to preserve and interpret resources associated with American military history.

SEC. 2. DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.

(a) AUTHORIZATION.—The Secretary of the Interior (hereafter in this Act referred to as the ''Secretary''), acting through the Director of the National Park Service, shall carry out a demonstration program that provides that receipts from timber sales shall be retained for expenditure within units of the National Park System from which the timber is removed as part of an approved plan for the restoration or protection of park resources or values.

(b) PARTICIPATION.—The Secretary shall permit each of the 24 National Battlefields, National Battlefield Parks, National Military Parks, and National Battlefield Sites in existence on the date of the enactment of this Act to participate in the demonstration program authorized by subsection (a) if the unit has in place, before the date of the enactment of this Act, a general management plan, cultural landscape plan, or other resources management plan approved pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (43 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.), that identifies specific timber for removal for purposes of cultural or historic landscape restoration or fuel load reduction.

(c) USE OF RECEIPTS.—Each unit selected to participate in the demonstration program authorized under subsection (a) shall retain receipts from the sale or disposal of timber removed from that unit. Such receipts shall be available for expenditure without further appropriation or fiscal year limitation for the following purposes only:

(1) Landscape restoration within the unit.

(2) Interpretive services within the unit.

(3) Eradication of disease, insects, or invasive species within the unit.

(4) Fuel load reduction within the unit.

SEC. 3. REPORT.

Two years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit a report to the House Natural Resources Committee and the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources that contains the results of the demonstration program authorized under this Act, including—

(1) a detailed accounting of the receipts generated in each unit by the demonstration program;

(2) the expenditure by each unit of those receipts; and

(3) any resource or other impacts, positive or negative, on each participating unit.

SEC. 4. SUNSET.

The authority granted to the Secretary in section 2 shall expire 4 years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GRIJALVA) and the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. PEARCE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Many units of the National Park System were established to conserve U.S. military history. All these units have restoration of their historic landscapes as an important management goal. This restoration entails removal of landscape features, including trees, which were not present at the time of the relevant historic event. However, removal of any natural resources from a National Park must be undertaken extremely carefully. In addition, many of these park units report a lack of funding for such work.

H.R. 309, introduced by my colleague on the Natural Resources Committee, Representative STEVE PEARCE, would create a revenue source for such projects by allowing individual units to retain proceeds from the sale of timber removed from the unit. Importantly, the legislation is narrowly written as a demonstration project to apply within a defined list of 24 military parks and to prevent any change to existing environmental requirements governing logging on NPS land.

Representative PEARCE has worked tirelessly on behalf of this legislation and is to be commended for his efforts.

We strongly support the passage of H.R. 309, as amended, by the House today.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I appreciate the comments by the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GRIJALVA).

H.R. 309, introduced by me, would establish an innovative 4-year demonstration program in the National Park Service to improve and expedite landscape restoration programs within 24 units of the National Park System to better preserve and interpret resources associated with American military history.

One of the tenets of the Park Service is to preserve the look of national battlefields as they existed at the time of the conflict. Often this involves removing trees and other woody debris that encroach on sightlines. Under current law, these trees are removed and any funds from their sale are returned to the General Treasury.

As a part of this new program, selected parks would be permitted to retain receipts from any timber sales and use those funds on the respective landscape restoration programs and interpretive services. While this would not involve a lot of money, every little bit helps, especially given the National Park System maintenance backlog.

This noncontroversial bill was favorably reported last Congress by unanimous consent, and I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 309.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GRIJALVA) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 309, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SOUTHERN NEVADA READINESS CENTER ACT

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 815) to provide for the conveyance of certain land in Clark County, Nevada, for use by the Nevada National Guard.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 815

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 ''Southern Nevada Readiness Center Act''.

SEC. 2. NEVADA NATIONAL GUARD LAND CONVEYANCE, CLARK COUNTY, NEVADA.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, Clark County, Nevada, may convey, without consideration, to the Nevada Division of State Lands for use by the Nevada National Guard between 35 and 50 acres of land in Clark County, Nevada, as generally depicted on the map entitled ''Southern Nevada Readiness Center Act'' and dated October 4, 2005.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GRIJALVA) and the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. PEARCE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

H.R. 815, introduced by the gentleman from Nevada, Representative JON PORTER, states that notwithstanding any other provision of law, Clark County, Nevada, may convey, without consideration, between 35 and 50 acres of land for the use by the Nevada National Guard as a Readiness Center.

The land in question is part of a larger block of lands conveyed to Clark County under a provision of the Public Law 109–263, the Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act of 1998. These lands comprise part of the Airport Environs Overlay District for McCarran Airport, and Public Law 105–263 required that the land be managed in accordance with airport noise compatibility planning agreements.

Further, the 1998 act specified if land was sold or transferred, it had to be done at fair market value with the proceeds distributed pursuant to the act. H.R. 815 would waive this last requirement. Since the proceeds of the land is for an important public purpose, we believe the waiver is appropriate.

□ 1315

Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend my colleague from Nevada, Representative PORTER, for his work on this legislation. I would note that identical legislation passed the House in the 109th Congress. We support the passage of H.R. 815 and recommend its adoption by the House today.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 815 and yield to the author of the bill, the distinguished gentleman from Nevada (Mr. PORTER).

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, the Southern Nevada Readiness Center Act conveys land to the Army National Guard for a readiness center that will provide Guardsmen with access to facilities, technology, and equipment needed to ensure proper training and readiness.

Because the Southern Nevada National Guard's force continues to grow, this new facility is crucial. It will better train and prepare our soldiers on the front lines. The center is the first new construction for the Army National Guard in the Las Vegas valley in more than 10 years. The facility will house communications, engineering and medical Guard units. It will include a 200-person theater-style auditorium, distance-learning classrooms, medical examination rooms, a weight room, locker rooms, multiple arms vaults, a kitchen, and a maintenance bay. Soldiers will be able to prepare both physically and technically for missions. In total, between 300 and 400 Guardsmen will train at the armory on a drill weekend.

The center will not only help ensure Nevada will be prepared in the event of a crisis or a natural disaster, but also would help ensure that Guardsmen are fully trained and ready for any contingency as directed by the National Command Authority.

I commend the National Guard soldiers who volunteer to serve at home and overseas in order to keep our country safe. It is incumbent upon us to provide the proper facilities that will ensure these soldiers are well trained and prepared.

I thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for working in a bipartisan, bicameral manner in support of this bill.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for allowing me to speak on this important legislation.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GRIJALVA) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 815.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

COPPER VALLEY NATIVE ALLOTMENT RESOLUTION ACT OF 2007

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 865) to grant rights-of-way for electric transmission lines over certain Native allotments in the State of Alaska, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 865

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 ''Copper Valley Native Allotment Resolution Act of 2007''.

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) ASSOCIATION.—The term ''Association'' means the Copper Valley Electric Association.

(2) NATIVE ALLOTMENT.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The term ''Native allotment'' means—

(i) each of the following allotments issued under the Act of May 17, 1906 (34 Stat. 197, chapter 2469):

(I) A–031653.

(II) A–043380.

(III) A–046337.

(IV) AA–5896.

(V) AA–6014, Parcel B.

(VI) AA–6034.

(VII) AA–7059.

(VIII) AA–7242, Parcel B.

(IX) AA–7336.

(X) AA–7552.

(XI) AA–7553.

(XII) AA–7554.

(XIII) AA–7600.

(XIV) AA–8032; and

(ii) any allotment for which a patent or Certificate of Allotment has been issued under the Act of May 17, 1906 (34 Stat. 197, chapter 2469) across which the Association maintains an electric transmission line on the date of enactment of this Act.

(B) EXCLUSIONS.—The term ''Native allotment'' does not include any allotment to which the Secretary has approved the grant of a right of way or issued a patent or Certificate of Allotment that is subject to a right of way held by the Association.

(3) SECRETARY.—The term ''Secretary'' means the Secretary of the Interior.

(4) STATE.—The term ''State'' means the State of Alaska.

SEC. 3. ELECTRIC TRANSMISSION LINE RIGHTS-OF-WAY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—There is granted to the Association rights-of-way across the Native allotments for an electric transmission line owned by the Association.

(b) WIDTH.—After considering any information provided by the Association, allottee, or any other source that the Secretary determines to be relevant, the Secretary shall determine an accurate legal description of the rights-of-way, the nature of the rights granted, and the widths of the rights-of-way granted by subsection (a).

(c) CERTAIN AGREEMENTS.—Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, this Act does not apply to land owned by Ahtna, Inc. and any prior or current right-of-way agreements that may exist between Ahtna, Inc. and the Copper Valley Electric Association or the State.

(d) COMPENSATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall—

(A) appraise the value of the rights-of-way granted under subsection (a);

(B) pay to any owner of a Native allotment or, if the owner is deceased, an heir or assign of the owner, compensation for the grant of a right-of-way over the Native allotment in an amount determined under paragraph (2);

(C) issue recordable instruments that indicate the location of the rights-of-way over the Native allotments;

(D) provide written notice of the compensation procedure for the rights-of-way to—

(i) the owner of record for each Native allotment; or

(ii) if the owner of record is deceased, the heir or assign of the owner of record; and

(E) publish in the Federal Register and any newspaper of general circulation within the service area of the Association and location of the relevant allotment—

(i) notice of the compensation procedure established by this subsection; and

(ii) with respect to a Native allotment described in section 2(2)(A)(ii), the location of the right-of-way, as prepared by the Association and provided to the Secretary, in accordance with any requirements established by the Secretary.

(2) CALCULATION OF PAYMENTS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of calculating the amount of compensation required under paragraph (1)(B), the Secretary shall determine, with respect to a portion of a Native allotment encumbered by a right-of-way—

(i) compensation for each right-of-way based on an appraisal conducted in conformity with the version of the Uniform Appraisal Standards for Federal Land Acquisitions that is correct as of the date of the compensation proceeding; and

(ii) interest calculated based on the section 3116 of title 40, United States Code.

(B) DATE OF VALUATION.—For purposes of subparagraph (A), the date of valuation of the acquisition by the Association of each right-of-way shall be considered to be the date of enactment of this Act.

(3) JUDICIAL REVIEW.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, judicial review under this subsection shall be limited to a review of the determination of the Secretary under paragraph (2) regarding the compensation for a right-of-way over a Native allotment.

SEC. 4. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as are necessary to carry out this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GRIJALVA) and the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. PEARCE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

H.R. 865, introduced by the gentleman from Alaska, Representative DON YOUNG, would resolve a longstanding conflict between Alaska Native land titles and utility rights-of-way in Alaska. This legislation is in response to a September 2004 GAO report entitled, ''Alaska Native Allotments: Conflicts With Utility Rights-of-Way Have Not Been Resolved Through Existing Remedies.''

Although the Copper Valley Electric Association, a rural non-profit electrical cooperative, holds rights-of-way granted in the 1950s and 1960s, and built electric lines prior to the filing of the Alaska Native allotment claims, there is a conflict with land titles subsequently issued under the Alaska Native Allotment Act. In essence, H.R. 865 resolves that conflict by ratifying the existing rights-of-way across 14 specified Native allotments and providing for fair market value compensation for the landowners. As amended, the bill provides that the compensation, which is estimated by CBO to be no more than $150,000, is subject to appropriations. We have no objection to H.R. 865.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 865. The majority, Mr. GRIJALVA, has adequately explained this bill. I thank him for his consideration on behalf of the author, DON YOUNG.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GRIJALVA) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 865, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

AUTHORIZING PAYMENT FOR SERVICES RENDERED BY SUBCONTRACTORS FOR WORK TO BE COMPLETED AT GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1191) to authorize the National Park Service to pay for services rendered by subcontractors under a General Services Administration Indefinite Deliver/Indefinite Quantity Contract issued for work to be completed at the Grand Canyon National Park, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1191

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

SECTION 1. DEFINITIONS.

As used in this Act, the following definitions apply:

(1) IDIQ.—The term ''IDIQ'' means an Indefinite Deliver/Indefinite Quantity contract.

(2) PARK.—The term ''park'' means Grand Canyon National Park.

(3) PGI.—The term ''PGI'' means Pacific General, Inc.

(4) SECRETARY.—The term ''Secretary'' means the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Director of the National Park Service.

SEC. 2. AUTHORIZATION.

The Secretary is authorized, subject to the appropriation of such funds as may be necessary, to pay the amount owed to the subcontractors of PGI for work performed at the park under an IDIQ with PGI between fiscal years 2002 and 2003, provided that—

(1) the primary contract between PGI and the National Park Service is terminated;

(2) the amount owed to the subcontractors is verified;

(3) all reasonable legal avenues or recourse have been exhausted by the subcontractors to recoup amounts owed directly from PGI; and

(4) the subcontractors provide a written statement that payment of the amount verified in paragraph (2) represents payment in full by the United States for all work performed at the park under the IDIQ with PGI between fiscal years 2002 and 2003.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GRIJALVA) and the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. PEARCE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, during fiscal years 2002 and 2003, Grand Canyon National Park entered into construction contracts worth $17 million with a general contractor called Pacific General, Incorporated, known as PGI.

In January 2004, numerous subcontractors employed by PGI notified National Park Service that they were not receiving payment. After an investigation, it was discovered that PGI was diverting Federal funds which should have gone to the subcontractors. PGI eventually declared bankruptcy.

It was further discovered that in a clear violation of Federal policies, the park had failed to require PGI to post a surety bond as a condition of the contract. The agency is now prohibited from paying the subcontractors directly because the funds appropriated for those contracts have already been paid to PGI. Overall, the subcontractors are owed about $1.3 million. H.R. 1191 authorizes the Secretary to use $1.3 million in available funds from Grand Canyon National Park to pay the subcontractors. Applicants for the funds would have to verify the amount they are owed, demonstrate that they have exhausted all reasonable legal avenues to recoup amounts owed to them by PGI, and provide written statements that the amount they are seeking represents payment in full.

Mr. Speaker, this is an imperfect solution to a difficult problem. However, these small business owners who provided quality services to the Federal Government in good faith should not have to wait any longer to receive payment.

My colleague from Arizona, Representative RENZI, is to be commended for his efforts on behalf of these small business people. Similar legislation

was approved by the House in the 109th Congress, and we urge its passage today.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to thank the majority, Mr. GRIJALVA, for his support of H.R. 1191, and I would yield such time as he may consume to the distinguished author of the bill, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. RENZI), who has worked tirelessly for 4 years on this bill.

Mr. RENZI. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my chairman and colleague from Arizona (Mr. GRIJALVA) and my neighbor from New Mexico (Mr. PEARCE) for their assistance and support in helping us find a solution finally today.

It has been 4 years in the making. I thank you, Mr. GRIJALVA and Mr. PEARCE, for being a part of pushing this across the finish line.

Our intention today is to provide legislation to fix a problem that affects almost 40 small business men and women throughout Arizona, Utah, New Mexico and the Southwest who are devastated by this unfortunate contract mismanagement that the National Park Service and Pacific General, Inc. were involved in.

I know, Mr. PEARCE, you remember from last Congress, in helping us finish on this, that many of these businesses are bankrupt today. Many of their sons and daughters aren't able to go to college because the Federal Government owes them money for work that they performed in the Grand Canyon. So today, we find a way to fix that with a technical correction in order for these subcontractors to get paid.

Mike Richardson, who is the owner of Southwest Water Works, located in Phoenix, Arizona, came before Congress, before your subcommittee last session. He testified, and he was able to bring this problem to the forefront. His dedicated assistance to bringing this matter before Congress should be commended.

After this time, the Washington Contracting and Procurement Office of the National Park Service performed an acquisition management review. In this review, the National Park Service discovered that the park had failed to ensure that PGI obtained the proper payments and performance bonds required by the National Park Service under the Miller Act. Then on February 6, 2004, the National Park Service suspended further payments to PGI, issued a suspension notice, and ceased activities with the contractor.

Unfortunately, as stated, the subcontractors were not paid for the work that they provided to the Federal Government. They fall into two categories. The first category consists of subcontractors that performed work on various projects where the National Park Service had already paid PGI for their work. Up to $1.3 million PGI did not pay to subcontractors. I think, as Congressman GRIJALVA talked about, there were $17 million paid overall to the contractor; $1.3 million never made its way down to these subcontractors.

The second category is composed of subcontractors who performed work on various projects where the National Park Service failed to pay PGI. The National Park Service has been unable to pay these contractors who performed the work at Grand Canyon because Federal law prohibits payments directly to subcontractors due to a lack of direct contractual relationship between the parties.

This bill today that Mr. GRIJALVA has championed, and Mr. PEARCE, fixes this grave inequity.

I thank you so very much for your leadership, Mr. GRIJALVA and Mr. PEARCE. I appreciate your service, and understanding these are small business men and women, Arizona, New Mexico and Utah, that will benefit from your leadership on this bill.

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

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, again let me commend the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. RENZI) for this legislation.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GRIJALVA) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1191, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1330

TAXPAYER PROTECTION ACT OF 2007

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1677) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to enhance taxpayer protections and outreach, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1677

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; ETC.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the ''Taxpayer Protection Act of 2007''.

(b) AMENDMENT OF 1986 CODE.—Except as otherwise expressly provided, whenever in this Act an amendment or repeal is expressed in terms of an amendment to, or repeal of, a section or other provision, the reference shall be considered to be made to a section or other provision of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

(c) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; etc.
Sec. 2. Family business tax simplification.
Sec. 3. Taxpayer notification of suspected identity theft.
Sec. 4. Extension of time for return of property for wrongful levy.
Sec. 5. Individuals held harmless on wrongful levy, etc., on individual retirement plan.
Sec. 6. Clarification of IRS unclaimed refund authority.
Sec. 7. Prohibition on IRS debt indicators for predatory refund anticipation loans.
Sec. 8. Prohibition on misuse of Department of the Treasury names and symbols.
Sec. 9. EITC outreach.
Sec. 10. Modification of rules pertaining to FIRPTA nonforeign affidavits.
Sec. 11. Disclosure of prisoner return information to Federal Bureau of Prisons.
Sec. 12. Increase in penalty for bad checks and money orders.

SEC. 2. FAMILY BUSINESS TAX SIMPLIFICATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 761 (defining terms for purposes of partnerships) is amended by redesignating subsection (f) as subsection (g) and by inserting after subsection (e) the following new subsection:

''(f) QUALIFIED JOINT VENTURE.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—In the case of a qualified joint venture conducted by a husband and wife who file a joint return for the taxable year, for purposes of this title—

''(A) such joint venture shall not be treated as a partnership,

''(B) all items of income, gain, loss, deduction, and credit shall be divided between the spouses in accordance with their respective interests in the venture, and

''(C) each spouse shall take into account such spouse's respective share of such items as if they were attributable to a trade or business conducted by such spouse as a sole proprietor.

''(2) QUALIFIED JOINT VENTURE.—For purposes of paragraph (1), the term 'qualified joint venture' means any joint venture involving the conduct of a trade or business if—

''(A) the only members of such joint venture are a husband and wife,

''(B) both spouses materially participate (within the meaning of section 469(h) without regard to paragraph (5) thereof) in such trade or business, and

''(C) both spouses elect the application of this subsection.''.

(b) NET EARNINGS FROM SELF-EMPLOYMENT.—

(1) Subsection (a) of section 1402 (defining net earnings from self-employment) is amended by striking '', and'' at the end of paragraph (15) and inserting a semicolon, by striking the period at the end of paragraph (16) and inserting ''; and'', and by inserting after paragraph (16) the following new paragraph:

''(17) notwithstanding the preceding provisions of this subsection, each spouse's share of income or loss from a qualified joint venture shall be taken into account as provided in section 761(f) in determining net earnings from self-employment of such spouse.''.

(2) Subsection (a) of section 211 of the Social Security Act (defining net earnings from self-employment) is amended by striking ''and'' at the end of paragraph (14), by striking the period at the end of paragraph (15) and inserting ''; and'', and by inserting after paragraph (15) the following new paragraph:

''(16) Notwithstanding the preceding provisions of this subsection, each spouse's share of income or loss from a qualified joint venture shall be taken into account as provided in section 761(f) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 in determining net earnings from self-employment of such spouse.''.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to taxable years beginning after December 31, 2006.

SEC. 3. TAXPAYER NOTIFICATION OF SUSPECTED IDENTITY THEFT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 77 (relating to miscellaneous provisions) is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

"SEC. 7529. NOTIFICATION OF SUSPECTED IDENTITY THEFT.

''If, in the course of an investigation under section 7206 (relating to fraud and false statements) or 7207 (relating to fraudulent returns, statements, or other documents), the Secretary determines that there was or may have been an unauthorized use of the identity of the taxpayer or dependents, the Secretary shall—

''(1) as soon as practicable and without jeopardizing such investigation, notify the taxpayer of such determination, and

''(2) if any person is criminally charged by indictment or information under either of such sections, notify such taxpayer as soon as practicable of such charge.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for chapter 77 is amended by adding at the end the following new item:

''Sec. 7529. Notification of suspected identity theft.''.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to determinations made after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 4. EXTENSION OF TIME FOR RETURN OF PROPERTY FOR WRONGFUL LEVY.

(a) EXTENSION OF TIME FOR RETURN OF PROPERTY SUBJECT TO LEVY.—Subsection (b) of section 6343 (relating to return of property) is amended by striking ''9 months'' and inserting ''2 years''.

(b) PERIOD OF LIMITATION ON SUITS.—Subsection (c) of section 6532 (relating to suits by persons other than taxpayers) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1) by striking ''9 months'' and inserting ''2 years'', and

(2) in paragraph (2) by striking ''9-month'' and inserting ''2-year''.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to—

(1) levies made after the date of the enactment of this Act, and

(2) levies made on or before such date if the 9-month period has not expired under section 6343(b) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (without regard to this section) as of such date.

SEC. 5. INDIVIDUALS HELD HARMLESS ON WRONGFUL LEVY, ETC., ON INDIVIDUAL RETIREMENT PLAN.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 6343 (relating to authority to release levy and return property) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(f) INDIVIDUALS HELD HARMLESS ON WRONGFUL LEVY, ETC. ON INDIVIDUAL RETIREMENT PLAN.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—If the Secretary determines that an individual retirement plan has been levied upon in a case to which subsection (b) or (d)(2)(A) applies, an amount equal to the sum of—

''(A) the amount of money returned by the Secretary on account of such levy, and

''(B) interest paid under subsection (c) on such amount of money,

may be deposited into such individual retirement plan or any other individual retirement plan (other than an endowment contract) to which a rollover from the plan levied upon is permitted.

''(2) TREATMENT AS ROLLOVER.—If amounts are deposited into an individual retirement plan under paragraph (1) not later than the 60th day after the date on which the individual receives the amounts under paragraph (1)—

''(A) such deposit shall be treated as a rollover described in section 408(d)(3)(A)(i),

''(B) to the extent the deposit includes interest paid under subsection (c), such interest shall not be includible in gross income, and

''(C) such deposit shall not be taken into account under section 408(d)(3)(B).

For purposes of subparagraph (B), an amount shall be treated as interest only to the extent that the amount deposited exceeds the amount of the levy.

''(3) REFUND, ETC., OF INCOME TAX ON LEVY.—If any amount is includible in gross income for a taxable year by reason of a levy referred to in paragraph (1) and any portion of such amount is treated as a rollover under paragraph (2), any tax imposed by chapter 1 on such portion shall not be assessed, and if assessed shall be abated, and if collected shall be credited or refunded as an overpayment made on the due date for filing the return of tax for such taxable year.

''(4) INTEREST.—Notwithstanding subsection (d), interest shall be allowed under subsection (c) in a case in which the Secretary makes a determination described in subsection (d)(2)(A) with respect to a levy upon an individual retirement plan.''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by this section shall apply to amounts paid under subsections (b), (c), and (d)(2)(A) of section 6343 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 6. CLARIFICATION OF IRS UNCLAIMED REFUND AUTHORITY.

Section 6103(m)(1) (relating to tax refunds) is amended by inserting '', and through any other means of mass communication,'' after ''media''.

SEC. 7. PROHIBITION ON IRS DEBT INDICATORS FOR PREDATORY REFUND ANTICIPATION LOANS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (f) of section 6011 (relating to promotion of electronic filing) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(3) PROHIBITION ON IRS DEBT INDICATORS FOR PREDATORY REFUND ANTICIPATION LOANS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—In carrying out any program under this subsection, the Secretary shall not provide a debt indicator to any person with respect to any refund anticipation loan if the Secretary determines that the business practices of such person involve refund anticipation loans and related charges and fees that are predatory.

''(B) REFUND ANTICIPATION LOAN.—For purposes of this paragraph, the term 'refund anticipation loan' means a loan of money or of any other thing of value to a taxpayer secured by the taxpayer's anticipated receipt of a Federal tax refund.

''(C) IRS DEBT INDICATOR.—For purposes of this paragraph, the term 'debt indicator' means a notification provided through a tax return's acknowledgment file that a refund will be offset to repay debts for delinquent Federal or State taxes, student loans, child support, or other Federal agency debt.''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by this section shall apply to determinations after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 8. PROHIBITION ON MISUSE OF DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY NAMES AND SYMBOLS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (a) of section 333 of title 31, United States Code, is amended by inserting ''internet domain address,'' after ''solicitation,'' both places it appears.

(b) PENALTY FOR MISUSE BY ELECTRONIC MEANS.—Subsections (c)(2) and (d)(1) of section 333 of such Code are each amended by inserting ''or any other mass communications by electronic means,'' after ''telecast,''.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply with respect to violations occurring after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 9. EITC OUTREACH.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 32 (relating to earned income) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(n) NOTIFICATION OF POTENTIAL ELIGIBILITY FOR CREDIT AND REFUND.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—To the extent possible and on an annual basis, the Secretary shall provide to each taxpayer who—

''(A) for any preceding taxable year for which credit or refund is not precluded by section 6511, and

''(B) did not claim the credit under subsection (a) but may be allowed such credit for any such taxable year based on return or return information (as defined in section 6103(b)) available to the Secretary,

notice that such taxpayer may be eligible to claim such credit and a refund for such taxable year.

''(2) NOTICE.—Notice provided under paragraph (1) shall be in writing and sent to the last known address of the taxpayer.''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by this section shall take effect on the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 10. MODIFICATION OF RULES PERTAINING TO FIRPTA NONFOREIGN AFFIDAVITS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (b) of section 1445 (relating to exemptions) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(9) ALTERNATIVE PROCEDURE FOR FURNISHING NONFOREIGN AFFIDAVIT.—For purposes of paragraphs (2) and (7)—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Paragraph (2) shall be treated as applying to a transaction if, in connection with a disposition of a United States real property interest—

''(i) the affidavit specified in paragraph (2) is furnished to a qualified substitute, and

''(ii) the qualified substitute furnishes a statement to the transferee stating, under penalty of perjury, that the qualified substitute has such affidavit in his possession.

''(B) REGULATIONS.—The Secretary shall prescribe such regulations as may be necessary or appropriate to carry out this paragraph.''.

(b) QUALIFIED SUBSTITUTE.—Subsection (f) of section 1445 (relating to definitions) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(6) QUALIFIED SUBSTITUTE.—The term 'qualified substitute' means, with respect to a disposition of a United States real property interest—

''(A) the person (including any attorney or title company) responsible for closing the transaction, other than the transferor's agent, and

''(B) the transferee's agent.''.

(c) EXEMPTION NOT TO APPLY IF KNOWLEDGE OR NOTICE THAT AFFIDAVIT OR STATEMENT IS FALSE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Paragraph (7) of section 1445(b) (relating to special rules for paragraphs (2) and (3)) is amended to read as follows:

''(7) SPECIAL RULES FOR PARAGRAPHS (2), (3), AND (9).—Paragraph (2), (3), or (9) (as the case may be) shall not apply to any disposition—

''(A) if—

''(i) the transferee or qualified substitute has actual knowledge that the affidavit referred to in such paragraph, or the statement referred to in paragraph (9)(A)(ii), is false, or

''(ii) the transferee or qualified substitute receives a notice (as described in subsection (d)) from a transferor's agent, transferee's agent, or qualified substitute that such affidavit or statement is false, or

''(B) if the Secretary by regulations requires the transferee or qualified substitute

to furnish a copy of such affidavit or statement to the Secretary and the transferee or qualified substitute fails to furnish a copy of such affidavit or statement to the Secretary at such time and in such manner as required by such regulations.''.

(2) LIABILITY.—

(A) NOTICE.—Paragraph (1) of section 1445(d) (relating to notice of false affidavit; foreign corporations) is amended to read as follows:

''(1) NOTICE OF FALSE AFFIDAVIT; FOREIGN CORPORATIONS.—If—

''(A) the transferor furnishes the transferee or qualified substitute an affidavit described in paragraph (2) of subsection (b) or a domestic corporation furnishes the transferee an affidavit described in paragraph (3) of subsection (b), and

''(B) in the case of—

''(i) any transferor's agent—

''(I) such agent has actual knowledge that such affidavit is false, or

''(II) in the case of an affidavit described in subsection (b)(2) furnished by a corporation, such corporation is a foreign corporation, or

''(ii) any transferee's agent or qualified substitute, such agent or substitute has actual knowledge that such affidavit is false,

such agent or qualified substitute shall so notify the transferee at such time and in such manner as the Secretary shall require by regulations.''.

(B) FAILURE TO FURNISH NOTICE.—Paragraph (2) of section 1445(d) (relating to failure to furnish notice) is amended to read as follows:

''(2) FAILURE TO FURNISH NOTICE.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—If any transferor's agent, transferee's agent, or qualified substitute is required by paragraph (1) to furnish notice, but fails to furnish such notice at such time or times and in such manner as may be required by regulations, such agent or substitute shall have the same duty to deduct and withhold that the transferee would have had if such agent or substitute had complied with paragraph (1).

''(B) LIABILITY LIMITED TO AMOUNT OF COMPENSATION.—An agent's or substitute's liability under subparagraph (A) shall be limited to the amount of compensation the agent or substitute derives from the transaction.''.

(C) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The heading for section 1445(d) is amended by striking ''OR TRANSFEREE'S AGENTS'' and inserting '', TRANSFEREE'S AGENTS, OR QUALIFIED SUBSTITUTES''.

(d) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to dispositions of United States real property interests after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 11. DISCLOSURE OF PRISONER RETURN INFORMATION TO FEDERAL BUREAU OF PRISONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (k) of section 6103 (relating to disclosure of certain return and return information for tax administration purposes) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(10) DISCLOSURE OF CERTAIN RETURN INFORMATION OF PRISONERS TO FEDERAL BUREAU OF PRISONS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Under such procedures as the Secretary may prescribe, the Secretary may disclose to the head of the Federal Bureau of Prisons any return information with respect to individuals incarcerated in Federal prison whom the Secretary has determined may have filed or facilitated the filing of a false return to the extent that the Secretary determines that such disclosure is necessary to permit effective Federal tax administration.

''(B) RESTRICTION ON REDISCLOSURE.—Notwithstanding subsection (n), the head of the Federal Bureau of Prisons may not disclose any information obtained under subparagraph (A) to any person other than an officer or employee of such Bureau.

''(C) RESTRICTION ON USE OF DISCLOSED INFORMATION.—Return information received under this paragraph shall be used only for purposes of and to the extent necessary in taking administrative action to prevent the filing of false and fraudulent returns, including administrative actions to address possible violations of administrative rules and regulations of the prison facility.

''(D) ANNUAL REPORT.—In each of the calendar years 2007 through 2010, the Secretary shall submit to Congress and make publicly available a report on the filing of false and fraudulent returns by individuals incarcerated in Federal and State prisons. Such report shall include statistics on the number of false and fraudulent returns associated with each Federal and State prison.

''(E) TERMINATION.—No disclosure may be made under this paragraph after December 31, 2010.''.

(b) RECORDKEEPING.—Paragraph (4) of section 6103(p) is amended by striking ''(k)(8)'' both places it appears and inserting ''(k)(8) or (10)''.

(c) EVALUATION BY TREASURY INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR TAX ADMINISTRATION.—Paragraph (3) of section 7803(d) is amended by striking ''and'' at the end of subparagraph (A), by striking the period at the end of subparagraph (B) and inserting ''; and'', and by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

''(C) not later than December 31, 2009, submit a written report to Congress on the implementation of section 6103(k)(10).''.

(d) EFFECTIVE DATE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), the amendments made by this section shall apply to disclosures made after December 31, 2007.

(2) ANNUAL REPORT.—Section 6103(k)(10)(D) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (relating to annual reports), as added by this section, shall apply to reports submitted after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 12. INCREASE IN PENALTY FOR BAD CHECKS AND MONEY ORDERS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 6657 (relating to bad checks) is amended—

(1) by striking ''$750'' and inserting ''$1,250'', and

(2) by striking ''$15'' and inserting ''$25''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to checks or money orders received after the date of the enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LEWIS) and the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. RAMSTAD) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in strong support of H.R. 1677 and am pleased to be a lead co-sponsor of this bill with Chairman RANGEL.

Today is the due date for Americans to file their tax returns. On this day, it is wise for the House to consider a bill to increase taxpayer protection and expand outreach efforts to millions of Americans.

Mr. Speaker, this is an important bill; this is a timely bill. The Taxpayer Protection Act is a result of a hearing held by the Oversight Subcommittee that I chair. H.R. 1677 is an important first step in standing up, really standing up for the American taxpayer. It is a shame that people use fraudulent tax schemes to steal Social Security numbers and financial information from Americans.

This legislation protects taxpayers from misleading Web sites and identity theft. H.R. 1677 provides higher penalties for persons who use either Web site names that may be confused with the official IRS Web site or mass e-mails that appear to be from the IRS. This bill requires the IRS to notify you if your identity is stolen in a tax scam.

You should not become more vulnerable for being a responsible citizen. The Taxpayer Protection Act prohibits the IRS from providing certain information to businesses that the IRS believes make predatory loans based on tax refunds. These short-term loans often charge interest rates sometimes above 100 percent that victimize low-income workers.

H.R. 1677 will also assist with efforts to reach millions of working Americans who are eligible to claim the earned income tax credit. These taxpayers often do not take advantage of the EITC. They have a right to know of all benefits available to them. Under this bill, the IRS will expand its current outreach program to help more low-income Americans receive this tax credit, a credit which lifts millions of families out of poverty each year.

This bipartisan legislation moves us in the right direction to make tax issues simpler and clearer for the average person. We must fight poverty, fight fraud, and provide these basic protections for all Americans.

Mr. Speaker, I fully support the Taxpayer Protection Act, and I urge all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to vote ''yes'' for H.R. 1677.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. RAMSTAD. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly support the Taxpayer Protection Act. This legislation is a package of commonsense reforms that passed the Ways and Means Committee by a voice vote with broad bipartisan support, and I want to take this opportunity to thank Chairman RANGEL of the full Ways and Means Committee, as well as Chairman LEWIS, the chairman of our Oversight Subcommittee, for working in a bipartisan, pragmatic and commonsense way on this legislation, and for working in a bipartisan way thus far generally in the committee. I also want to thank Ranking Member MCCRERY for his leadership.

Mr. Speaker, true to its name, this bill will protect taxpayers and expand their rights. One important reform will prevent Internet domains from using the Treasury Department's name or symbol, which is usually done to trick people into giving out sensitive personal or financial information. Clearly, this should not be allowed and should be outlawed, as this bill provides. It

prohibits phishing, and by that I mean phishing with a ''P-H,'' not the kind that Minnesota is famous for. We are referring here to mass e-mail communications falsely claiming to be from the IRS that can lead to identity theft and have victimized too many Americans.

The bill also requires the IRS to notify taxpayers when there is an unauthorized use of the taxpayer's identity. This will help taxpayers take steps to clear their names quickly if and when their identity is stolen.

Another commonsense provision of this bill allows the IRS to return funds directly to a taxpayer's retirement account if the IRS improperly levied fines from that account.

One provision, Mr. Speaker, that received considerable attention in the committee deals with refund anticipation loans. I mentioned in the committee that while I certainly understand the motivation behind the provision and the belief that the IRS should not be a facilitator for predatory loans, I am concerned because the bill does not define ''predatory''; but I trust, Mr. Speaker, that will be clarified in the conference.

I also hope we are not inadvertently making this problem worse by denying lenders information on ''debt indicators'' so that the provision increases the risk that a lender will not be reimbursed by the taxpayer's refund. This could cause lenders to increase fees and interest rates even further, making taxpayers pay even more for early access to their refunds. While I am not opposed to the provision, this should be addressed in the conference.

I strongly support another provision in the bill which would encourage the IRS to do more to ensure that taxpayers entitled to receive earned income credit refunds actually receive them.

Mr. Speaker, as we all know, the earned income credit is one of our most effective antipoverty tools for working families. This provision certainly deserves our strong support.

Mr. Speaker, I am also very pleased that the committee adopted my amendment to prevent tax fraud by prison inmates. This amendment is based on legislation that Chairman LEWIS and I introduced in the last Congress in response to a hearing we held in 2005. This hearing revealed massive tax fraud going on within the walls of our Nation's prisons. In fact, the IRS testified that 15 percent of all tax fraud in the United States is committed by prison inmates while in prison. Tax fraud in any form is obviously unacceptable and illegal; but it is particularly outrageous and egregious when it is committed by prison inmates who are supposed to be paying their debt to society, not bilking taxpayers.

For example, we heard testimony, Mr. Speaker, from one inmate who had swindled taxpayers to the tune of $3.5 million in false tax return claims, and this was not an isolated incident.

While the IRS is able to detect some inmate tax fraud, far too much of it falls through the cracks. And, unfortunately, the IRS is prohibited by current law from sharing information with prison officials that would allow those officials to punish and stop this fraud.

My amendment, and I appreciate the chairman's support of this amendment, my amendment would allow the IRS to disclose information to Federal prison officials to help them stop the tax fraud that is occurring right under their noses within the walls of Federal prisons. I hope in time this commonsense provision can also be extended to include State prisons.

Mr. Speaker, it is truly fitting that in a bill entitled the Taxpayer Protection Act we protect honest taxpayers from such blatant, outrageous fraud that is being committed by some prison inmates.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to protect taxpayers and support this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend, my colleague, the ranking member, for all of his help and support in bringing this legislation before us today.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to give Members 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks on the bill, H.R. 1677.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from North Dakota (Mr. POMEROY), a member of the committee.

Mr. POMEROY. Mr. Speaker, I want to commend my friend, the chairman of the Oversight Subcommittee, the former chairman, now ranking member of the Oversight Subcommittee, for bringing this bipartisan bill to the floor.

There are a couple of features I wish to speak to: one, we prohibit use of misleading Internet names. I want to show you why I think that is important.

This is Departmentofthetreasury.com. You pull it up and it looks like an official Web page of the Federal Government. However, the second page on this same domain name shows Departmentofthetreasury.com is for sale. Basically, departmentofthetreasury.gov is the protected government name, and dot-com is a private name that preys upon the public believing they are communicating with the Federal Government, and they are not.

Now, I think we ought to take some exception to the marketing ''Departmentofthetreasury.com is for sale.'' That is a public name. It is owned by the American people. You can't sell something you don't own, and that is a name appropriately reserved reflecting the Department of Treasury of this country, and nobody should be allowed to make a plug nickel on it.

Here is some body of information showing just how lucrative it might be for those who want to prey upon the public using Federal names. There is a domain site called IRS.com, and inconceivably to me, they rang the bell as some prized business concern in the American Stock Exchange this morning. Well, I think a business that preys upon the public with misleading domain names is no business you want to celebrate in ringing the bell of a great stock exchange.

In fact, public reports, as reported in the New York Times today, show that their revenues jumped from $17.5 in 2005 to $25.6 million after IRS.com paid $12.9 million for that domain name. I have pulled up IRS.com. Some would say there is clear disclosure; this is not a public site. IRS.com has IRS. It has tax information, and in little tiny, flyspeck language it has the disclosure. It is deliberately built to deceive, and in fact one survey showed that 40 percent of those accessing the site thought it was a Federal site. And even after seeing it, one-third thought it was a Federal site. But they use this site to market information to taxpayers.

Just to conclude, the business plan of these enterprises to get people to the site, they then have other services offered on the site. The domain holder, IRS.com, is paid for each link accessed by a member of the public. Some of the things sold on that site represent very low value: refund anticipation loans or expensive tax preparation services. This is a fraud on the public, and we ought to put an end to it.

I also appreciate what we are doing, turning up the heat on these refund anticipation loans, or RALs. To me, they represent an exceedingly poor value to the American public. In fact, such a poor value that I can't believe people are accessing them if they knew the facts and knew the costs. The commissioner has identified some of the practices as predatory lending in testimony to the committee. I like giving the Treasury Department authority to deal with people engaged in predatory lending practices. I urge passage of the bill.

□ 1345

Mr. RAMSTAD. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. CARNEY).

Mr. CARNEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. LEWIS for his leadership on this very important bill that we are discussing today.

I rise today in support of the Taxpayer Protection Act of 2007. I have spent the last 2 weeks in northeast and central Pennsylvania hearing from families in my district about matters

that concern them, and one thing was consistent. Our middle-class families deserve a tax cut and tax protection.

It is time to start protecting our taxpayers, Mr. Speaker. This bipartisan legislation will do just that. This legislation requires the IRS to notify taxpayers if there has been an unauthorized use of their identity. This is a serious issue, and the IRS must be actively contacting those individuals who may have fallen victim to identity theft.

This bill protects those who would receive a tax break, also. It requires the IRS to notify those who would be eligible for a tax break. For example, it requires the IRS to conduct additional earned income tax credit outreach, including notifying those who are eligible about how to apply for it.

The Taxpayer Protection Act supports small, family-owned businesses and allows for spouses of the family-owned business to pay Social Security and Medicare taxes as a sole proprietorship rather than as a partnership. This will save our small businesses money, promoting investment and growth in our communities.

I came to Congress to stand up for working families, both in my State, Pennsylvania, and this country. This bipartisan bill protects taxpayers, protects families and protects individuals; and I am proud to support it today.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to mention our condolences for those at Virginia Tech University. I think today everybody in this country is a Hokie.

Mr. RAMSTAD. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. HERGER), a distinguished member of the Ways and Means Committee and ranking member of the Trade Subcommittee.

Mr. HERGER. Mr. Speaker, in 2001 President Bush and Congress worked to enact the most important tax relief since Ronald Reagan in the 1980s.

For individuals and families, we reduced marginal tax rates on personal income, doubled the child tax credit, reduced the unfair marriage tax penalty, phased out the onerous death tax, and significantly lessened the impact of the alternative minimum tax. We also provided essential tax relief on investment income.

Far from taxpayer protection, as this bill's title suggests, we are now hearing proposals from the other side that would do away with the tax relief of the last 6 years. Contrary to the naysayers, tax relief has played a critical role in revitalizing our Nation's economy.

Over 7.5 million new jobs have been created since 2003. The national unemployment rate has fallen to a very low 4.4 percent. Economic growth has been steady and strong. Our investment markets are no longer bursting; they are booming.

American families and small businesses did not just sit on the $1.1 trillion that we returned to them. They put much of it back into our economy through investment and consumption. The result: Tax revenues are up 35 percent and deficits are much lower than CBO anticipated.

Mr. Speaker, as we observe tax day, to truly protect taxpayers, Congress should talk about ways to make the tax relief we have permanent. Regrettably, the majority party and its budget anticipate the opposite.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from California (Mr. MCNERNEY).

Mr. MCNERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the Taxpayer Protection Act of 2007.

I would like to commend Chairman RANGEL and Ranking Member MCCRERY for bringing this bill to the floor and for working to simplify our tax policies.

Today's Tax Code has become so complex that it takes more than 25 hours to complete an itemized tax return. That is about 10 hours longer than in 1988.

Small business owners will also benefit significantly from this legislation by streamlining the process that married couples use to file returns.

Our reliance on technology and the openness of the Internet is greater than ever, and we should improve security to defend American taxpayers from identity theft.

I am pleased that provisions in the Taxpayer Protection Act increase online security for individuals and allow them to have better recourse in the event of a crime.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 1677.

Mr. RAMSTAD. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. CROWLEY), my colleague on the Ways and Means Committee.

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, thank you for giving me the time.

I also just want to express briefly the support of my constituents in Queens and The Bronx in New York. Their hearts and prayers are today in Virginia with the students and faculty and parents of Virginia Tech students.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the Taxpayer Protection Act, a bill that will work to protect and empower taxpayers.

I want to specifically recognize and thank Chairman RANGEL not only for crafting a solid, bipartisan bill, but also for continuing the comity that has, this year, become the hallmark of our committee.

I would also like to express my gratitude to you, as well as to Oversight Subcommittee Chairman LEWIS and Ranking Member RAMSTAD for including important new provisions dealing with the earned income tax credit. The EITC has been a great benefit to my constituents, with almost 114,000 of them claiming this credit, bringing home to Queens and The Bronx $270 million. While impressive, I still have almost 23,000 constituents in my district who are eligible, but do not seek this credit, thereby missing out on an estimated $54 million in revenue, money these people need for everyday living and money that can be turned back into our communities.

During both the oversight hearing on EITC and, later, the full committee hearing with IRS Commissioner Everson, I highlighted the need for the IRS to work with those who qualify for the EITC to make the process of restating past returns easier. This bill does that.

Additionally, during private and, later, under committee questioning, I asked Commissioner Everson about ways to outreach EITC to more people, including those who may not file returns.

Again, the sponsors heard the concerns of many of us on this committee and crafted a bill today that also mandates the IRS undertake this outing by using IRS' existing resources and data to dig deeper and find these eligible people.

The people who qualify and receive the earned income tax credit, the people I am talking about, are the working poor, again poor people who work, and they need our help. This bill provides them an important helping hand. I thank the sponsors for putting working people first in this legislation.

I also want to thank many of the not-for-profit groups that are helping our constituents access EITC. Just yesterday, I met with the leadership in New York City of ACORN, and they are starting a program to help our mutual constituents reach out so that they can make access of the EITC, the earned income tax credit.

I once again thank the sponsors of this legislation. I welcome this new direction in Congress and in America.

Mr. RAMSTAD. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. SHULER).

Mr. SHULER. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, before I begin, I would like to offer my thoughts and prayers to the family of those who died yesterday at Virginia Tech and all those affected by this senseless tragedy.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of this legislation, H.R. 1677, the Taxpayer Protection Act of 2007.

As we mark the deadline for Federal income taxes today, this bill takes important steps to simplify the tax process for family-owned small businesses, which are the backbone of our country and our economy.

Mr. Speaker, this bill will allow both spouses in a family-owned business to pay Social Security and Medicare taxes as a sole proprietorship, not as a partnership.

Mr. Speaker, when a husband and wife owns a business together, they are really collecting only one paycheck. They should only have to pay taxes once.

Mr. RAMSTAD. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. PRICE), a champion of the taxpayer.

(Mr. PRICE of Georgia asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. I appreciate the gentleman for yielding, and I appreciate the leadership on both sides of the aisle for this issue.

I am heartened by the stated enthusiasm of the members of the majority party for the Taxpayer Protection Act. I am remarkably encouraged.

Today being tax day, it is appropriate that we speak about this issue, and it is mostly good work. I would commend the individuals who worked on this. It is mostly good work, but I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that real protection requires real reform, and the real solution to the challenges that we face as Americans, all of us in our tax system, is that we need fundamental reform.

This is an appropriate bill and kind of tinkers with the margins of our tax system, and I think those modifications are, as I mentioned, appropriate and a step in the right direction; but our current system is extremely regressive and extremely unfair.

So, to talk about the earned income tax credit, it's an appropriate thing to notify people who don't know that they are eligible for that. However, there are embedded taxes in everything that we purchase that make our system right now much more regressive than it ought be.

There is legislation available that would, in fact, promote fundamental reform. It would capture all of the underground economy that is fully a third of our current economy, nearly $1 trillion. It would reward those kinds of things that we say that we want, like hard work and success and entrepreneurship and vision and all those wonderful American ideals.

That bill is H.R. 25. It is the fair tax, the national retail sales tax. It would bring about true fundamental reform and would bring about true protection for the American taxpayer.

So I commend the individuals who brought forward H.R. 1677, and I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that this is a small step in the right direction. However, real reform requires real change. Fundamental reform to our tax system is what is needed, and I am hopeful that in relatively short order we will be able to embrace each other with real fundamental reform to our entire tax system on the floor of this House.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER), a member of the Ways and Means Committee.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, I appreciate my colleague from Georgia, the distinguished chairman of the Oversight Committee, for permitting me to speak on this bill, and I commend his hard work.

I find no small amount of irony hearing one of our friends from the other side of the aisle talk about how it might be time now for tax reform. The other side of the aisle was in charge for 12 years, and it is interesting that in the last 6 years, when they controlled the White House and Congress and had three major tax bills before us, the words in the Tax Code increased 1.5 million; 1.5 million extra words, special-interest provisions, while ignoring opportunities to simplify the code and to deal meaningfully with the tax tsunami that is coming at us, the alternative minimum tax.

□ 1400

I appreciate the hard work that the subcommittee has done, dealing with provisions like this that have no argument against them. These are things that are long overdue. I am glad we are moving forward. I commend the subcommittee Chair, and our Chair, Mr. RANGEL, for looking at other provisions that would level the playing field, that would deal with simplification, deal with fairness, deal with some of the problems that lower-income citizens have in terms of trying to cope with the complexity, and being able to equip the Internal Revenue Service to make sure that we deal with hundreds of billions of dollars that is uncollected revenue that shifts the burden on the vast majority of Americans who are hard working, who report their income, who pay their taxes fairly and on time.

It isn't the fault of the worker who has got the W–2 that we have this vast amount of uncollected income. We have the complexity. I appreciate what this bill represents, a true effort at bipartisan cooperation to establish a foundation. We can move forward to have an Internal Revenue Code that is fair and effective for all.

Mr. RAMSTAD. Madam Speaker, may I just inquire as to how many speakers the other side may have.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. That was my last speaker, Mr. Ranking Member.

Mr. RAMSTAD. Madam Speaker, before yielding back, I too want to express my deepest sympathy to the entire Virginia Tech community. Like every other Member of this body, my thoughts and prayers are with all those affected by the tragic and senseless loss of lives.

Having no further speakers, I urge a strong ''yes'' vote for this taxpayer protection.

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

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I too, before I close this debate on this bill, join with my colleagues and others to mourn for the victims of this unspeakable, unbelievable, senseless act of violence at Virginia Tech. We mourn, we pray for the victims and for their families.

I also want to thank my colleague, my friend, the ranking member, Mr. RAMSTAD, for all of his help in bringing this piece of legislation, as I stated before, before us today.

Madam Speaker, I fully support H.R. 1677, the Taxpayer Protection Act of 2007. We must do more for Americans. We must protect taxpayers from being victims of fraudulent tax schemes, misleading Web sites and predatory refund loans.

H.R. 1677 does this. It provides higher penalties for deceptive Web sites and mass e-mails. It requires the IRS to notify you if your identity is stolen in a tax scam. It reduces predatory refund loans.

H.R. 1677 expands IRS outreach programs to millions of taxpayers eligible for the earned income tax credit who have not claimed it. This credit lifts millions of working Americans out of poverty each year.

Madam Speaker, this is a good bill. This is an important bill. This is a necessary bill. On this tax day we must do more for taxpayers. I urge my colleagues, all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to vote ''yes'' for H.R. 1677.

Mr. MARKEY. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 1677, the "Taxpayer Protection Act of 2007."

I would like to focus my remarks on Section 8 of this bill, which clarifies the intent of the Congress that the existing legal prohibitions on the misuse of Department of the Treasury names and symbols also extend to misuse over the Internet. I support this provision, which addresses a very real problem that currently exists with potentially misleading commercial websites that taxpayers may mistakenly believe to be affiliated with the IRS.

In February, the Subcommittee on Telecommunications and the Internet, which I chair, became aware of three commercial websites operating under domain names which may confuse the public into believing them to be official IRS websites: IRS.com, IRS.net and IRS.org. In response to this situation, I wrote to the Federal Trade Commission Chairman Majoras, Secretary of the Treasury Paulson, and Internal Revenue Service Commissioner Everson to express my concerns that consumers who visited these sites might provide the operators with personally identifiable information and tax return information, enabling the operators to either market or sell this information to others, or to sell and market all manner of products and services to these taxpayers.

A consumer survey and study presented to the IRS and FTC in early January of this year by the Computer and Communications Industry Association suggested that a significant proportion of consumers misinterpreted these three non-governmental Websites as being sites hosted by the IRS. The survey showed, for example, that before viewing the website IRS.com, 47 percent of those surveyed believed the site represented the Internet address of the Internal Revenue Service. Even after viewing the site, ⅓ of those surveyed still believed the site was the IRS website.

Now, the IRS.com website bears a remarkable resemblance to the official IRS.gov site. Both websites have the same color blue banner at the very top, a grey search bar right below, and a white background with various links and search features covering the bulk of the page. Back in February, the IRS.com site even had an actual image of the U.S. Treasury headquarters building on the top of the

page. At the time, there was only a fine-print disclaimer at the bottom of these sites stating that that it was a non-governmental site. This disclaimer was so far down on the webpage that few consumers were likely to view it.

I continue to be concerned about the potential for unfair or deceptive trade practices associated with these commercial websites, and I believe that we need to do more to ensure that the public does not continue to be exposed to these potentially misleading or confusing websites. There is no relationship between a citizen and our government more sensitive, nor information more private, than that involving individual taxes and the annual voluntary compliance obligation. The federal government has a duty to protect taxpayers from predatory behaviors as they seek to meet their obligation to pay taxes.

I am hopeful that, by clarifying the intent of the Congress that the existing legal prohibitions on misuse of Treasury Department and IRS names and symbols are and should be applied to commercial activity on the Internet, this bill will better protect the public from this kind of operation in the future.

I urge adoption of the bill.

Mr. EMANUEL. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1677, the Taxpayer Protection Act of 2007. Too often, middle-class taxpayers find themselves confused and frustrated by the complexity of the tax code. Over 60 percent of taxpayers now use a paid preparer to file their tax return, costing them hundreds or thousands of dollars that they could have used for college, health care, or retirement.

This legislation provides overdue relief for taxpayers that will protect them from fraud, require the IRS to do a better job of communicating which tax credits a taxpayer can qualify for, and hold tax cheats accountable for their actions. Today is Tax Day, and this legislation sends a message to taxpayers that help is on the way.

Hearings held by Chairman JOHN LEWIS provided ample evidence that taxpayers are too often exposed to identify theft or unaware of potential benefits. The Taxpayer Protection Act will require the IRS to notify taxpayers involved in tax fraud investigations that there may have been an unauthorized use of their identities, will provide filers with a longer period of time to seek restitution from the IRS for a wrongful penalty, punish predatory lenders, and require the IRS to promote the Earned Income Tax Credit so that more Americans can take care of a tax benefit they have earned but have not been notified.

Madam Speaker, Tax Day can be a difficult day for many Americans. Let us do our part to make common-sense reforms that put the government back on the side of the average taxpayer.

I thank Mr. RANGEL, the Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, for his leadership on this issue, and I urge my colleagues to join me in voting for H.R. 1677, the Taxpayer Protection Act of 2007.

Mr. LEVIN. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 1677, the Taxpayer Protection Act.

I would note that its consideration today is particularly timely as millions of hardworking Americans file their tax returns. Those workers and families deserve to know that their government is taking every step to protect the sensitive data contained in those returns and to enhance taxpayer rights.

Identity theft is a large and growing problem in our society, and unfortunately, a lack of vigilance on the part of the IRS has contributed to that problem. One criminal who testified before the Senate Finance Committee last week detailed how he stole $1.1 million from the Treasury by using stolen identities to claim fraudulent refunds. While this individual is rightly serving time in prison, we must act to prevent such crimes in the future.

This legislation contains a number of common sense provisions to accomplish just that, including a requirement that the IRS notify a taxpayer if it discovers that there may have been an unauthorized use of the taxpayer's identity during the course of a tax fraud investigation and the authority for the IRS to notify taxpayers on the Internet about unclaimed tax refunds. It also increases penalties on misleading websites that use government names and symbols to engage in the fraudulent practice known as ''phishing. ''

I am also pleased that it enhances Earned Income Tax Credit outreach so that every taxpayer who is eligible for this credit realizes its benefits.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the legislation.

Mr. MARKEY. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 1677, the ''Taxpayer Protection Act of 2007.''

I would like to focus my remarks on Section 8 of this bill, which clarifies the intent of the Congress that the existing legal prohibitions on the misuse of Department of Treasury names and symbols extend to misuse over the Internet. I support this provision, which addresses a very real problem that currently exists with potentially misleading commercial Web sites that taxpayers may mistakenly believe to be affiliated with the IRS.

In February, the Subcommittee on Telecommunications and the Internet, which I chair, became aware of three commercial Web sites operating under domain names which may confuse the public into believing them to be official IRS Web sites: IRS.com, IRS.net, and IRS.org. In response to this situation, I wrote to the Federal Trade Commission Chairman Majoras, Secretary of the Treasury Paulson, and Internal Revenue Service Commissioner Everson to express my concerns that consumers who visited these sites might provide the operators with personally identifiable information and tax return information, enabling the operators to either market or sell this information to others, or to sell and market all manner of products and services to these taxpayers. Since the taxpayers who provide personal information to these sites might be doing so under the misimpression that they were dealing with an official government Web site subject to applicable federal privacy protections, I felt there was a serious potential for consumer confusion, deception, and abuse.

In fact, a consumer survey and study presented to the IRS and FTC in early January of this year by the Computer and Communications Industry Association suggested that a significant proportion of consumers misinterpreted these three nongovernmental Web sites as being sites hosted by the IRS. The survey showed, for example, that before viewing the Web site IRS.com, 47 percent of those surveyed believed the site represented the Internet address of the Internal Revenue Service. Even after viewing the site, one third of those surveyed still believed the site was the IRS Web site.

Now, the IRS.com Web site bears a remarkable resemblance to the official IRS.gov site. Both Web sites have the same color blue banner at the very top, a grey search bar right below, and a white background with various links and search features covering the bulk of the page. Back in February, the IRS.com site even had an actual image of the U.S. Treasury headquarters building on the top of the page. At the time, there was only a fine-print disclaimer at the bottom of this site stating that it was a non-governmental site. This disclaimer was so far down on the Web page that few consumers were likely to view it.

I asked the FTC, the Treasury, and the IRS to look into the issues raised by this Web site, as well as the IRS.org and IRS.net sites. The IRS and the Treasury Department have never formally responded to my inquiry. However, the IRS has issued a press statement warning taxpayers about these potentially misleading sites. The FTC did respond to my letter, but in that response merely noted that in response to the concerns I had raised, the operator had ''made a number of changes to distinguish it from the official IRS Web site, and to better highlight the disclaimers included on the Web site.''

I continue to be concerned about the potential for unfair or deceptive trade practices associated with these commercial Web sites, and I believe that we need to do more to ensure that the public does not continue to be exposed to these potentially misleading or confusing Web sites. There is no relationship between a citizen and our government more sensitive, nor information more private, than that involving individual taxes and the annual voluntary compliance obligation. The federal government has a duty to protect taxpayers from predatory behaviors as they seek to meet their obligation to pay taxes. I am hopeful that by clarifying the intent of the Congress that the existing legal prohibitions on misuse of Treasury Department and IRS names and symbols is and should be applied to commercial activity on the Internet, that this bill will better protect the public from this kind of operation in the future.

I urge adoption of the bill.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. TAUSCHER). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LEWIS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1677, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Madam 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 Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF WORLD WATER DAY

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 196) supporting the goals and ideals of World Water Day.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 196

Whereas the global celebration of World Water Day is an initiative that grew out of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro;

Whereas the United Nations General Assembly, via resolution, designated March 22 of each year as World Water Day;

Whereas although water is the most widely occurring substance on earth, only 2.53 percent of all water is freshwater and the remainder is salt water;

Whereas freshwater resources are further impaired by various forms of industrial, chemical, human, and agricultural pollution;

Whereas climate change will increasingly pose a challenge for ensuring the availability of sufficient water supplies at the appropriate times;

Whereas approximately one in six people in the world lack access to safe drinking water and approximately two in every five people lack access to basic sanitation services;

Whereas water-related diseases are among the most common causes of illness and death, afflicting primarily the poor and very poor in developing countries;

Whereas up to five million people die each year from preventable water and sanitation related diseases, including one out of every five children in the poorest countries;

Whereas every $1 invested in safe drinking water and sanitation yields an economic return of between $3 and $34, depending on the region;

Whereas increasing access to safe drinking water and sanitation advances efforts towards other United States development objectives including fighting poverty and hunger, promoting primary education and gender equality, reducing child mortality, promoting environmental stability, improving the lives of slum dwellers, and strengthening national security;

Whereas the participants in the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, including the United States, agreed to the Plan of Implementation which included an agreement to work to reduce by one-half from the baseline year 1990 ''the proportion of people who are unable to reach or to afford safe drinking water,'' and ''the proportion of people without access to basic sanitation'' by 2015; and

Whereas Congress passed and the President signed into law the ''Senator Paul Simon Water for the Poor Act of 2005'' (Public Law 109–121) which was intended to ''elevate the role of water and sanitation policy in the development of U.S. foreign policy and improve the effectiveness of U.S. official programs'': Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) supports the goals and ideals of World Water Day;

(2) recognizes the importance of increasing access to safe drinking water and sanitation, as well as the conservation and sustainable management of water resources, to human health and quality of life across the globe;

(3) urges an increased effort and the investment of greater resources by the Department of State, the United States Agency for International Development, and all relevant Federal departments and agencies towards providing sustainable and equitable access to safe drinking water and sanitation for the poor and very poor; and

(4) encourages the people of the United States to observe World Water Day with appropriate recognition, ceremonies, activities, and programs to demonstrate the importance of water to humanity.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution, and I yield myself such time as I might consume.

I would first like to commend my distinguished colleague and a former member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, EARL BLUMENAUER of Oregon, for introducing this important resolution.

Nearly 5 years ago, representatives of governments around the globe, including the United States, stood together and agreed to reduce by one-half the number of people who lack access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation by the year 2015. We now stand at the midpoint of that target, and we are no closer to reaching it than we were at the outset.

Today over 900 million people lack access to safe water, and over 1.3 billion people do not have access to basic sanitation. Climate change is rapidly depleting the world's already badly stretched water resources.

Each year more than 3 billion of our fellow human beings suffer from preventable water-related diseases. As a result of these diseases, 5 million people die. Most of these victims are children under the age of 5. Clearly, more must be done to address this humanitarian catastrophe.

Our legislation, H. Res. 196, demonstrates the commitment of the Congress to achieve the goals and ideals of World Water Day to increase the availability of clean water.

Collectively, we have the means to address this global crisis. What we need is political will for action. Congress swiftly acted with the passage of the Senator Paul Simon Water for the Poor Act in 2005, a critically important piece of legislation spearheaded by the distinguished gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) with the support of my former colleague, Chairman Henry Hyde, and myself.

This resolution is another step in improving our commitment to bringing clean water and basic sanitation to the poorest of the poor. H. Res. 196 urges our own government to utilize every resource at our disposal to improve access to clean water and sanitation for those most in need. It recognizes the importance of conservation and sustainable management of water resources to both human health and the quality of life.

We must do all we can to provide clean water and basic sanitation for all people across the globe.

Madam Speaker, I strongly support this resolution and urge all of my colleagues to do so.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in support of House Resolution 196, which expresses the support of this House for the goals and ideals associated with World Water Day.

The lack of access to safe drinking water and the lack of adequate sanitation systems continue to be major problems for poor people around the world despite our strong efforts over many decades to help address those challenges. The lack of clean water and sanitation systems in many parts of the world lead to the spread of disease and to the deaths that might otherwise have been avoided and undermines the efforts we take to assist poor people around the world as they seek a better life.

Madam Speaker, I just got back last week from a heart-wrenching trip to Darfur, and we saw firsthand how important a resource water is to so many people. We saw, by visiting the clinics, how many people are afflicted with the diseases that are borne because of the water that is not pure, that is not sanitized and that is, in fact, full of bacteria. I understand how important it is to support the goals and ideals of this resolution before us commemorating World Water Day.

In addition to sanitation and access to clean water, the conservation of water resources is, itself, an increasing challenge around the world. Conservation of drinking water will, in fact, remain even a greater challenge in the near future as mankind's population continues to expand and the demand for fresh, clean water increases.

In calling for the appropriate Departments and agencies of the United States Government to increase our efforts to support access to clean water, availability of sanitation systems and conservation of water, this resolution properly cites the Senator Paul Simon Water for the Poor Act of 2005 enacted in the last Congress, which called for a greater focus on the objectives that are associated with World Water Day.

This resolution rightfully seeks to highlight this global problem encouraging all of us to observe World Water Day every year on March 22. I support the intent of this resolution and its adoption by this House.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of our time.

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield 7 minutes to the author of this resolution, my good friend from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER).

Mr. BLUMENAUER. I appreciate the chairman's courtesy. I appreciate his leadership in working with me on this bill.

Madam Speaker, as we stagger under the implications of what we have just witnessed at Virginia Tech, I think part of what we ought to do is to rededicate ourselves to simple steps that will help make the world a better place. I can think of no better or direct way for us to act today than what this legislation means for us.

I would begin by thanking the gentlewoman from Texas, Ms. JOHNSON, who can't be here right now because she is actually chairing a committee dealing with water pollution as we speak, as Chair of the Water Resources Subcommittee. She has been really a terrific champion. I see here today my friend from Tennessee, the former Chair of the subcommittee, who likewise has been focusing on the central need for us to be respectful of water supply.

As the old joke goes, God gives us water for free, but he doesn't give us the pipes, the distribution system and purification.

Across the world, as my good friends from the Foreign Affairs Committee have just enumerated, every day millions and millions of poor people are paying the price for nature's failure to provide water exactly where they live, and a failure of stewardship on the part of governments and individuals to take care of the water that they have.

□ 1415

They are paying the price for pollution from inadequate or nonexistent sanitation, and far too many poor people are paying a huge amount of their scarce income because they can't otherwise get water. They are paying in time and in money. There are some poor people that are slowly going blind because of arsenic poisoning in their water system in Bangladesh.

I used to think that the pictures in the National Geographic articles with the water jug on the head was sort of exotic, but now I recognize this as the face of poverty. Indeed it is a travesty as young women particularly spend 1, 2, or 3 hours with that jug of water balanced on their head to meet the needs of their family. That is time that they are not spending in school, that is time that they are not spending economically to support that family. As has been mentioned, every 15 seconds a child dies from lack of access to safe drinking water and sanitation, and each is an unnecessary death because we know exactly what to do to stop it. Indeed, there are people from churches and synagogues and Boy Scout troops and Kiwanis Clubs that are acting on their own to help provide water around the world.

Lack of access to drinking water and sanitation is the number one preventable killer in the world. And I won't repeat the statistics, mind numbing as they are, of over 2 billion people without access to sanitation, and the fact that half the people who are sick today around the globe are sick needlessly from waterborne diseases.

As my friend from Florida said, this is tied to other health problems, HIV/AIDS, and poverty reduction. The tragedy is compounded because we are not doing enough to stop it. By recognizing the goals and ideals of World Water Day, we commit again on this floor to spread the word about this grave issue and build the momentum to address it.

As the chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee pointed out, in 2002 the world did take a stand. I was privileged to be at that conference in Johannesburg, where the United States and 185 other countries agreed to that ambitious goal. The frustration is that this goal can be met, if done correctly, for less than the cost of a takeout pizza a year for an American family.

In 2005, the Congress passed and the President signed into law the Paul Simon Water for the Poor Act, which I thought was important because not only were we for the first time taking a stand, but the way that we did it, with the leadership of Mr. LANTOS and Mr. Hyde; and on the Senate side we had the minority leader and the majority leader coming together in broad bipartisan legislation. We were for the first time providing a plan to implement the commitment that the United States and 185 other countries made.

I am saddened as we come to the floor today, however, that the Bush administration has failed to implement this legislation. Instead, as I read the budget, the President has proposed major cuts to the already inadequate commitment from the United States to water and sanitation.

The centerpiece of this bill was to create a strategy for meeting our international commitments, to bring together some 15 agencies and departments, to have a plan. Sadly, the deadline has passed, and as yet, we don't have yet that comprehensive plan. We continue to use gimmicks and numbers games to claim that the administration is meeting Congress' requirements, but they are not. This resolution ought to be a point of emphasis that Congress demands a greater effort, not lesser, from the administration, and indeed from ourselves, as we come forward with the budgets this year. We should insist that the United States stand by its word and actually do something about this crisis. We are saying that we have to partner with poor people wherever they are, not in a few allied countries in the Middle East, but especially in sub-Saharan Africa, in South Asia, and around the world.

I would hope that with the help of the Foreign Affairs Committee and the distinguished leadership on the floor here that when the State Department comes back to Congress this June with its second report on the implementation of the bipartisan ''Water for the Poor Act,'' I would hope that it will match our legislation in scope, ambition, and focus. If not, let us return to the drawing board to find ways to help the State Department meet its obligation under the Act.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. I am now pleased to yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN), who is the former chairman of the Subcommittee on Water Resources and the Environment, and representing a district that surrounds Knoxville and includes Knoxville, who passed a resolution supporting the ideals of the issue before us.

Mr. DUNCAN. Madam Speaker, I thank, first of all, the gentlelady from Florida, the new ranking member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, for yielding me this time and for her kind words and her strong support of this legislation. I also commend Chairman LANTOS for bringing this resolution to the floor. But I especially want to commend my good friend and colleague, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for his work in bringing this matter to the floor today and also calling attention to what is a very, very serious problem.

I had the privilege of chairing the Aviation Subcommittee for 6 years, and that subcommittee seemed to generate a lot of attention and publicity. Then I chaired for 6 years the Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee, and unfortunately I think people did not pay as much attention to that subcommittee; and I thought it was just as important, perhaps more important, than the Aviation Subcommittee. And yet I said many times there probably is nothing that the people in this country take for granted as much as they do our clean water and wastewater infrastructure in this Nation.

Madam Speaker, much work needs to be done in this country in regard to our water to keep it to the standards that the people of this country want. And so the day after tomorrow we will hopefully pass a long overdue bill, the Water Resources Development Act, a bill that we passed two or three times here in the House, that has been held up in the Senate, but that is very, very important for our water infrastructure in this Nation.

You have heard some of the statistics already. My statistics vary just a little bit. I was given the information that 1.2 billion don't have access to clean water; Chairman LANTOS said a lower figure, I think Mr. BLUMENAUER said a higher figure, but it is an astounding number of people, whatever the exact number is, that don't have access to a good, clean water source.

Water-related diseases, as Chairman LANTOS said, kill over 5 million people each year. Six million are blind today because of trachoma, an eye infection

spread through poor hygiene caused by dirty water and unsanitary conditions. I could give all kinds of statistics.

As the gentlelady from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) said, I was proud that in my hometown of Knoxville recently, the city council, at the urging of our great Mayor Bill Haslam, passed a proclamation in support of World Water Day. This was done without my knowledge, and so I am pleased that other people are helping to call attention to what is one of the most serious problems that this world faces today.

And so I think that it is very appropriate that the Congress take up a resolution at this time, and I think that this will help lead to progress in this area, much, much needed progress; and I urge support for this resolution.

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to my good friend from Ohio, the distinguished chairman of the Oversight and Government Reform Subcommittee on Domestic Policy, Mr. KUCINICH.

Mr. KUCINICH. I thank my friend, Mr. LANTOS.

I rise as a proud cosponsor of this bill emphasizing the importance of water. Despite the availability of advanced and inexpensive water treatment technologies and despite an aggregate level of wealth that should preclude injustice, one in six people in the world still lack access to safe drinking water. Global warming is expected to worsen the situation.

At the same time, privatization of our scarce water supplies is also proliferating. It drives up the price of a life-giving resource under the guise of making it cheaper. In its most egregious form, bottled water companies overpump a valuable water supply, restricting access to only those who can afford to pay more for water than for gas.

I represent an area of Cleveland that, like many nearby cities, relies on Lake Erie for drinking water. During negotiations by Great Lakes States over the conditions under which water could be withdrawn from Lake Erie and the surrounding Great Lakes, the bottled water industry slipped in their own language; it allowed exclusive, unlimited access to Great Lakes water by their industry. By weakening the agreement in this way, it also paved the way for any corporation to have full access to the lakes, even at the expense of the public water supply. This is happening at a time when both water quality and quantity are expected to decline as a result of global warming.

In Nottingham and Barrington, two small New Hampshire towns, a company called USA Springs is attempting to pump 310,000 gallons a day in an area populated with homes that get their water from small, private, household wells. The community is concerned about loss of their water supply, loss of water quality, degradation of nearby wetlands, but USA Springs is using their substantial resources to overwhelm the community. The result is that this company, USA Springs, is now dangerously close to winning this battle it started in 2001. Similar battles are being fought in communities all over the country.

The basic building blocks of life, like water, must be accessible by people before corporations and must be managed as a public trust, not reduced to a commodity.

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to my friend and neighbor from California, Congresswoman LYNN WOOLSEY, chairwoman of the Education and Labor Subcommittee on Workforce Protections.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Speaker, today I rise in support of the World Water Day resolution, H.R. 196, and I am proud to be a cosponsor of Congressman BLUMENAUER's resolution.

The district I represent includes Marin and Sonoma Counties just north of San Francisco. My district is very ecologically diverse. In fact, we are putting new life into our wetlands, we are expanding our wetlands. We have wastewater treatment plants that make it possible for us to send our wastewater and use our wastewater to water our grapes, and we have one of the best grape growing counties in the country.

In fact, in my very own backyard, my drip system that waters my yard is controlled by satellite because my town of Petaluma is experimenting. They picked 100 houses and asked us, would we let them use our drip systems as an experimental project; and it will indeed save me money and save water, I am sure. Along with that, many of our commercial and recreation activities in my district are focused around water.

So even with programs like this throughout our country, throughout the world, we are squandering. We still squander this precious resource called water.

World Water Day raises the profile of the issue. It means that we must keep on working, we must keep on paying attention to safe and sustainable water supplies, and we must make safe and sustainable water available without regard to any economic or any political boundaries.

Recently, there has been an entirely renewed attention to global warming, and with that, we are paying more attention to our water resources and what we need to do to keep a safe and liveable world, not just for Americans, not just for Petalumans, but for everyone.

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

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 196.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. LANTOS. Madam 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 Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

□ 1430

CONDEMNING RECENT VIOLENT ACTIONS OF GOVERNMENT OF ZIMBABWE AGAINST PEACEFUL OPPOSITION PARTY ACTIVISTS AND MEMBERS OF CIVIL SOCIETY

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 100) condemning the recent violent actions of the Government of Zimbabwe against peaceful opposition party activists and members of civil society, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

H. CON. RES. 100

Whereas in 2005 the Government of Zimbabwe launched Operation Murambatsvina (''Operation Throw Out the Trash'') against citizens in major cities and suburbs throughout Zimbabwe, depriving over 700,000 people of their homes, businesses, and livelihoods;

Whereas on March 11, 2007, opposition party activists and members of civil society attempted to hold a peaceful prayer meeting to protest the economic and political crisis engulfing Zimbabwe, where inflation is running over 3,000 percent and formal sector unemployment stands at 80 percent and in response to President Robert Mugabe's announcement that he intends to seek reelection in 2008;

Whereas opposition activist Gift Tandare died on March 11, 2007, as a result of being shot by police while attempting to attend the prayer meeting and Itai Manyeruke died on March 12, 2007, as a result of police beatings and was found in a morgue by his family on March 20, 2007;

Whereas under the direction of President Robert Mugabe and the Zimbabwe African National Union–Patriotic Front (ZANU–PF) government, police officers, security forces, and youth militia brutally assaulted the peaceful demonstrators and arrested opposition leaders and hundreds of civilians;

Whereas Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) leader Morgan Tsvangarai was brutally assaulted and suffered a fractured skull, lacerations, and major bruising; MDC member Sekai Holland, a 64-year old grandmother, suffered ruthless attacks at Highfield Police Station, which resulted in the breaking of her leg, knee, arm, and three ribs; fellow activist Grace Kwinje, age 33, also was brutally beaten, while part of one ear was ripped off; and Nelson Chamisa was badly injured by suspected state agents at Harare airport on March 18, 2007, when trying to board a plane for a meeting of Africa Caribbean Pacific (APC) lawmakers in Brussels, Belgium;

Whereas Zimbabwe's foreign minister warned Western diplomats that the Government of Zimbabwe would expel them if they

gave support to the opposition, and said Western diplomats had gone too far by offering food and water to jailed opposition activists;

Whereas victims of physical assault by the Government of Zimbabwe have been denied emergency medical transfer to hospitals in neighboring South Africa, where their wounds can be properly treated;

Whereas those incarcerated by the Government of Zimbabwe were denied access to legal representatives and lawyers appearing at the jails to meet with detained clients were themselves threatened and intimidated;

Whereas at the time of Zimbabwe's independence, President Robert Mugabe was hailed as a liberator and Zimbabwe showed bright prospects for democracy, economic development, domestic reconciliation, and prosperity;

Whereas President Robert Mugabe and his ZANU–PF government continue to turn away from the promises of liberation and use state power to deny the people of Zimbabwe the freedom and prosperity they fought for and deserve;

Whereas the staggering suffering brought about by the misrule of Zimbabwe has created a large-scale humanitarian crisis in which 3,500 people die each week from a combination of disease, hunger, neglect, and despair;

Whereas the Chairman of the African Union, President Alpha Oumar Konare, expressed ''great concern'' about Zimbabwe's crisis and called for the need for the scrupulous respect for human rights and democratic principles in Zimbabwe;

Whereas the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Council of Nongovernmental Organizations stated that ''We believe that the crisis has reached a point where Zimbabweans need to be strongly persuaded and directly assisted to find an urgent solution to the crisis that affects the entire region.'';

Whereas Zambian President Levy Mwanawasa has likened Zimbabwe to a ''sinking Titanic'' and has urged southern Africa to take a new approach to Zimbabwe, stating that ''quiet diplomacy has failed to help solve the political chaos and economic meltdown in Zimbabwe'';

Whereas European Union and African, Caribbean, and Pacific lawmakers strongly condemned the latest attack on an opposition official in Zimbabwe and urged the government in Harare to cooperate with the political opposition to restore the rule of law; and

Whereas United States Ambassador to Zimbabwe, Christopher Dell, warned that opposition to President Robert Mugabe had reached a tipping point because the people no longer feared the regime and believed they had nothing left to lose: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That—

(1) it is the sense of Congress that—

(A) the state-sponsored violence taking place in Zimbabwe represents a serious violation of fundamental human rights and the rule of law and should be condemned by all responsible governments, civic organizations, religious leaders, and international bodies; and

(B) the Government of Zimbabwe has not lived up to its commitments as a signatory to the Constitutive Act of the African Union and African Charter of Human and Peoples Rights which enshrine commitment to human rights and good governance as foundational principles of African states; and

(2) Congress—

(A) condemns the Government of Zimbabwe's violent suppression of political and human rights through its police force, security forces, and youth militia that deliberately inflict gross physical harm, intimidation, and abuse on those legitimately protesting the failing policies of the government;

(B) holds those individual police, security force members, and militia involved in abuse and torture responsible for the acts that they have committed;

(C) condemns government harassment and intimidation of lawyers attempting to carry out their professional obligations to their clients and repeated failure by police to comply promptly with court decisions;

(D) condemns the harassment of foreign officials, journalists, human rights workers, and others, including threatening their expulsion from the country if they continue to provide food and water to victims detained in prison and in police custody while in the hospital;

(E) commends United States Ambassador Christopher Dell and other United States Government officials and foreign officials for their support to political detainees and victims of torture and abuse while in police custody or in medical care centers and encourages them to continue providing such support;

(F) calls on the Government of Zimbabwe to cease immediately its violent campaign against fundamental human rights, to respect the courts and members of the legal profession, and to restore the rule of law while adhering to the principles embodied in an accountable democracy, including freedom of association and freedom of expression;

(G) calls on the Government of Zimbabwe to cease illegitimate interference in travel abroad by its citizens, especially for humanitarian purposes; and

(H) calls on the leaders of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the African Union to consult urgently with all Zimbabwe stakeholders to intervene with the Government of Zimbabwe while applying appropriate pressures to resolve the economic and political crisis.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) each will control 20 minutes.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, first I want to thank my good friend from Florida, Ranking Member ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN of the Foreign Affairs Committee, Chairman DONALD PAYNE and Ranking Member CHRIS SMITH, and all the other cosponsors of this resolution for joining me in condemning the egregious violence perpetrated against innocent civilians by the Government of Zimbabwe.

For the past 6 years, the Government of Zimbabwe has been on a path of failed policies and distorted vision. As the economy of the country spiraled downward, the Central Bank has been unresponsive and reckless.

Zimbabwe was once known as Southern Africa's bread basket. But after years of disastrous misrule, the people there now find themselves eating field mice to stave off hunger. Zimbabwean officials have the temerity to declare to the world that they eat field mice because they are a delicacy.

On March 11, many segments of Zimbabwe's society joined together to hold a prayer breakfast to focus attention on the country's desperate situation. The government reacted swiftly, violently cracking down on the gathering. In this incident, six opposition activists were shot, and over 50 had to be hospitalized, including key opposition leaders, many of whom did not get proper treatment for their severe injuries.

This latest incident underscores a disturbing pattern of recent years. The Zimbabwean Government pledges peace, then commits human rights violations against its own people, and it precipitates humanitarian crisis after humanitarian crisis. In response to legitimate protests, the government has retaliated with draconian legislation and harsh security enforcement. It transformed Zimbabwe's poor children into violent militia members, not unlike child soldiers in other ravaged African countries.

In 2005, the Zimbabwean Government launched its infamous Operation Throw Out the Trash against citizens in major cities, driving some 700,000 innocent people from their homes, businesses, and livelihoods.

So I ask Mugabe, the dictator of this country, what kind of human being called himself a ''leader,'' yet is willing to commit atrocities against the very people he is supposed to lead?

In spite of Zimbabwe's embittered rhetoric toward the United States, our Congress passed, 6 years ago, the Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act, offering significant economic and political aid to Zimbabwe if it would reverse its anti-democratic and anti-people ways.

Zimbabwe had invaded a neighboring country, grossly mismanaged its economy, flaunted the rule of law and democratic practices. Using the diplomatic tools at our disposal, our government imposed travel and economic sanctions against individuals who were responsible for the grossest violations.

The United States remains open to change in Zimbabwe, hopeful about prospects and ready to reward its arrival. We clearly provided an opportunity for Zimbabwe to reverse course and to reap generous economic benefits from the American people.

Unfortunately, the Zimbabwean leaders are bent on a bitter and disastrous course that no sane or rational appeal from its own citizens or the community of nations has been able to reverse.

Today Zimbabwe, once one of the most promising countries of Africa, is a dismal shadow of its former self. It faces an unfathomable inflation rate of

3,000 percent, the highest on the planet, and a shocking 80 percent of the people of the country are unemployed.

Our resolution condemns the economic and political madness that is gripping Zimbabwe and urges the government to return to sanity, end the state-sponsored violence, and address the needs of its people.

I, again, want to thank all of those who cosponsored my resolution and urge all of my colleagues to vote in support of H. Con. Res. 100.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I am very pleased to be an original cosponsor of House Concurrent Resolution 100, authored by the esteemed Chair of our Foreign Affairs Committee, the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS). And this resolution, Madam Speaker, condemns the Government of Zimbabwe for its latest assault against political freedom and human rights in that country.

Once hailed by some as a liberator, President Mugabe of Zimbabwe has been exposed as a tyrant and a thug.

Under his authoritarian rule, Zimbabwe boasts the highest rate of inflation in the world, currently standing at an estimated 3,000 percent. Formal sector unemployment stands at 80 percent. Literacy rates are declining, and life expectancy has plummeted to 38 years. Thirty-eight years is the life expectancy in that country.

Large scale commercial farming has been effectively destroyed by a disastrous land reform program which ultimately displaced poor black farmers in favor of political cronies, and acute food shortages which have since left Zimbabweans dependent on international food aid.

The very same party that emerged from a hard-fought struggle for majority rule, shouting slogans of equality and justice, has now taken to arresting, to beating and to intimidating anyone who dares to challenge its policies.

It is clear that, absent meaningful corrective measures, Mugabe's legacy will be defined by his responsibility for the ruinous policies and draconian laws that have brought untold suffering to his people and the near collapse of Zimbabwe as a nation.

Rather than address the underlying inequities that have driven Zimbabwe to economic and political ruin, Mugabe prefers to engage in soapbox demagoguery and espouse conspiracy theories of Western imperialism.

He interferes with the work of nongovernmental organizations that are attempting to aid Zimbabweans in need. He harasses, he threatens foreign diplomats, and he even revokes the visas of congressional staffers from our Foreign Affairs Committee attempting to travel to the region to get a clear understanding of what is happening in Zimbabwe.

Mugabe thumbs his nose at Western nations that condemn his assault on basic human rights, particularly those who appear committed to helping Zimbabwe realize its potential through true democratic reform.

Zimbabwe's neighbors and the African Union should take proactive measures to help resolve this crisis, including by pressing the Mugabe regime to immediately halt its brutal crackdown, to release political prisoners, and to engage in meaningful dialogue with the opposition and with civil society.

The President of Zambia already has stepped up to the plate in this regard, and South Africa would be well advised to follow suit.

I thank the gentleman from California again, our chairman of our Foreign Affairs Committee, for introducing this very important and timely resolution. And I urge the full support of our House.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of our time.

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, I am delighted to yield 5 minutes to my good friend from New Jersey, chairman of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health, Mr. PAYNE.

(Mr. PAYNE asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PAYNE. Madam Speaker, I rise to speak in support of H. Con. Res. 100, and commend Mr. LANTOS and the ranking member for this H. Con. Res. 100, condemning the violence and the violent action taken against the peaceful opposition party activists and members of civil society in Zimbabwe just a few months ago, last month in March.

Zimbabwe has faced a number of political and economic challenges over the past 7 years. Every time I begin to believe that the situation in Zimbabwe has calmed down, something happens which reminds me of how volatile the situation really is.

The March 11 crackdown on people who were gathering at a prayer meeting was a disturbing display of violence. Two people were killed. The leader of the Movement for Democratic Change, Morgan Tsvangari, and other members of the MDC were tortured while in police custody.

Two women were beaten so severely they needed specialized medical care that was only available in South Africa. One of them, Sekai Holland, had her leg broken in three places, her knee broken and her arm and three ribs broken. I cannot understand what possessed security forces to beat a 64-year-old woman so brutally.

And according to the people in Zimbabwe, abductions and killings continue. However, there are encouraging developments. What is most encouraging is that the regional leaders in Southern Africa have spoken out publicly. As recently mentioned, the President of Zambia has likened Zimbabwe to the Titanic, a sinking ship. Officials at the South African Department of Foreign Affairs expressed concern about the situation as well.

The leaders of Southern Africa's Development Community held a meeting of extraordinary heads of state in Tanzania in the wake of violence and asked South African President Thabo Mbeki to help resolve the situation.

This is an important step, and we should support SADC's effort. It is imperative that Congress do all we can to ensure that human rights and the rule of law are respected in Zimbabwe across the political spectrum.

As Mr. LANTOS mentioned, Zimbabwe had great promise. When the struggle to end white rule of Ian Smith was led by Mr. Nkhomo and Mr. Mugabe, the ZANU and ZAPO leaders, they finally were able to break the stranglehold of Ian Smith's government. And education was the order of the day, and the Zimbabweans went ahead to build a country.

But something happened in the meantime, and the move from multipartyism to single-party system, and Mr. Mugabe taking all of the power, that was a move in the wrong direction. And so we have seen multipartyism come back again. But this brutal behavior of the security forces must end.

In conclusion, I think that we should take a look at the Lancaster House Accords because this was an agreement between Zimbabwe and Great Britain where there would be willing seller-willing buyer purchase of the land that was in the hands of the very small minority of the white Rhodesians.

□ 1445

And there has to be a program of some land distribution. However, the way that Mr. Mugabe has been doing it, as Mr. LANTOS mentioned, in the past there was an attempt to assist Zimbabwe to see if we could help in that process, but we were denied.

So I just ask my colleagues if they would support this resolution, and, hopefully, Mr. Mugabe and the people of Zimbabwe will finally see the light.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield such time as he may consume to the former Chair of the Africa Subcommittee, now the ranking member, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Madam Speaker, I thank my good friend and colleague for yielding.

I rise in very strong support of H. Con. Res. 100. I want to thank Chairman LANTOS for sponsoring it. I think it sends a very clear and nonambiguous message to all parties, including the barbaric Mugabe regime.

Madam Speaker, 2 years ago almost to this date, April 21, I chaired a hearing of the House Subcommittee on Africa, Global Human Rights and International Operations entitled ''Zimbabwe: Prospects for Democracy after the March, 2005, Elections.'' At that time, I noted that ''Robert Mugabe was a hero to his people and to

his fellow Africans for successfully standing up to racism and oppression. More than two decades later, however, he has so tarnished his image that it must now resemble the fictional portrait of Dorian Gray, showing an increasingly repugnant picture of a hero who has gone astray.''

During the Mugabe reign, approximately 2.4 million people have been literally thrown out of their homes, and their homes have been bulldozed. There have been a number of killings and politically motivated kidnappings and torture. The government has relied on repressive laws to suppress freedom of speech, press, assembly, movement, association, and academic freedom. The Zimbabwean people have suffered greatly as a result of the government's extremely misguided economic policies, and many have died from preventable diseases. The U.S. Department of State concluded in its Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2006 that Zimbabwe and its government have ''engaged in pervasive and systematic abuse of human rights.''

Unfortunately, the situation has only worsened in 2007. The world community was shocked by the photos of beaten members of the political opposition who gathered on March 11 for a peaceful prayer meeting. Mugabe has continued to crack down on any political opposition and even threatened foreign diplomats who offered food and water to jailed opposition leaders.

It is essential that the entire international community raise its voice in support of those seeking democratic reforms in Zimbabwe. Among other measures, this resolution calls upon the Southern African Development Community, or SADC, and the African Union to consult urgently with all Zimbabwe stakeholders to intervene with the Government of Zimbabwe while applying appropriate pressures to resolve the economic and political crisis.

I must express my deep disappointment that SADC has failed to take decisive action with regard to Zimbabwe. Following consultations in Zimbabwe earlier this month, the executive director of SADC stated, ''What's good for Zimbabwe is good for the region. What's bad for Zimbabwe is bad for the region. I think it's time we did less talk and do the work.'' On that point, I could not agree more.

Unfortunately, rather than getting to work and pressing Mugabe to undertake meaningful reforms and halt his latest assault on human beings, on political and human rights, this statement was followed by a plea of support for the Mugabe regime by the International Monetary Fund.

Is the complete retraction of political and human rights and the beating to death of innocent civilians not bad for Zimbabwe? Are Mugabe's disastrous economic policies, which have resulted in inflation rates of up to 3,000 percent, unemployment rates of 80 percent, and the flight of thousands of economic and political refugees from Zimbabwe into other SADC countries not bad for the region? And what does the continued coddling of Mugabe say about the SADC members' commitment to a ''new vision'' of responsible governance under the New Economic Partnership for Africa Development, which was championed by South Africa?

Madam Speaker, the Mugabe government has used every means of suppression, every tool that they could muster, to crush those who disagree with that regime.

I urge the passage of this resolution in order to send an urgent message to SADC and to the rest of the international community to do everything necessary to resolve this crisis currently crippling Zimbabwe and provide any and all assistance that the Zimbabwean people so desperately need to achieve democratic reform, peace, and economic prosperity.

Again, I thank the author, Mr. LANTOS, and the ranking member for bringing to the floor this timely and extremely important piece of legislation.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 100, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. LANTOS. Madam 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 Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

THE AMERICAN NATIONAL RED CROSS GOVERNANCE MODERNIZATION ACT OF 2007

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1681) to amend the Congressional Charter of The American National Red Cross to modernize its governance structure, to enhance the ability of the board of governors of The American National Red Cross to support the critical mission of The American National Red Cross in the 21st century, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1681

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 American National Red Cross Governance Modernization Act of 2007''.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS; SENSE OF CONGRESS.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following findings:

(1) Substantive changes to the Congressional Charter of The American National Red Cross have not been made since 1947.

(2) In February 2006, the board of governors of The American National Red Cross (the ''Board of Governors'') commissioned an independent review and analysis of the Board of Governors' role, composition, size, relationship with management, governance relationship with chartered units of The American National Red Cross, and whistleblower and audit functions.

(3) In an October 2006 report of the Board of Governors, entitled ''American Red Cross Governance for the 21st Century'' (the ''Governance Report''), the Board of Governors recommended changes to the Congressional Charter, bylaws, and other governing documents of The American National Red Cross to modernize and enhance the effectiveness of the Board of Governors and governance structure of The American National Red Cross.

(4) It is in the national interest to create a more efficient governance structure of The American National Red Cross and to enhance the Board of Governors' ability to support the critical mission of The American National Red Cross in the 21st century.

(5) It is in the national interest to clarify the role of the Board of Governors as a governance and strategic oversight board and for The American National Red Cross to amend its bylaws, consistent with the recommendations described in the Governance Report, to clarify the role of the Board of Governors and to outline the areas of its responsibility, including—

(A) reviewing and approving the mission statement for The American National Red Cross;

(B) approving and overseeing the corporation's strategic plan and maintaining strategic oversight of operational matters;

(C) selecting, evaluating, and determining the level of compensation of the corporation's chief executive officer;

(D) evaluating the performance and establishing the compensation of the senior leadership team and providing for management succession;

(E) overseeing the financial reporting and audit process, internal controls, and legal compliance;

(F) holding management accountable for performance;

(G) providing oversight of the financial stability of the corporation;

(H) ensuring the inclusiveness and diversity of the corporation;

(I) ensuring the chapters of the corporation are geographically and regionally diverse;

(J) providing oversight of the protection of the brand of the corporation; and

(K) assisting with fundraising on behalf of the corporation.

(6)(A) The selection of members of the Board of Governors is a critical component of effective governance for The American National Red Cross, and, as such, it is in the national interest that The American National Red Cross amend its bylaws to provide a method of selection consistent with that described in the Governance Report.

(B) The new method of selection should replace the current process by which—

(i) 30 chartered unit-elected members of the Board of Governors are selected by a non-Board committee which includes 2 members of the Board of Governors and other individuals elected by the chartered units themselves;

(ii) 12 at-large members of the Board of Governors are nominated by a Board committee and elected by the Board of Governors; and

(iii) 8 members of the Board of Governors are appointed by the President of the United States.

(C) The new method of selection described in the Governance Report reflects the single category of members of the Board of Governors that will result from the implementation of this Act:

(i) All Board members (except for the chairman of the Board of Governors) would be nominated by a single committee of the Board of Governors taking into account the criteria outlined in the Governance Report to assure the expertise, skills, and experience of a governing board.

(ii) The nominated members would be considered for approval by the full Board of Governors and then submitted to The American National Red Cross annual meeting of delegates for election, in keeping with the standard corporate practice whereby shareholders of a corporation elect members of a board of directors at its annual meeting.

(7) The United States Supreme Court held The American National Red Cross to be an instrumentality of the United States, and it is in the national interest that the Congressional Charter confirm that status and that any changes to the Congressional Charter do not affect the rights and obligations of The American National Red Cross to carry out its purposes.

(8) Given the role of The American National Red Cross in carrying out its services, programs, and activities, and meeting its various obligations, the effectiveness of The American National Red Cross will be promoted by the creation of an organizational ombudsman who—

(A) will be a neutral or impartial dispute resolution practitioner whose major function will be to provide confidential and informal assistance to the many internal and external stakeholders of The American National Red Cross;

(B) will report to the chief executive officer and the audit committee of the Board of Governors; and

(C) will have access to anyone and any documents in The American National Red Cross.

(b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) charitable organizations are an indispensable part of American society, but these organizations can only fulfill their important roles by maintaining the trust of the American public;

(2) trust is fostered by effective governance and transparency, which are the principal goals of the recommendations of the Board of Governors in the Governance Report and this Act;

(3) Federal and State action play an important role in ensuring effective governance and transparency by setting standards, rooting out violations, and informing the public;

(4) while The American National Red Cross is and will remain a Federally chartered instrumentality of the United States, and it has the rights and obligations consistent with that status, The American National Red Cross nevertheless should maintain appropriate communications with State regulators of charitable organizations and should cooperate with them as appropriate in specific matters as they arise from time to time; and

(5) while The American National Red Cross is and will remain a Federally chartered instrumentality of the United States, and it has the rights and obligations consistent with that status, The American National Red Cross nevertheless should maintain appropriate communications and collaborations with local, community, and faith-based non-profit organizations, including those organizations that work within minority communities.

SEC. 3. ORGANIZATION.

Section 300101 of title 36, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by inserting ''a Federally chartered instrumentality of the United States and'' before ''a body corporate and politic''; and

(2) in subsection (b), by inserting at the end the following new sentence: ''The corporation may conduct its business and affairs, and otherwise hold itself out, as the 'American Red Cross' in any jurisdiction.''.

SEC. 4. PURPOSES.

Section 300102 of title 36, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking ''and'' at the end of paragraph (3);

(2) by striking the period at the end of paragraph (4) and inserting ''; and''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following paragraph:

''(5) to conduct other activities consistent with the foregoing purposes.''.

SEC. 5. MEMBERSHIP AND CHAPTERS.

Section 300103 of title 36, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by inserting '', or as otherwise provided,'' before ''in the bylaws'';

(2) in subsection (b)(1)—

(A) by striking ''board of governors'' and inserting ''corporation''; and

(B) by inserting ''policies and'' before ''regulations related''; and

(3) in subsection (b)(2)—

(A) by inserting ''policies and'' before ''regulations shall require''; and

(B) by striking ''national convention'' and inserting ''annual meeting''.

SEC. 6. BOARD OF GOVERNORS.

Section 300104 of title 36, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

''§ 300104. Board of governors

''(a) BOARD OF GOVERNORS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The board of governors is the governing body of the corporation with all powers of governing and directing, and of overseeing the management of the business and affairs of, the corporation.

''(2) NUMBER.—The board of governors shall fix by resolution, from time to time, the number of members constituting the entire board of governors, provided that—

''(A) as of March 31, 2009, and thereafter, there shall be no fewer than 12 and no more than 25 members; and

''(B) as of March 31, 2012, and thereafter, there shall be no fewer than 12 and no more than 20 members constituting the entire board.

Procedures to implement the preceding sentence shall be provided in the bylaws.

''(3) APPOINTMENT.—The governors shall be appointed or elected in the following manner:

''(A) CHAIRMAN.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—The board of governors, in accordance with procedures provided in the bylaws, shall recommend to the President an individual to serve as chairman of the board of governors. If such recommendation is approved by the President, the President shall appoint such individual to serve as chairman of the board of governors.

''(ii) VACANCIES.—Vacancies in the office of the chairman, including vacancies resulting from the resignation, death, or removal by the President of the chairman, shall be filled in the same manner described in clause (i).

''(iii) DUTIES.—The chairman shall be a member of the board of governors and, when present, shall preside at meetings of the board of governors and shall have such other duties and responsibilities as may be provided in the bylaws or a resolution of the board of governors.

''(B) OTHER MEMBERS.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—Members of the board of governors other than the chairman shall be elected at the annual meeting of the corporation in accordance with such procedures as may be provided in the bylaws.

''(ii) VACANCIES.—Vacancies in any such elected board position and in any newly created board position may be filled by a vote of the remaining members of the board of governors in accordance with such procedures as may be provided in the bylaws.

''(b) TERMS OF OFFICE.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The term of office of each member of the board of governors shall be 3 years, except that—

''(A) the board of governors may provide under the bylaws that the terms of office of members of the board of governors elected to the board of governors before March 31, 2012, may be less than 3 years in order to implement the provisions of subparagraphs (A) and (B) of subsection (a)(2); and

''(B) any member of the board of governors elected by the board to fill a vacancy in a board position arising before the expiration of its term may, as determined by the board, serve for the remainder of that term or until the next annual meeting of the corporation.

''(2) STAGGERED TERMS.—The terms of office of members of the board of governors (other than the chairman) shall be staggered such that, by March 31, 2012, and thereafter, ⅓ of the entire board (or as near to ⅓ as practicable) shall be elected at each successive annual meeting of the corporation with the term of office of each member of the board of governors elected at an annual meeting expiring at the third annual meeting following the annual meeting at which such member was elected.

''(3) TERM LIMITS.—No person may serve as a member of the board of governors for more than such number of terms of office or years as may be provided in the bylaws.

''(c) COMMITTEES AND OFFICERS.—The board—

''(1) may appoint, from its own members, an executive committee to exercise such powers of the board when the board is not in session as may be provided in the bylaws;

''(2) may appoint such other committees or advisory councils with such powers as may be provided in the bylaws or a resolution of the board of governors;

''(3) shall appoint such officers of the corporation, including a chief executive officer, with such duties, responsibilities, and terms of office as may be provided in the bylaws or a resolution of the board of governors; and

''(4) may remove members of the board of governors (other than the chairman), officers, and employees under such procedures as may be provided in the bylaws or a resolution of the board of governors.

''(d) ADVISORY COUNCIL.—

''(1) ESTABLISHMENT.—There shall be an advisory council to the board of governors.

''(2) MEMBERSHIP; APPOINTMENT BY PRESIDENT.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The advisory council shall be composed of no fewer than 8 and no more than 10 members, each of whom shall be appointed by the President from principal officers of the executive departments and senior officers of the Armed Forces whose positions and interests qualify them to contribute to carrying out the programs and purposes of the corporation.

''(B) MEMBERS FROM THE ARMED FORCES.—At least 1, but not more than 3, of the members of the advisory council shall be selected from the Armed Forces.

''(3) DUTIES.—The advisory council shall advise, report directly to, and meet, at least

1 time per year with the board of governors, and shall have such name, functions and be subject to such procedures as may be provided in the bylaws.

''(e) ACTION WITHOUT MEETING.—Any action required or permitted to be taken at any meeting of the board of governors or of any committee thereof may be taken without a meeting if all members of the board or committee, as the case may be, consent thereto in writing, or by electronic transmission and the writing or writings or electronic transmission or transmissions are filed with the minutes of proceedings of the board or committee. Such filing shall be in paper form if the minutes are maintained in paper form and shall be in electronic form if the minutes are maintained in electronic form.

''(f) VOTING BY PROXY.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Voting by proxy is not allowed at any meeting of the board, at the annual meeting, or at any meeting of a chapter.

''(2) EXCEPTION.—The board may allow the election of governors by proxy during any emergency.

''(g) BYLAWS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The board of governors may—

''(A) at any time adopt bylaws; and

''(B) at any time adopt bylaws to be effective only in an emergency.

''(2) EMERGENCY BYLAWS.—Any bylaws adopted pursuant to paragraph (1)(B) may provide special procedures necessary for managing the corporation during the emergency. All provisions of the regular bylaws consistent with the emergency bylaws remain effective during the emergency.

''(h) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this section—

''(1) the term 'entire board' means the total number of members of the board of governors that the corporation would have if there were no vacancies; and

''(2) the term 'emergency' shall have such meaning as may be provided in the bylaws.''.

SEC. 7. POWERS.

Subsection (a)(1) of section 300105 of title 36, United States Code, is amended by striking ''bylaws'' and inserting ''policies''.

SEC. 8. ANNUAL MEETING.

Section 300107 of title 36, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

''§ 300107. Annual meeting

''(a) IN GENERAL.—The annual meeting of the corporation is the annual meeting of delegates of the chapters.

''(b) TIME OF MEETING.—The annual meeting shall be held as determined by the board of governors.

''(c) PLACE OF MEETING.—The board of governors is authorized to determine that the annual meeting shall not be held at any place, but may instead be held solely by means of remote communication subject to such procedures as are provided in the bylaws.

''(d) VOTING.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—In matters requiring a vote at the annual meeting, each chapter is entitled to at least 1 vote, and voting on all matters may be conducted by mail, telephone, telegram, cablegram, electronic mail, or any other means of electronic or telephone transmission, provided that the person voting shall state, or submit information from which it can be determined, that the method of voting chosen was authorized by such person.

''(2) ESTABLISHMENT OF NUMBER OF VOTES.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The board of governors shall determine on an equitable basis the number of votes that each chapter is entitled to cast, taking into consideration the size of the membership of the chapters, the populations served by the chapters, and such other factors as may be determined by the board.

''(B) PERIODIC REVIEW.—The board of governors shall review the allocation of votes at least every 5 years.''.

SEC. 9. ENDOWMENT FUND.

Section 300109 of title 36, United States Code is amended—

(1) by striking ''nine'' from the first sentence thereof; and

(2) by striking the second sentence and inserting the following: ''The corporation shall prescribe policies and regulations on terms and tenure of office, accountability, and expenses of the board of trustees.''.

SEC. 10. ANNUAL REPORT AND AUDIT.

Subsection (a) of section 300110 of title 36, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

''(a) SUBMISSION OF REPORT.—As soon as practicable after the end of the corporation's fiscal year, which may be changed from time to time by the board of governors, the corporation shall submit a report to the Secretary of Defense on the activities of the corporation during such fiscal year, including a complete, itemized report of all receipts and expenditures.''.

SEC. 11. COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES AND OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 3001 of title 36, United States Code, is amended by redesignating section 300111 as section 300113 and by inserting after section 300110 the following new sections:

''§ 300111. Authority of the Comptroller General of the United States

''The Comptroller General of the United States is authorized to review the corporation's involvement in any Federal program or activity the Government carries out under law.

''§ 300112. Office of the Ombudsman

''(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The corporation shall establish an Office of the Ombudsman with such duties and responsibilities as may be provided in the bylaws or a resolution of the board of governors.

''(b) REPORT.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Office of the Ombudsman shall submit annually to the appropriate Congressional committees a report concerning any trends and systemic matters that the Office of the Ombudsman has identified as confronting the corporation.

''(2) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—For purposes of paragraph (1), the appropriate Congressional committees are the following committees of Congress:

''(A) SENATE COMMITTEES.—The appropriate Congressional committees of the Senate are—

''(i) the Committee on Finance;

''(ii) the Committee on Foreign Relations;

''(iii) the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions;

''(iv) the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs; and

''(v) the Committee on the Judiciary.

''(B) HOUSE COMMITTEES.—The appropriate Congressional committees of the House of Representatives are—

''(i) the Committee on Energy and Commerce;

''(ii) the Committee on Foreign Affairs;

''(iii) the Committee on Homeland Security;

''(iv) the Committee on the Judiciary; and

''(v) the Committee on Ways and Means.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for chapter 3001 of title 36, United States Code, is amended by striking the item relating to section 300111 and inserting the following:

''300111. Authority of the Comptroller General of the United States.

''300112. Office of the Ombudsman.

''300113. Reservation of right to amend or repeal.''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in strong support of this legislation. Wherever disaster strikes, the American Red Cross is on the scene to lend a helping hand in any immediate aftermath. In times of crisis, its staff of 35,000 and over 1 million Red Cross volunteers take on the daunting task of translating the compassion of the American people into shelter, clothing, medical help, and food. Be it a fire that puts a family out of its home or a tornado that tears through an entire community, the Red Cross responds immediately, answering the call of an astonishing 75,000 incidents last year alone.

The relief work of the Red Cross is not limited to our borders. The Red Cross responds to tsunamis and earthquakes and other natural disasters across the globe, providing much-needed assistance to victims. Earlier this month, the Red Cross quickly mobilized to provide the Solomon Islands with safe drinking water, medical care, and emergency shelter after that country was hit with a tsunami.

But the American Red Cross, Madam Speaker, like so many disaster relief organizations, has come under heightened scrutiny after 9/11 and the gulf coast hurricanes of 2005. Particularly, the disaster that New Orleans and the gulf coast suffered and the response to it crystallized the need for reform of this venerable organization, which had not changed its governance structure in over half a century. The leadership of the American Red Cross undertook a 6-month, top-to-bottom comprehensive governance and performance audit. After over 100 interviews of past and present Red Cross officers, volunteer chapter leaders, donors, and many others, the verdict was in: Red Cross governance required a major overhaul.

Last October, Madam Speaker, the Red Cross board of governors unanimously approved a series of changes to improve the governance and the accountability of the organization. But such changes cannot be implemented

without amending the Red Cross charter, and for that to occur, congressional action is needed. That is the reason for our legislation.

Last month the other body acted with urgency by passing the American National Red Cross Organization Act. This House aims to act with similar urgency as we consider this bill just 3 weeks after it was introduced by my good friend, ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN of Florida, and myself.

Madam Speaker, H.R. 1681 amends the Red Cross charter in a number of significant ways. First, the board of governors will be reduced to 25 members. Where previously some board members were selected by local chapters, some elected by the board, others appointed by the President, our legislation requires governors to be elected solely by delegates to the Red Cross' annual meeting. The responsibilities for day-to-day operations will be delegated exclusively to the Red Cross management rather than to the board. Our legislation requires the Red Cross to establish an office of ombudsman, who will report to Congress, to raise the profile of the whistleblower process for employees and volunteers and to make improvements to it.

Madam Speaker, while these changes would not directly affect the organization's disaster response, it will help promote the kind of leadership needed to make Red Cross management and operations run smoothly and effectively for the balance of this century.

□ 1500

I would like to express my appreciation to my friend and distinguished colleague, the ranking member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, for cosponsoring this legislation; and I want to thank her for her commitment to ensuring that the American Red Cross remains accountable to the American people.

I strongly support this legislation, and I urge all of my colleagues to do the same.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, as always, it is a delight and a joy to work with our chairman, TOM LANTOS of California. And I join him as an original co-sponsor of The American Red Cross Governance Modernization Act of 2007.

The American Red Cross, as Mr. LANTOS has pointed out, is an institution with a unique status. It has been assigned the responsibility by Congress of fulfilling the obligations of the United States under the Geneva Convention for carrying out peacetime and disaster relief functions. This obligation has not been a small undertaking. The Red Cross has been helping victims of war and natural disasters since its founding in 1881.

As a Member of Congress from Florida's 18th District, I am well aware of the great job, the amazing efforts of Red Cross as an organization made up of volunteers, and in the way that they have responded to numerous hurricanes in my State and tropical storms. And so on behalf of the residents of my district and my State, thank you to the Red Cross and its many volunteers.

And it is precisely because of this, Madam Speaker, I applaud the Red Cross for the hard work that it has done to review its internal governance structures and proposed changes to its charter that will make it an even stronger organization so they can help more people that will reform the organization and take it into its next century of service.

I am pleased that the Red Cross was willing to accept additional significant proposed changes that will provide even more accountability and transparency in the manner in which it will report its findings regarding audits and investigations to the general public.

In the future, Madam Speaker, anyone will be able to log on to the Red Cross Web site and view the results of its finding for audits and investigations that are conducted by the ombudsman's office. This act alone will provide even further assurances necessary for the American public to feel confident that the Red Cross handles donations with the utmost care.

I urge my colleagues to unanimously support H.R. 1681. And I thank the chairman for his leadership on this issue.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1681, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS HIGHLIGHTED THROUGH NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 293) supporting the goals and ideals highlighted through National Volunteer Week.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 293

Whereas National Volunteer Week will be observed during the week of April 15 through 21, 2007;

Whereas the National Volunteer Week theme, ''Inspire By Example'', truly reflects the power volunteers have to inspire the people they help and to inspire others to serve;

Whereas about 61.2 million people volunteered through or for an organization at least once between September 2005 and September 2006, according to a recent survey by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, and the proportion of people who volunteered was 26.7 percent, more than a quarter of the total United States population;

Whereas the estimated dollar value of volunteer time was $18.04 in 2005, according to the latest information provided by Independent Sector, a nonpartisan leadership forum, and the coalition estimates the value of volunteer time for 2005 to be $280 billion;

Whereas volunteers have contributed to the enhancement and improvement of communities across the United States, especially with respect to the aftermath of the hurricanes on the Gulf Coast; and

Whereas National Volunteer Week will continue to build awareness of the role that volunteers play in local, national, and international communities, and their commitment and dedication to improving lives, strengthening communities, and fostering civic engagement through service and volunteering: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) supports the goals and ideals highlighted through National Volunteer Week;

(2) acknowledges the diligent efforts of our major federally funded community service and volunteer programs;

(3) recognizes with gratitude the contributions of the millions of dedicated and caring individuals who have chosen to serve others through volunteerism; and

(4) encourages all American people, of any age and background, to seek out opportunities to serve through volunteerism.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from New Hampshire (Ms. SHEA-PORTER) and the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PLATTS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New Hampshire.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Madam Speaker, I request 5 legislative days during which Members may insert material relevant to House Resolution 293 into the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from New Hampshire?

There was no objection.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Ms. SHEA-PORTER asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. House Resolution 293 is a bipartisan bill recognizing the important role of volunteers in local, national, and international communities and their dedication to improving lives, strengthening communities, and fostering civic engagement through service and volunteering.

April 15–21, 2007 is recognized as National Volunteer Week. The theme is Inspire by Example, which reflects the power volunteers have to inspire the people they help and to aspire others to serve.

Inspire by Example has been the theme throughout our history. We have 61 million volunteers out of a population of 300 million who volunteer some time each day to serve others.

From the very beginning of our time, we have been committed to serving each other. Benjamin Franklin started a volunteer fire department in a library and took care of those in the community, as have others.

From the beginning, through war, through disaster and through famine, we have seen the greatest step forward to serve our country. Who could forget the service of the Greatest Generation who came forward in so many ways as others went to war and we saw our own population step up to fulfill the roles in our community and to each other?

What do these volunteers do each day of the year? They teach others to read. They care for others who are ill. They work on the forefront for disaster. Right now, in my own State of New Hampshire, which has once again been hit by flood waters, we have volunteers who are out there serving our community. They serve to take care of babies and young mothers. They serve to take care of alcoholics and drug addicts and the most vulnerable in our communities, and they continue their service right through hospice and in senior settings. So we have to thank our volunteers and also recognize what motivates them and to encourage them. That is what this resolution does, to speak to them and to urge them to continue their service.

While we have had the greatest numbers at all in the past year, 61.2 million volunteers, we have also had a slight drop. We have to make sure it is possible for volunteers to continue their full-time lives of service in their own jobs and then also in their communities.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PLATTS. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of House Resolution 293, which supports the goals and ideals highlighted through National Volunteer Week.

I would like to thank my colleague from New Hampshire (Ms. SHEA-PORTER) for introducing this legislation and bringing it to the floor here today.

As we have heard, National Volunteer Week has been celebrated since 1974, when President Nixon signed an executive order establishing this annual celebration of volunteerism.

As we now celebrate another National Volunteer Week, we are reminded that community service takes place through efforts both large and small throughout our great country. This year's Volunteer Week theme is Inspire by Example, and countless individuals of all backgrounds and ages inspire others every day through their efforts to address the common concerns of our neighborhoods, communities, Nation, and world. And I know personally that it was the example of my parents, Babs and Dutch Platts, volunteering in our community as a Sunday school teacher, a Little League coach, running the school candy sales; their example of volunteerism for me and my four siblings helped to inspire my interest in public service and pursuit of this very position I now hold.

Our country has seen the inspiring example of our citizens' willingness to serve others in the wake of the terrorist attacks of 9/11 and rebuilding efforts along the gulf coast, and in response to countless other tragedies, large and small, that touch lives every day.

Community service isn't just about responding to disaster. It is also about lifting a hand to help a neighbor, teaching a child to read, restoring a neglected park, and numerous other acts of good will that reaffirm our common humanity. As cochair of the National Service Caucus here in the House with Representatives CHRIS SHAYS, DORIS MATSUI and DAVID PRICE, I am particularly interested in seeing the spirit of volunteerism celebrated and extended to as many Americans as possible.

As this resolution says, more than a quarter of this country's population volunteered in some capacity from September of 2005 to September of 2006 at an estimated value or benefit to our country of $280 billion. I certainly hope these numbers continue to grow.

I also want to express my thanks to the thousands of organizations and their leaders across the country that capture the spirit of our volunteers and bring that spirit to bear in a concentrated way to relieve suffering, provide opportunities to the needy, to clean up our communities, and bring hope to millions. These organizations and the public and private partners that support them provide needed infrastructure to support the energy of our community service providers.

As this resolution states, National Volunteer Week will continue to raise awareness of the role that volunteers play in local, national and international communities, and their commitment to improving lives, strengthening communities and fostering civic engagement.

Again, I thank my colleague, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, and urge my colleagues to support National Volunteer Week and to support House Resolution 293.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. I now yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Kentucky, JOHN YARMUTH.

Mr. YARMUTH. I thank the gentlewoman.

Madam Speaker, in a week when our hearts are heavy with the weight of yesterday's tragedy at Virginia Tech and the anniversary of the shooting at Columbine High School, it is important that we also remember America's tremendous capacity for selfless acts of goodness.

I refer to a spirit that sets aside superficial desires in favor of the needs of our fellow human beings, a spirit that shows our Nation at its best, the spirit honored during this National Volunteer Week.

Last year, as has been said, more than a quarter of Americans dedicated their time to bettering their communities, inspiring by example and improving lives.

I am fortunate to represent a community in which passionate leadership and dedicated citizens have enacted community service projects on every scale throughout Louisville. Just during our recent recess, I think a picture has been painted of what people are willing to give to others. On one morning I joined more than 3,000 volunteers of all ages as we embarked on a project to clean up across the communities in furthering the Operation Brightside movement. In visiting schools, we saw parents and grandparents volunteering their time to help kids. In hospital after hospital we saw people of all ages helping our sick. And also in one of the most moving experiences during my recess, two first grade classes at Coleridge-Taylor Elementary had decided to help the troops in Iraq. They went out and collected 200 pounds of candy to send overseas. These were sixth graders who saw the need to give of their time and energy to help others. It was truly an inspirational moment.

The great thing about volunteering is it is a way that you demonstrate your citizenship. We talk a lot about patriotism and citizenship in this body, but nothing demonstrates citizenship more than your willingness to spend your dear time to help others.

I hope this week does not stand alone in honoring our generous citizens and organizations. And I urge every citizen to join them in discovering the rewards that volunteering has to offer.

I urge my colleagues to support H. Res. 293.

Mr. PLATTS. Madam Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Connecticut, cochair of the National Service Caucus (Mr. SHAYS).

Mr. SHAYS. I thank my colleague from Pennsylvania.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 293, supporting the goals and ideals of National Volunteer Week.

This week, we celebrate the millions of volunteers from around the country who give their time and energy to their communities.

National Volunteer Week's theme, ''Inspire by Example,'' says it all. Volunteers set an example of selfless service in giving in support of our country's most vulnerable residents, the homeless, hungry, elderly, at-risk youth, and disabled. Their work not only supports their communities, but encourages others to do the same.

More than 61 million people volunteered between September 2005 and September 2006. The estimated value of volunteer time given in 2005 is $280 billion.

This underscores the value of national service. Our Federal national service programs give Americans of all ages the opportunity to serve in areas of need around the country, recruiting

and managing volunteers. They help ensure the volunteer's time is used effectively to provide the maximum benefit to the organization and the people it serves.

I still remember how I felt as a 14-year-old watching the 1960 Presidential election between Vice President Richard Nixon and Senator John Kennedy. I felt energized listening to Senator Kennedy when he spoke of the Peace Corps and making the world a better and safer place. I wanted to be part of his vision. I wanted to give to the world community. Years later that dream was fulfilled when my wife, Betsi, and I served 2 years in the Peace Corps. The same powerful emotions, the same sense of energy and eagerness we felt in the 1960s is alive today and expressed by those who give back to their communities.

Today is a day to recognize the millions of Americans who volunteer and express our sincere gratitude for their service.

I thank my colleague CAROL SHEA-PORTER, for introducing this resolution.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. I now yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. SARBANES).

□ 1515

Mr. SARBANES. Madam Speaker, before I say anything else, I would like to extend my deepest sympathies and prayers to the families and friends of the victims of yesterday's tragedy, and to the entire Virginia Tech community.

I rise today in support of H. Res. 293 which recognizes the diligent efforts of federally funded and volunteer programs, and generally observes the role of volunteers in the life of our country. When somebody volunteers to perform a service, it is not only a service for other people, it is a service for them as well.

Now more than ever, Americans need a restored sense of greatness and purpose. On the release of the Corporation for National and Community Service's report on volunteering in America, CEO David Eisner's remarks poignantly address the importance of community and national service. He said, ''Service and volunteering aren't just nice things to do, but are necessary parts of how our Nation deals with its challenges.''

In the wake of tragedies such as Hurricane Katrina, hundreds of thousands of lives have been changed for the better because of the dedication and hard work of volunteers all across the country. But it is not enough. We can do much more. According to the Corporation for National and Community Service, while there has been a significant increase in the number of volunteers nationwide, one in three Americans dropped out of volunteering between 2005 and 2006. Volunteer programs need more than just willing and able volunteers, they need national support.

By reinvigorating national and community service programs, and honoring our volunteers, we feed our democratic spirit and cultivate citizenship. Being engaged in democracy through service, we bolster the best of what citizenship is about. The result will be more vibrant communities and a stronger America, cultivated through experiences that all people share regardless of their background. No young American should be deprived of these opportunities due to a lack of commitment from Washington.

I ask for your support of H. Res. 293.

Mr. PLATTS. Madam Speaker, I urge passage of H. Res. 293, and thank Ms. SHEA-PORTER for her introduction of this resolution, and hope that all of our fellow Americans will experience and celebrate the spirit of volunteerism throughout our country.

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Res. 293 honoring volunteer service and thank Representative SHEA-PORTER for introducing this bill. As Chairwoman of the Healthy Families and Communities Subcommittee, I wanted to highlight this extremely important issue which is why the first hearing the HFC Subcommittee held was on national service. This is a bipartisan issue, and I am looking forward to working with Ranking Member PLATTS to move ahead on reauthorizing the service bill.

National service has a distinguished and strong history in our Nation. Our roots in service extend back to the first pioneers, when colonists had to ban together to overcome the challenges of surviving and adjusting to a new land.

Evidence shows that service and volunteering lowers dropout rates among teens, lowers crime rates in communities with high rates of volunteerism, lowers costs associated with the aging population and improves the health and lowers the rates of depression among the elderly. Volunteering is a cost effective way of meeting our Nation's social needs both from the standpoint of the volunteers and the people who benefit from the services.

In my home state of New York, more than 76,000 people of all ages and backgrounds are helping to meet local needs and strengthen communities. There are 239 national service programs in New York alone. In my district we have more than 1,300 service volunteers, and we have almost 3,000 students age K–12 that participate in the Learn and Serve programs.

I truly believe that expanding national service, particularly to disadvantaged youth, is an effective way to combat things like youth gangs and violence, and the evidence bears that out. And it is critical that we begin teaching about participation and service at an early age.

Madam Speaker, I would like to thank Congresswoman SHEA-PORTER for her hard work to in introducing this resolution. I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation.

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

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H. Res. 293, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from New Hampshire (Ms. SHEA-PORTER) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 293.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Madam 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 Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

TREATING CERTAIN COMMUNITIES AS METROPOLITAN CITIES FOR PURPOSES OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1515) to amend the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 to treat certain communities as metropolitan cities for purposes of the community development block grant program.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1515

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

SECTION 1. METROPOLITAN CITIES.

Paragraph (4) of section 102(a) of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C. 5302) is amended by adding at the end the following new sentence: ''Notwithstanding any other provision of this paragraph, with respect to any fiscal year beginning after the date of the enactment of this sentence, the cities of Alton and Granite City, Illinois, shall be considered metropolitan cities for purposes of this title.''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. FRANK) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SHIMKUS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, this is a bipartisan bill that passed our committee unanimously. It addresses a series of glitches which have resulted in the communities of Alton and Granite City, Illinois, losing their status as entitlement communities under the community development block grant program.

These are both cities that have done a very good job of using these funds. There is no reason why they should not continue to be allowed to enjoy this. The events which led to this having happened are complicated, and even more relevant, quite boring, so it does not seem to me that the House would much care about them.

The relevant point is that there is a unanimous view on the part of our committee, and this has been urged on us by the gentlemen from Illinois, Mr. SHIMKUS and Mr. COSTELLO, that we

should restore Alton and Granite City to their rightful places as entitlement cities, and I hope the House will do that.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SHIMKUS. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of this resolution that would restore the entitlement status to Alton and Granite City for consideration in the community development block grant program.

I want to thank my colleague and friend, Congressman COSTELLO, who will be following me, for his leadership on this. This is a snafu that happens in government, and we are glad to come together, united, to attempt to fix this.

The bottom line geographical issues are that I am from Collinsville, Illinois, in Madison County. I represent half that county. Granite City and Alton are actually in Madison County. Congressman COSTELLO represents those communities ably and well. So we come together to try to fix this.

I want to thank the chairman of the committee, who heard our concerns and moved this expeditiously, along with the ranking member, Mr. BACHUS, and my good friend, JUDY BIGGERT, who helped in the process.

We look forward to a time when Alton and Granite City can get involved in the process and make applications through the CDBG for the needed infrastructure developments that are available through that Federal program.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Madam Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the prime author of this bill, who is a very vigorous advocate for one of the communities he represents, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. COSTELLO).

Mr. COSTELLO. Madam Speaker, I thank the chairman of the Financial Services Committee not only for yielding time to me, but for handling this bill in a very quick fashion and getting it to the floor today.

I think everything that needs to be said about this legislation has been said by the chairman and my colleague from Collinsville, Illinois.

I urge passage of this legislation.

H.R. 1515 would allow the cities of Alton and Granite City in Illinois to maintain principal city designation for entitlement purposes under the Community Development Block Grant program.

Alton and Granite City have been a part of the Madison County CDBG program since its inception in 1975 for purposes of receiving grants as entitlement communities under the CDBG program.

In 1999, Alton and Granite City deferred their entitlement status so Madison County would not lose entitlement status as a county.

This agreement proved to be satisfactory until the OMB changed definitions. OMB no longer recognizes the "central city" status. The new "principal city" designation requires a minimum population of 50,000, which neither community meets.

As a result, both communities lost entitlement status for purposes of the CDBG program, while all other "central city" communities were grandfathered into the program.

HUD has determined that Alton & Grantie City are the only communities to have lost CDBG entitlement status in the Nation as a result of the recent OMB changes in how counties are defined.

As a result, Granite City and Alton are no longer part of an entitlement community.

At no time did the cities or the county believe that, by deferring their status in previous years, they would be jeopardizing future funding.

Madam Speaker, I again thank Chairman BARNEY FRANK, Ranking Member BACHUS, and Congressman SHIMKUS, for working together in a bipartisan manner to address this unique situation.

Other information:

Both communities are older industrial cities that have suffered from job losses and have higher than local, State and national unemployment levels. Both have had large employers, including steel mills in both cities, close. Both have an older housing stock and lower income residents. Additionally, both have a disproportionate share of public housing, in comparison to the balance of the region.

Alton population: 30,500; Granite City population: 31, 301.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. FRANK) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1515.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 3 o'clock and 23 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

□ 1804

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. MEEKS of New York) at 6 o'clock and 4 minutes p.m.

PRIVILEGED REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1257, SHAREHOLDER VOTE ON EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION ACT

Mr. ARCURI, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 110–96) on the resolution (H. Res. 301) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1257) to amend the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 to provide shareholders with an advisory vote on executive compensation, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

PRIVILEGED REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1361, RELIEF FOR ENTREPRENEURS: COORDINATION OF OBJECTIVES AND VALUES FOR EFFECTIVE RECOVERY ACT OF 2007

Mr. ARCURI, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 110–97) on the resolution (H. Res. 302) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1361) to improve the disaster relief programs of the Small Business Administration, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on motions to suspend the rules previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

H.R. 1677, by the yeas and nays;

H. Res. 196, by the yeas and nays;

H. Con. Res. 100, by the yeas and nays;

H. Res. 273, by the yeas and nays;

H. Con. Res. 76, by the yeas and nays.

Proceedings on H. Res. 293 will resume tomorrow.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. Remaining electronic votes will be conducted as 5-minute votes.

TAXPAYER PROTECTION ACT OF 2007

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1677, as amended, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LEWIS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1677, as amended.

This will be a 15-minute note.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 407, nays 7, not voting 19, as follows:

[Roll No. 214]

YEAS—407

Abercrombie	Altmire	Baker
Ackerman	Andrews	Baldwin
Aderholt	Arcuri	Barrett (SC)
Akin	Baca	Barrow
Alexander	Bachus	Bartlett (MD)
Allen	Baird	Barton (TX)

Bean
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
Berry
Biggert
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bishop (UT)
Blumenauer
Blunt
Boehner
Bonner
Bono
Boozman
Boren
Boswell
Boucher
Boustany
Boyd (FL)
Boyda (KS)
Brady (TX)
Braley (IA)
Brown (SC)
Brown, Corrine
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Buchanan
Burgess
Burton (IN)
Butterfield
Buyer
Calvert
Camp (MI)
Campbell (CA)
Cannon
Cantor
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Cardoza
Carney
Castle
Castor
Chabot
Chandler
Clarke
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coble
Cohen
Cole (OK)
Conaway
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Costello
Courtney
Cramer
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cubin
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (IL)
Davis (KY)
Davis, David
Davis, Jo Ann
Davis, Lincoln
Davis, Tom
Deal (GA)
DeFazio
DeGette
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Donnelly
Doolittle
Doyle
Drake
Dreier
Duncan
Edwards
Ehlers
Ellison
Ellsworth
Emanuel
Emerson
Engel
English (PA)
Eshoo
Etheridge
Everett
Fallin
Farr
Feeney
Filner
Forbes
Fortenberry
Fossella
Foxx
Frank (MA)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Gerlach
Giffords
Gilchrest
Gillibrand
Gillmor
Gingrey
Gohmert
Gonzalez
Goode
Goodlatte
Gordon
Granger
Graves
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutierrez
Hall (NY)
Hall (TX)
Hare
Harman
Hastert
Hastings (FL)
Hastings (WA)
Hayes
Heller
Hensarling
Herger
Herseth Sandlin
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Hirono
Hobson
Hodes
Hoekstra
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hooley
Hoyer
Hulshof
Inglis (SC)
Inslee
Israel
Issa
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jefferson
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jones (NC)
Jones (OH)
Jordan
Kagen
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Keller
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilpatrick
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Klein (FL)
Kline (MN)
Knollenberg
Kucinich
Kuhl (NY)
LaHood
Lamborn
Langevin
Lantos
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
LaTourette
Lee
Levin
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (GA)
Lewis (KY)
Linder
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lucas
Lungren, Daniel E.
Lynch
Mack
Mahoney (FL)
Maloney (NY)
Manzullo
Marchant
Markey
Marshall
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (CA)
McCarthy (NY)
McCaul (TX)
McCotter
McCrery
McDermott
McGovern
McHugh
McIntyre
McKeon
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
McNulty
Meehan
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Melancon
Mica
Michaud
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller (NC)
Miller, Gary
Miller, George
Mitchell
Mollohan
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Moran (KS)
Moran (VA)
Murphy (CT)
Murphy, Patrick
Murphy, Tim
Murtha
Musgrave
Myrick
Nadler
Napolitano
Neugebauer
Nunes
Oberstar
Obey
Olver
Ortiz
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Payne
Pearce
Pence
Perlmutter
Peterson (MN)
Peterson (PA)
Petri
Pickering
Pitts
Platts
Pomeroy
Porter
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Pryce (OH)
Putnam
Radanovich
Rahall
Ramstad
Rangel
Regula
Rehberg
Reichert
Renzi
Reyes
Reynolds
Rodriguez
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothman
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Salazar
Sali
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Saxton
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schmidt
Schwartz
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sestak
Shadegg
Shays
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuler
Shuster
Simpson
Sires
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Solis
Souder
Space
Spratt
Stark
Stearns
Stupak
Sullivan
Sutton
Tanner
Tauscher
Taylor
Terry
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Tierney
Towns
Turner
Udall (CO)
Udall (NM)
Upton
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walberg
Walden (OR)
Walz (MN)
Wamp
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watson
Watt
Waxman
Weiner
Welch (VT)
Weldon (FL)
Weller
Wexler
Whitfield
Wicker
Wilson (NM)
Wilson (OH)
Wilson (SC)
Wolf
Woolsey
Wu
Wynn
Yarmuth
Young (AK)
Young (FL)

NAYS—7

Bachmann
Blackburn
Flake
McHenry
Paul
Tancredo
Westmoreland

NOT VOTING—19

Brady (PA)
Carnahan
Carson
Carter
Fattah
Ferguson
Higgins
Hill
Hunter
Jindal
Kirk
Lampson
McCollum (MN)
Millender-McDonald
Neal (MA)
Poe
Rogers (MI)
Rush
Walsh (NY)

□ 1831

Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. GARY G. MILLER of California and Ms. SLAUGHTER changed their vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF WORLD WATER DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 196, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 196.

This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 393, nays 22, not voting 18, as follows:

[Roll No. 215]

YEAS—393

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Aderholt
Akin
Alexander
Allen
Altmire
Andrews
Arcuri
Baca
Bachmann
Bachus
Baird
Baker
Baldwin
Barrett (SC)
Barrow
Bartlett (MD)
Barton (TX)
Bean
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
Berry
Biggert
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Blackburn
Blumenauer
Blunt
Boehner
Bonner
Bono
Boozman
Boren
Boswell
Boucher
Boustany
Boyd (FL)
Boyda (KS)
Brady (TX)
Braley (IA)
Brown (SC)
Brown, Corrine
Buchanan
Burgess
Butterfield
Calvert
Camp (MI)
Campbell (CA)
Cantor
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Cardoza
Carney
Castle
Castor
Chabot
Chandler
Clarke
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coble
Cohen
Cole (OK)
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Costello
Courtney
Cramer
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cubin
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (IL)
Davis (KY)
Davis, David
Davis, Jo Ann
Davis, Lincoln
Davis, Tom
DeFazio
DeGette
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Donnelly
Doolittle
Doyle
Drake
Dreier
Duncan
Edwards
Ehlers
Ellison
Ellsworth
Emanuel
Emerson
Engel
English (PA)
Eshoo
Etheridge
Everett
Fallin
Farr
Feeney
Filner
Forbes
Fortenberry
Fossella
Foxx
Frank (MA)
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Gerlach
Giffords
Gilchrest
Gillibrand
Gillmor
Gingrey
Gohmert
Gonzalez
Goodlatte
Gordon
Granger
Graves
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutierrez
Hall (NY)
Hall (TX)
Hare
Harman
Hastert
Hastings (FL)
Hastings (WA)
Hayes
Heller
Hensarling
Herseth Sandlin
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Hirono
Hobson
Hodes
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hooley
Hoyer
Hulshof
Inglis (SC)
Inslee
Israel
Issa
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jefferson
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, E. B.
Jones (NC)
Jones (OH)
Jordan
Kagen
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Keller
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilpatrick
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kirk
Klein (FL)
Kline (MN)
Knollenberg
Kucinich
Kuhl (NY)
LaHood
Langevin
Lantos
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
LaTourette
Lee
Levin
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (GA)
Lewis (KY)
Linder
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lucas
Lungren, Daniel E.
Lynch
Mack
Mahoney (FL)
Maloney (NY)
Manzullo
Marchant
Markey
Marshall
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (CA)
McCarthy (NY)
McCaul (TX)
McCotter
McCrery
McDermott
McGovern
McHenry
McHugh
McIntyre
McKeon
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
McNulty
Meehan
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Melancon
Mica
Michaud
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller (NC)
Miller, Gary
Miller, George
Mitchell
Mollohan
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Moran (KS)
Moran (VA)
Murphy (CT)
Murphy, Patrick
Murphy, Tim
Murtha
Musgrave
Myrick
Nadler
Napolitano
Neugebauer
Nunes
Oberstar
Obey
Olver
Ortiz
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Payne
Pearce
Pence
Perlmutter
Peterson (MN)
Peterson (PA)
Petri
Pickering
Pitts
Platts
Pomeroy
Porter
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Pryce (OH)
Putnam
Radanovich
Rahall
Ramstad
Rangel
Regula
Rehberg
Reichert
Renzi
Reyes
Reynolds
Rodriguez
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothman

Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Salazar
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Saxton
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schmidt
Schwartz
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Serrano
Sessions
Sestak
Shays
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuler
Shuster
Simpson
Sires
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Solis
Souder
Space
Spratt
Stark
Stearns
Stupak
Sullivan
Sutton
Tancredo
Tanner
Tauscher
Taylor
Terry
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Tierney
Towns
Turner
Udall (CO)
Udall (NM)
Upton
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walden (OR)
Walz (MN)
Wamp
Wasserman Schultz
Watson
Watt
Waxman
Weiner
Welch (VT)
Weller
Wexler
Whitfield
Wicker
Wilson (NM)
Wilson (OH)
Wilson (SC)
Wolf
Woolsey
Wu
Wynn
Yarmuth
Young (AK)
Young (FL)

NAYS—22

Bishop (UT)
Burton (IN)
Buyer
Carter
Conaway
Deal (GA)
Flake
Franks (AZ)
Goode
Herger
Hoekstra
Johnson, Sam
Lamborn
Paul
Poe
Sali
Sensenbrenner
Shadegg
Thornberry
Walberg
Weldon (FL)
Westmoreland

NOT VOTING—18

Brady (PA)
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Cannon
Carnahan
Carson
Fattah
Ferguson
Higgins
Hill
Hunter
Jindal
Lampson
McCollum (MN)
Millender-McDonald
Neal (MA)
Rush
Walsh (NY)
Waters

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). Members are advised they have 2 minutes to record their votes.

□ 1841

Mr. CONAWAY changed his vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

CONDEMNING RECENT VIOLENT ACTIONS OF GOVERNMENT OF ZIMBABWE AGAINST PEACEFUL OPPOSITION PARTY ACTIVISTS AND MEMBERS OF CIVIL SOCIETY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 100, as amended, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 100, as amended.

This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 414, nays 0, answered ''present'' 4, not voting 15, as follows:

[Roll No. 216]

YEAS—414

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Aderholt
Akin
Alexander
Allen
Altmire
Andrews
Arcuri
Baca
Bachmann
Bachus
Baird
Baker
Baldwin
Barrett (SC)
Barrow
Bartlett (MD)
Barton (TX)
Bean
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
Berry
Biggert
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blumenauer
Blunt
Boehner
Bonner
Bono
Boozman
Boren
Boswell
Boucher
Boustany
Boyd (FL)
Boyda (KS)
Brady (TX)
Braley (IA)
Brown (SC)
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Buchanan
Burgess
Burton (IN)
Butterfield
Buyer
Calvert
Camp (MI)
Campbell (CA)
Cannon
Cantor
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carney
Carter
Castle
Castor
Chabot
Chandler
Clarke
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coble
Cohen
Cole (OK)
Conaway
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Costello
Courtney
Cramer
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cubin
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (IL)
Davis (KY)
Davis, David
Davis, Jo Ann
Davis, Lincoln
Davis, Tom
Deal (GA)
DeFazio
DeGette
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Donnelly
Doolittle
Doyle
Drake
Dreier
Duncan
Edwards
Ehlers
Ellison
Ellsworth
Emanuel
Emerson
Engel
English (PA)
Eshoo
Etheridge
Everett
Fallin
Farr
Feeney
Filner
Flake
Forbes
Fortenberry
Fossella
Foxx
Frank (MA)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Gerlach
Giffords
Gilchrest
Gillibrand
Gillmor
Gingrey
Gohmert
Gonzalez
Goode
Goodlatte
Gordon
Granger
Graves
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutierrez
Hall (NY)
Hall (TX)
Hare
Harman
Hastert
Hastings (FL)
Hastings (WA)
Hayes
Heller
Hensarling
Herger
Herseth Sandlin
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Hirono
Hobson
Hodes
Hoekstra
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hooley
Hoyer
Hulshof
Inglis (SC)
Inslee
Israel
Issa
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jefferson
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (IL)
Jones (NC)
Jones (OH)
Jordan
Kagen
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Keller
Kennedy
Kildee
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kirk
Klein (FL)
Kline (MN)
Knollenberg
Kucinich
Kuhl (NY)
LaHood
Lamborn
Langevin
Lantos
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
LaTourette
Lee
Levin
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (GA)
Lewis (KY)
Linder
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lucas
Lungren, Daniel E.
Lynch
Mack
Mahoney (FL)
Maloney (NY)
Manzullo
Marchant
Markey
Marshall
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul (TX)
McCollum (MN)
McCotter
McCrery
McDermott
McGovern
McHenry
McHugh
McIntyre
McKeon
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
McNulty
Meehan
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Melancon
Mica
Michaud
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller (NC)
Miller, Gary
Miller, George
Mitchell
Mollohan
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Moran (KS)
Moran (VA)
Murphy (CT)
Murphy, Patrick
Murphy, Tim
Murtha
Musgrave
Myrick
Nadler
Napolitano
Neugebauer
Nunes
Oberstar
Obey
Olver
Ortiz
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Payne
Pearce
Pence
Perlmutter
Peterson (MN)
Peterson (PA)
Petri
Pickering
Pitts
Platts
Poe
Pomeroy
Porter
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Pryce (OH)
Putnam
Radanovich
Rahall
Ramstad
Rangel
Regula
Rehberg
Reichert
Renzi
Reyes
Reynolds
Rodriguez
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothman
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Salazar
Sali
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Saxton
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schmidt
Schwartz
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sestak
Shadegg
Shays
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuler
Shuster
Simpson
Sires
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Solis
Souder
Space
Spratt
Stark
Stearns
Stupak
Sullivan
Sutton
Tancredo
Tanner
Tauscher
Taylor
Terry
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Tierney
Towns
Turner
Udall (CO)
Udall (NM)
Upton
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walberg
Walden (OR)
Walz (MN)
Wamp
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watson
Watt
Waxman
Weiner
Welch (VT)
Weldon (FL)
Weller
Westmoreland
Wexler
Whitfield
Wicker
Wilson (NM)
Wilson (OH)
Wilson000000 (SC)
Wolf
Woolsey
Wu
Wynn
Yarmuth
Young (AK)
Young (FL)

ANSWERED ''PRESENT''—4

Brown, Corrine
Johnson, E. B.
Kilpatrick
Paul

NOT VOTING—15

Brady (PA)
Carson
Fattah
Ferguson
Higgins
Hill
Hunter
Jindal
Johnson, Sam
Lampson
McCarthy (NY)
Millender-McDonald
Neal (MA)
Rush
Walsh (NY)

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). Members are advised they have 2 minutes to record their votes.

□ 1852

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the concurrent resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF FINANCIAL LITERACY MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 273, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATSON) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 273.

This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 414, nays 2, not voting 17, as follows:

[Roll No. 217]

YEAS—414

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Aderholt
Akin
Alexander
Allen
Altmire
Andrews
Arcuri
Baca
Bachmann
Bachus
Baird
Baker
Baldwin
Barrett (SC)
Barrow
Bartlett (MD)
Barton (TX)
Bean
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
Berry
Biggert
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blumenauer
Blunt
Boehner
Bonner
Bono
Boozman
Boren
Boswell
Boucher
Boustany
Boyd (FL)
Boyda (KS)
Brady (TX)
Braley (IA)
Brown (SC)
Brown, Corrine
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Buchanan
Burgess
Burton (IN)
Butterfield
Buyer
Calvert
Camp (MI)
Campbell (CA)
Cannon
Cantor
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carney
Carter
Castle
Castor
Chabot
Chandler
Clarke
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coble
Cohen
Cole (OK)
Conaway
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Costello
Courtney
Cramer
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cubin
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (IL)
Davis (KY)
Davis, David
Davis, Jo Ann
Davis, Lincoln
Davis, Tom
Deal (GA)
DeFazio
DeGette
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Donnelly
Doolittle
Doyle
Drake
Dreier
Duncan
Ehlers
Ellison
Ellsworth
Emanuel
Emerson
Engel
English (PA)
Eshoo
Etheridge
Everett
Fallin
Farr
Feeney
Filner
Forbes
Fortenberry
Fossella
Foxx
Frank (MA)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Gerlach
Giffords
Gilchrest
Gillibrand
Gillmor
Gingrey
Gohmert
Gonzalez
Goode
Goodlatte
Gordon
Granger
Graves
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutierrez
Hall (NY)
Hall (TX)
Hare
Harman
Hastert
Hastings (FL)
Hastings (WA)
Hayes
Heller
Hensarling
Herger
Herseth Sandlin
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Hirono
Hobson
Hodes
Hoekstra
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hooley
Hoyer
Hulshof
Inglis (SC)
Inslee
Israel
Issa
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jefferson
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, E. B.
Jones (NC)
Jones (OH)
Jordan
Kagen
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Keller
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilpatrick
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kirk
Klein (FL)
Kline (MN)
Knollenberg
Kucinich
Kuhl (NY)
LaHood
Lamborn
Langevin
Lantos
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
LaTourette
Lee
Levin
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (GA)
Lewis (KY)
Linder
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lucas
Lungren, Daniel E.
Lynch
Mack
Mahoney (FL)
Maloney (NY)
Manzullo
Marchant
Markey
Marshall
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul (TX)
McCollum (MN)
McCotter
McDermott
McGovern
McHenry
McHugh
McIntyre
McKeon
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
McNulty
Meehan
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Melancon
Mica
Michaud
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller (NC)
Miller, Gary
Miller, George
Mitchell
Mollohan
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Moran (KS)
Moran (VA)
Murphy (CT)
Murphy, Patrick
Murphy, Tim
Murtha
Musgrave
Myrick
Nadler
Napolitano
Neugebauer
Nunes
Oberstar
Obey
Olver
Ortiz
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Payne
Pearce
Pence
Perlmutter
Peterson (MN)
Peterson (PA)
Petri
Pickering
Pitts
Platts
Poe
Pomeroy
Porter
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Pryce (OH)
Putnam
Radanovich
Rahall
Ramstad
Rangel
Regula
Rehberg
Reichert
Renzi
Reyes
Reynolds
Rodriguez
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothman
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Salazar
Sali
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Saxton
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schmidt
Schwartz
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sestak
Shadegg
Shays
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuler
Shuster
Simpson
Sires
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Solis
Souder
Space
Spratt
Stark
Stearns
Stupak
Sullivan
Sutton
Tancredo
Tanner
Tauscher
Taylor
Terry
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Tierney
Towns
Turner
Udall (CO)
Udall (NM)
Upton
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walberg
Walden (OR)
Walz (MN)
Wamp
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watson
Watt
Waxman
Weiner
Welch (VT)
Weldon (FL)
Weller
Westmoreland
Wexler
Whitfield
Wicker
Wilson (NM)
Wilson (OH)
Wilson (SC)
Wolf
Woolsey
Wu
Wynn
Yarmuth
Young (AK)
Young (FL)

NAYS—2

Flake
Paul

NOT VOTING—17

Brady (PA)
Carson
Edwards
Fattah
Ferguson
Higgins
Hill
Hunter
Jindal
Johnson, Sam
Lampson
McCarthy (NY)
McCrery
Millender-McDonald
Neal (MA)
Rush
Walsh (NY)

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). Members are advised 2 minutes remain in this vote.

□ 1900

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

WELCOMING BACK THE HONORABLE JO ANN DAVIS OF VIRGINIA

(Mr. WAMP asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. WAMP. Mr. Speaker, I know this is unusual, but God is good, and I just wanted her colleagues to welcome back to the floor of this House the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS).

Mr. Speaker, we'll keep praying, and I yield back.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, 5-minute voting will continue.

There was no objection.

HONORING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE INTERNATIONAL GEOPHYSICAL YEAR

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 76, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. WILSON) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 76.

This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 406, nays 0, not voting 27, as follows:

[Roll No. 218]

YEAS—406

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Aderholt
Akin
Alexander
Allen
Altmire
Andrews
Arcuri
Baca
Bachmann
Bachus
Baird
Baker
Baldwin
Barrett (SC)
Barrow
Bartlett (MD)
Barton (TX)
Bean
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
Berry
Biggert
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blumenauer
Blunt
Boehner
Bonner
Bono
Boozman
Boren
Boswell
Boucher
Boustany
Boyd (FL)
Boyda (KS)
Brady (TX)
Braley (IA)
Brown (SC)
Brown, Corrine
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Buchanan
Burgess
Burton (IN)
Butterfield
Buyer
Calvert
Camp (MI)
Campbell (CA)
Cannon
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carney
Carter
Castle
Castor
Chabot
Chandler
Clarke
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coble
Cohen
Cole (OK)
Conaway
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Courtney
Cramer
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cubin
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (IL)
Davis (KY)
Davis, David
Davis, Jo Ann
Davis, Lincoln
Davis, Tom
Deal (GA)
DeFazio
DeGette
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Donnelly
Doolittle
Doyle
Drake
Dreier
Duncan
Ehlers
Ellison
Ellsworth
Emanuel
Emerson
Engel
English (PA)
Eshoo
Etheridge
Everett
Fallin
Farr
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Frank (MA)
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Frelinghuysen
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Garrett (NJ)
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Giffords
Gilchrest
Gillibrand
Gillmor
Gingrey
Gohmert
Gonzalez
Goode
Goodlatte
Gordon
Granger
Graves
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
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Hall (NY)
Hall (TX)
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Hastings (WA)
Hayes
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Herseth Sandlin
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Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jefferson
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, E. B.
Jones (NC)
Jones (OH)
Jordan
Kagen
Kanjorski
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Kennedy
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King (IA)
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Kucinich
Kuhl (NY)
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Larsen (WA)
Latham
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Lewis (CA)
Lewis (GA)
Lewis (KY)
Linder
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lucas
Lungren, Daniel E.
Mack
Mahoney (FL)
Manzullo
Marchant
Markey
Marshall
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul (TX)
McCollum (MN)
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McMorris Rodgers
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Meek (FL)
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Michaud
Miller (FL)
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Miller (NC)
Miller, Gary
Miller, George
Mitchell
Mollohan
Moore (KS)
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Moran (KS)
Moran (VA)
Murphy, Patrick
Murphy, Tim
Musgrave
Myrick
Nadler
Napolitano
Neugebauer
Nunes
Oberstar
Olver
Ortiz
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Paul
Payne
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Peterson (MN)
Peterson (PA)
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Price (GA)
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Reichert
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Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothman
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Salazar
Sali
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Saxton
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schmidt
Schwartz
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
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Shadegg
Shays
Shea-Porter
Sherman
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Smith (NE)
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Tauscher
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Thompson (CA)
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Thornberry
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Udall (CO)
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Velázquez
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Wasserman Schultz
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Weiner
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Weldon (FL)
Weller
Westmoreland
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Whitfield
Wicker
Wilson (NM)
Wilson (OH)
Wilson (SC)
Wolf
Woolsey
Wu
Wynn
Yarmuth
Young (AK)
Young (FL)

NOT VOTING—27

Brady (PA)
Cantor
Carson
Costello
Edwards
Fattah
Ferguson
Higgins
Hill
Hunter
Jindal
Johnson, Sam
Lampson
Larson (CT)
LaTourette
Lynch
Maloney (NY)
McCarthy (NY)
McCrery
Millender-McDonald
Murphy (CT)
Murtha
Neal (MA)
Obey
Radanovich
Rush
Walsh (NY)

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). Members are advised there are 2 minutes to record their vote.

□ 1908

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the concurrent resolution was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated for:

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 218, had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

ELECTION OF MEMBER TO CERTAIN STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Democratic Caucus, I offer a privileged resolution (H. Res. 304) and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 304

Resolved, That the following named Member be, and is hereby, elected to the following standing committee of the House of Representatives:

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY.—Ms. Baldwin (to rank immediately after Mr. Sherman).

Mr. BECERRA (during the reading). Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be considered as read and printed in the RECORD.

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

There was no objection.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

THE DUKE CASE: POLITICAL PANDERING?

(Mr. POE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, District Attorney Mike Nifong of North Carolina quickly prosecuted Duke University lacrosse players for an alleged sexual assault against a minority female. He sensationalized and fueled racial unrest, all to promote his reelection campaign. He made outlandish allegations, calling the players hooligans.

Forget the presumption of innocence or due process. Forget the facts.

Nifong is yet another example of a prosecutor gone wild, wild about publicity and win-at-all-costs mentality. Now the cases have been dismissed for lack of evidence.

The damage is to the innocent players who cannot get their reputations back. The damage is to the bona fide sexual assault victims who may be reluctant to prosecute. The damage is to Duke University who acted too hastily by suspending the players due to media hysteria. The damage is to those who are actual victims of crime based on race.

DAs who violate their oath to seek justice and then flaunt their power by relentlessly prosecuting people in spite of the facts, all to grab a headline, should be held personally liable in our courts and be accountable for their actions by removal from office and permanent suspension from the practice of law. There must be consequences for abuse of power.

And that's just the way it is.

WHAT IS THE ADMINISTRATION DOING TO COMBAT THE RISING PRICE OF GASOLINE

(Mr. ENGEL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, every day my constituents and people all around America go to a gasoline station to put gasoline in their cars and see that the prices are rising and rising and rising to a point of ridiculousness. I want to know what is the administration doing to combat this problem.

When the price of a barrel of oil goes up, gasoline prices go up, but when the cost of a barrel of oil goes down, gasoline prices still go up.

Americans remember the gasoline prices started dropping conveniently just before the last election in 2006. Is it a coincidence? I don't know, but certainly I do know that nothing is happening, and every single day Americans are feeling the pinch at the pump.

I call on the administration to take action. Enough is enough. I don't know if it's collusion. I don't know what it is. I just know it's wrong, and prices should be dropping when the cost of a barrel of oil goes down, not getting higher.

HONORING TEACHER EMILY JENNETTE

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

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Emily Jennette, a teacher at Sawyer Road Elementary School in Marietta, Georgia, who was recently recognized as our State's Teacher of the Year.

This award could not have gone to a more deserving candidate. Ms. Jennette is an exceptional educator, praised by her fellow teachers for her innovative teaching techniques, a commitment to learning and an outstanding ability to engage her students.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank both Ms. Jennette and another Cobb County teacher who was a top 10 finalist, Ms. Jennifer Dawson of Lost Mountain Middle School. Educators are among our communities' most valuable assets. Their gifts impact students in the classroom, and their lessons follow our children throughout life.

Georgia is fortunate to have teachers like Emily Jennette educating our children, and I know she will make our State proud at the National Teacher of the Year competition.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you join me in congratulating Ms. Jennette and all the teachers who help mold our children's lives every day.

A THREE-POINT PLAN FOR RESCUING THE NATION FROM VIOLENCE

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

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, in the aftermath of the tragedy at Blacksburg, Virginia, it is becoming painfully obvious that the easy availability of handguns constitutes a growing national crisis of public health and safety, one that calls for a powerful, wide-ranging response from this Congress.

I am urging Members to support H.R. 676, the Conyers-Kucinich bill, which establishes a universal, not-for-profit health care system, which provides full and comprehensive mental health care.

Second, support H.R. 808, a bill establishing a Department of Peace and Nonviolence, which directly addresses the issues of domestic violence, gang violence, and violence in the schools which is reflected in our current homicide rates.

And third, the 33 deaths at Blacksburg constitute a national tragedy. So, too, does the fact that an average of 32 people each and every day in the United States perish in handgun-related incidents. Accordingly, I am drafting a bill to ban the purchase, sale, transfer or possession of handguns by civilians. A gun buy-back provision will be provided in the bill.

It's time for us to rescue this Nation from the violence which is engulfing it, and I have just articulated a three-point plan to do so.

□ 1915

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ELLSWORTH). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

BUILD A BETTER NATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Michigan (Ms. KILPATRICK) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. KILPATRICK. Mr. Speaker and Members, I stand here today as chairperson of the Congressional Black Caucus to say thank you to America, thank you to the president and CEO of NBC News network, as well as the president and CEO of CBS News network. I had an opportunity to meet with them last week. They did the right thing.

Our country is in peril. We need to bring our country together. Thank you very much for the senior staffs of both of those organizations and for the people of America for standing up and speaking out.

We are in trying times at the moment, and there is much we must do to bring our country together and make our families stronger. Kudos, most gracious love, to the women of the Rutgers' basketball team, 10 young women, all honor students, child prodigies, dedicated and working to make life better for themselves and for America, to get to Rutgers, to stay there, to achieve academic excellence, and, yes, then to excel. Also, kudos to the University of Tennessee women's basketball team, the NCAA women's basketball champions.

This is the 35th anniversary year of title IX. Title IX is the legislation 35 years ago that was enacted that would make an equal playing field for women in sports and athletics. We will celebrate title IX and have been all year. I have spoken to President McCormick, and the Congressional Black Caucus, the Speaker of the House and others will be welcoming the Rutgers and Tennessee teams as well as the president and coaching staffs to our city of Washington, DC, very soon. We will hold a 2-hour summit and hear from the National Organization For Women, a psychiatrist from Rutgers University, some renowned women and others who speak to the values of America.

Today we had the chairman of the Federal Communications Commission in our Appropriations Committee. He came for his budget today. We talked about how do we make America better; how do we shut down some of the smut and other things that are negatively impacting our children. We are a better Nation than that. He has agreed to work with us and together, through this Congress, the FCC will be stronger. We must strengthen some of the things that they must do.

The 1934 law is archaic. The courts have interpreted that law very narrowly. This is far bigger than a person. This is about the strength and success of our families, of our children.

On behalf of the men and women who serve in this United States Congress, and specifically the men and women of the Congressional Black Caucus, let us rise up and build a better Nation for our sisters, our girls, our women, and, yes, our men and boys.

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

(Mr. JONES of North Carolina addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

OPEN BORDER CHAOS

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

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, recent memos that have been released finally by the Justice Department regarding certain situations in the Federal Government, specifically in the U.S. Attorney's office, have revealed numerous things. No wonder the Justice Department fought releasing these e-mails and memos.

We now understand that the prosecution of Federal drug cases along the Texas-Mexico border has dropped dramatically. All the way from Texas to California, prosecutions of drug cases have dropped. In some places up to 25 percent of drug cases are not prosecuted that were prosecuted just a year ago. What is happening is the Federal Government is not able to prosecute drug smugglers, and they are asking the States to prosecute those cases.

Many States—especially those counties on the border with Texas and Mexico, same was true in Arizona and Mexico, New Mexico and California and Mexico—don't have the resources to prosecute all those drug cases.

So what is happening is many cases are dropping through the cracks, all because the Federal Government has dropped 25 percent of prosecution of drug smugglers into the United States because they say they are overwhelmed with cases.

How many cases are we talking about? What types of drug cases? Well, in some cases they are prosecuting cases of only 500 pounds or more of marijuana. Five hundred pounds, that is just a number. But we can relate it to money, and 500 pounds of marijuana is worth about $400,000. A drug smuggler smuggling in $400,000 worth of dope or less, in some cases is getting a pass by the Federal Government because they say they are too overwhelmed with the illegal entry into the United States by drug smugglers.

If the States don't prosecute those cases, as many States are not able to do, what is happening is those drug smugglers are getting a get-out-of-jail-free card.

Drug smugglers are not stupid. They can weigh their marijuana. So all they got to do, before they bring that dope into the United States, is make sure they have less than 500 pounds, because if they are caught by our border agents, the Federal Government won't prosecute them because the Federal Government says we have too many cases.

This is absurd; this is nonsense. This is chaos. Law enforcement is mad about this, and rightfully so. One former DEA official in the El Paso sector made the comment that if the Feds decline to prosecute, and the State lacks the resources to prosecute these drug smugglers, they just go free. You have people violating the drug laws who now get away with it in the United States, all because the Federal Government doesn't do its job. The job is bigger than prosecuting drug smugglers. The job is protect the borders, and our Federal Government doesn't do that.

They claim that they are not prosecuting drug cases because they are prosecuting folks that illegally enter the United States. But maybe that is not true either. These same memos now reveal that in the State of Texas an illegal coming into the United States has to be captured six times before they are actually prosecuted criminally for being in the United States.

What happens is if they are caught the first six times, they are just taken home. Of course, they come right back to the United States. They are not being prosecuted. In Arizona, sometimes it is up to 11 times illegals enter the United States before they are criminally prosecuted for being here illegally.

So what is the Federal Government doing? Well, we do know they are spending a lot of their time prosecuting border protectors. They are spending a lot of taxpayer money to make deals, back-room deals with drug smugglers so that they can prosecute the likes of border agents Ramos and Compean, deputy sheriffs like Gilmer Hernandez, individuals who are enforcing the law.

The Federal Government's duty is to protect the dignity of this Nation. It needs to protect the border from everybody coming into the United States illegally, no matter the reason, but especially those people who are criminals, especially those drug smugglers who bring drugs into the United States and make a profit off of that human weakness, and now giving them a pass, because they are not bringing in enough dope? This is absurd. Not prosecuting illegals until the sixth or eleventh time because we don't supposedly have the resources is absurd, and it is all because we don't protect the dignity of the United States.

Border control in this country doesn't seem to even exist. Third World nations protect their borders better than the United States, and the United States protects the borders of other nations like Korea. Why don't we protect our own border?

While all of this is going on down there on the lawless border of the United States and Mexico, now we hear about a new reform package, a comprehensive immigration plan that is supposed to have little border security, supposed to have a lot of amnesty and supposed to have a whole lot more guest workers in the United States. That is not going to work.

What we need is the National Guard on the border. We need to protect the borders, the dignity of the United States.

And that's just the way it is.

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

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

THE FARM LABOR RECRUITMENT SYSTEM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, on April 9, 2007, 29-year-old Toledoan, Santiago Raphael Cruz, was found bound, gagged and beaten to death in Monterrey, Mexico, in the office of his employer, the Toledo-based Farm Labor Organizing Committee, or FLOC.

Mr. Cruz moved from Toledo, Ohio, to Mexico 3 months ago to legally arrange for Mexican guest laborers to work for a North Carolina pickle plant with which FLOC has a contract. FLOC's efforts assured guest workers were treated humanely, that their papers were legal, and that the notorious crime-ridden labor recruitment system that characterizes farm labor on this continent would cease to exist.

FLOC, which is part of the AFL–CIO, is a farm labor union and social movement based in our district led by Baldemar Velasquez. FLOC is perhaps most recently known for achieving a fair labor contract for guest workers in the United States with H2A visas in North Carolina. Mr. Velasquez led that campaign, as well as one to organize pickle workers in Ohio in the 1980s, and has been recognized as a MacArthur Foundation fellow.

In Mexico, FLOC offered a safe, legal alternative to the exploitative promises of coyotes and those who charge exorbitant fees to smuggle Mexicans across the border. The union had been burglarized, and the workers harassed for their efforts to protect Mexicans wishing to work in our country.

I learned, as I learned more about Mr. Cruz's brutal murder, I asked myself whether this horrendous crime could have been encouraged by FLOC's noble efforts to stop the illegal trafficking and continental labor caused by NAFTA. I have called upon the governments of the United States and Mexico to fully investigate and bring the perpetrators of this horrendous crime to justice. These coyotes prey upon desperate Mexican workers whose lands were taken from them by the Mexican Government under NAFTA. NAFTA set up conditions in North America for cruel exploitation of millions of landless peasants and workers in Mexico.

Mr. Velasquez and FLOC worked endlessly to give people not only legal rights but hope for an end to the harsh treatment handed to them by the governments of the United States and of Mexico. The current and often illegal labor recruitment system is rife with corruption. It exploits landless peasants through a corrupt bounty system imposed by unsavory labor recruiters.

Many times I have said NAFTA fuels illegal immigration by creating an exodus of massive proportion of people from the Mexican countryside who need something to eat after their livelihoods are taken from them. The manner in which these people are being exploited is a continental sacrilege. The problem with NAFTA and NAFTA-style trade agreements is they fail to take people into account.

NAFTA and NAFTA-style agreements serve the interests primarily of the money classes. They reduce risks for Wall Street investors while raising the risk that workers in our heartland will lose their jobs and health care. They are manna for hedge funds, but a threat to the economic security of blue collar workers.

□ 1930

They leave people out of the question. Whether it is campesinos in Mexico trying to provide food for their families and eke out an existence taken from them by their own government in cahoots with ours through NAFTA, or auto workers in the Midwest pursuing the American dream of a house, a car, and a better life for their children, they are the forgotten people in our global economy.

As Mr. Velasquez noted, Mr. Cruz had a good heart and was working for the people. Mr. Cruz gave his life in service to the forgotten people. We honor his commitment and we extend our sympathies to his family, to his friends, and to the entire FLOC community of which our community is so very proud.

His horrific death reminds us how brutal and unforgiving the NAFTA-induced labor system has become across our continent. It is time to renegotiate NAFTA. It is time not to extend it further. It is time to require continental labor standards that uphold the dignity of human life, not extinguish it.

Mr. Speaker, I submit extraneous material for printing in the RECORD, and I thank my colleague from Washington for allowing me to speak.

[From the toledoblade.com, April 12, 2007]

U.S. DEMANDS PROBE OF SLAYING

(By Clyde Hughes)

The U.S. General Consulate Office in Mexico is pressing for a complete investigation in the beating death of a Toledo union worker found dead early Monday at the union's office in Monterrey, U.S. Rep. Marcy Kaptur (D., Toledo) said yesterday.

Law enforcement officials from the state of Nuevo Leon are investigating the death of Santiago Rafael Cruz, 29, a Mexican native who has lived in Toledo since 1998 and had worked for the Farm Labor Organizing Committee as manager of its Monterrey office for three months, said Baldemar Velasquez, longtime president of the union.

Mr. Velasquez said he believed Mr. Cruz's death is directly related to FLOC's efforts to organize workers in the Monterrey area.

He said the union's education efforts made workers there less susceptible to people who would charge workers large sums of money to enter the United States illegally.

FLOC's program there recruits Mexican residents interested in going to the United States as part of a guest-worker program through a contract the union has with a North Carolina pickle company, union officials said.

Mr. Cruz was bound, gagged, and beaten, Miss Kaptur said yesterday.

She said she talked with Edward Heartney, consul for politics and economic affairs with the U.S. consulate general in Monterrey,

who assured her he'd press the Mexican government for a thorough investigation and offer the assistance of the FBI.

Miss Kaptur said she also could call for a special investigation, which is allowed through the North American Free Trade Agreement, which would engage the labor departments of both the United States and Mexico.

She said the investigation provision in NAFTA, though, does not provide for sanctions.

''Right now, they need to do the basic policing work,'' Miss Kaptur said. ''Our government is engaged and I wanted [Mr. Heartney's] assurance on that. You see how NAFTA is contributing to this endless stream of people who are so vulnerable to exploitation.

''There are no worker protections under NAFTA. When [FLOC] does try to take the illegality out of what's going on there, this sort of horrendous tragedy occurs. It will be taken note of on a national level here.''

Mr. Velasquez said his union workers have been harassed there before for organizing workers and helping them obtain legal documents to work in the United States.

He said he believes that people running illegal operations to move Mexicans into the United States see FLOC as a threat.

''We're actually fighting the corruption that's prevalent in this area,'' Mr. Velasquez said via phone call from Monterrey. ''There's been 10 policemen killed here in the last year. We've educated the workers not to be taken advantage of and some people here don't like that, but we have to carry on the work.''

Mr. Velasquez said Mr. Cruz's body will be returned to Puebla, Mexico, where the majority of his family is located, for a funeral. He said arrangements for the funeral have not been made yet.

He said Mr. Cruz's work with FLOC, which dates to his arrival to Toledo in 1998, made a difference in the union.

''He had a heart for the people,'' Mr. Velasquez said. ''He spent his extra time consulting people, teaching them how not to get cheated and ripped off by phony promises by people who said they could get papers for undocumented folks, and he would explain any proposals out there for immigration reform.

''Basically, he wouldn't allow people to be duped by other people wanting to take advantage of people's ignorance. He was very effective at that.''

Mr. Velasquez and Miss Kaptur said the murder investigation is still in the early stages and both said they plan on following the results closely.

WE JUST MARCHED IN (SO WE CAN JUST MARCH OUT)

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

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, all the reasons given to justify a preemptive strike against Iraq were wrong. Congress and the American people were misled.

Support for the war came from various special interests that had agitated for an invasion of Iraq since 1998. The Iraq Liberation Act passed by Congress and signed into law by President Clinton stated that getting rid of Saddam Hussein was official U.S. policy. This policy was carried out in 2003.

Congress failed miserably in meeting its crucial obligations as the branch of government charged with deciding whether to declare war. It wrongly and unconstitutionally transferred this power to the President, and the President did not hesitate to use it.

Although it is clear there was no cause for war, we just marched in. Our leaders deceived themselves and the public with assurances that the war was righteous and would be over quickly. Their justifications were false, and they failed to grasp even basic facts about the chaotic, political, and religious history of the region.

Congress bears the greater blame for this fiasco. It reneged on its responsibility to declare or not declare war. It transferred this decision-making power to the executive branch and gave open sanction to anything the President did. In fact, the Founders diligently tried to prevent the executive from possessing this power, granting it to Congress alone in article I, section 8, of the Constitution.

Today, just about everyone acknowledges the war has gone badly, and 70 percent of the American people want it to end. Our national defense is weakened, the financial costs continue to drain us, our allies have deserted us, and our enemies are multiplying, not to mention the tragic toll of death and injuries suffered by American forces.

Iraq is a mess, and we urgently need a new direction. But our leaders offer only hand-wringing and platitudes. They have no clear-cut ideas to end the suffering and war. Even the most ardent war hawks cannot begin to define victory in Iraq.

As an Air Force officer, serving from 1963 to 1968, I heard the same agonizing pleas from the American people. These pleas were met with the same excuses about why we could not change a deeply flawed policy and rethink the war in Vietnam. That bloody conflict, also undeclared and unconstitutional, seems to have taught us little despite the horrific costs.

Once again, though everyone now accepts that the original justifications for invading Iraq were not legitimate, we are given excuses for not leaving. We flaunt our power by building permanent military bases and an enormous billion-dollar embassy, yet claim we have no plans to stay in Iraq permanently. Assurances that our presence in Iraq has nothing to do with oil are not believed in the Middle East. The argument for staying to prevent civil war and bring stability to the region logically falls on deaf ears.

If the justifications for war were wrong, if the war is going badly, if we can't afford the costs, both human and economic, if civil war and chaos have resulted from our occupation, if the reasons for staying are not more credible than the reasons for going, then why the dilemma? The American people have spoken and continue to speak out against the war, so why not end it?

How do we end it? Why not exactly the way we went in? We marched in and we can march out.

More good things may come of it than anyone can imagine. Consider our relationship with Vietnam, now our friendly trading partner. Certainly we are doing better with her than when we tried to impose our will by force.

It is time to march out of Iraq and come home.

SITUATION IN IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, before I begin I would like to just have a moment of silence for the fallen students of Virginia Tech and our colleagues, who were with them today, the people of Virginia, and the people of the United States of America.

Thank you.

As I begin this 5 minutes, I believe it will be the challenge of this body to find a way to confront the issue of violence through physical acts and violence through words. Many of us will propose new gun legislation, some of us will look to outreach, but we will also seek understanding. That understanding I think leads me to join with the Chairwoman of the Congressional Black Caucus as I acknowledge the outstanding women of the Rutgers University basketball team, to thank them for their dignity, their diplomacy, and their excellence; and to speak, just a very short brief word, of my agreement with the final action on Imus and his unfortunate and destructive words.

Many of the first amendment advocates, of which I happen to be one, are up in arms. Many have said the punishment was too harsh. But I use the age-old teaching tool for those of us in constitutional law classes around the Nation. And though the first amendment is pure, the right to association, the freedom of religion is pure, but it is qualified by the Supreme Court that indicates that we cannot call ''fire'' in a crowded theater. And so it is obvious that unfortunately what Imus did with these words, these women athletes, these academically excellent students is that they cried ''fire.'' And fire cannot be allowed to burn, and the fire had to be extinguished, and Imus and his ugly words had to be taken off of the public airwaves, wishing him well for hopefully a reformation and a rebirth so that young people all around America can, one, not be subjected to the violence of words, and they cannot be subjected to the brutality, the violence of guns.

Let me move, Mr. Speaker, quickly to an additional cause for my standing here today. And that is to salute my colleague, Congresswoman LYNN WOOLSEY, who tonight will give her 200th statement in opposition to the war in Iraq. I join her today, sadly, because again young people, valiant, patriotic young people are on the front lines of Iraq. They have not protested, they have not said, I will not go, but they

look to their leadership, policymakers to have the courage of conviction.

My friend from Texas is right, this is an unending and unsuccessful political action; 3,309 are dead, the violence over the weekend has been unspeakable. The cleric, al-Sadr, has taken out his ministers from the government. That means the coalition government is on the brink of collapse. Why? Because the prime minister is stubborn and will not sit down with his cabinet and parliament and ask in a respectful and collaborative way for the United States to be thanked for its valiant work of its military and asked that we stand down so that Iraq can stand up.

What a tragedy: ego over commonsense. What a tragedy: the continued loss of life over big egos.

And so I say to the administration, we will not give you an unending mandate to continue the terrible loss of life of our troops, and the reason we will not do that is because we declare a military success.

I wear on my lapel the flag of the POWs, the celebration and commemoration of men and women still lost at war, still missing in action, some now who have come home, soldiers that are lost. There is a military success, a legislative initiative of H.R. 930 that I have declaring a military success, the discovery of no weapons of mass destruction, disposing of Saddam Hussein, and many other valiant efforts of our military. And then we must now move to diplomacy.

It is time now to recognize lives and patriotism rise stronger than egos and bluster and the sadness of the debacle in Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, as a proud member of the Progressive and the Out of Iraq Caucuses, I rise to speak about the current situation regarding the Iraq War. But before I do, let me express my condolences to the families and friends and neighbors and loved ones who suffered such horrific losses yesterday. I speak of Virginia Tech University, one of the Nation's great land grant colleges, where we witnessed the most senseless acts of violence on a scale unprecedented in our history.

Neither the mind nor the heart can contemplate a cause that could lead a human being to inflict such injury and destruction on fellow human beings. The loss of life and innocence at Virginia Tech is a tragedy over which all Americans mourn and the thoughts and prayers of people of goodwill everywhere go out to the victims and their families. In the face of such overwhelming grief, I hope they can take comfort in the certain knowledge that unearned suffering is redemptive.

The war in Iraq has also caused a lot of unearned suffering in Iraq and here at home. This is the same war, Madam Speaker, whose proponents misrepresented to the Nation would last no more than 6 months and likely less than 6 weeks. This same war in Iraq, we were led to believe by the Administration, would cost less than $50 billion and would be paid out of the ample revenues from Iraq's oil fields. The war in Iraq, the American people were promised, should have ended years ago with Americans troops greeted as liberators by jubilant Iraqis throwing rose petals at their feet.

As I and my colleagues in the Progressive Caucus and the Out of Iraq Caucus forecast at the time, the starry-eyed, rosy scenarios laid out by the President, Vice-President, and Defense Secretary Rumsfeld would come to pass in fantasy land, but not in the cold, hard world of reality which they refused to live in.

To date, the war in Iraq has lasted longer than America's involvement in World War II, the greatest conflict in all of human history. But there is a difference. The Second World War ended in complete and total victory for the United States and its allies. But then again, in that conflict America was led by FDR, a great Commander-in-Chief, who had a plan to win the war and secure the peace, listened to his generals, and sent troops in sufficient numbers and sufficiently trained and equipped to do the job.

As a result of the colossal miscalculation in deciding to invade Iraq, the loss of public trust resulting from the misrepresentation of the reasons for launching that invasion, and the breath-taking incompetence in mismanaging the occupation of Iraq, the Armed Forces and the people of the United States have suffered incalculable damage.

The war in Iraq has claimed the lives of 3,309 brave servicemen and women (64 in the first 16 days of this month). More than 24,600 Americans have been wounded, many suffering the most horrific injuries. American taxpayers have paid nearly $400 billion to sustain this misadventure.

The depth, breadth, and scope of the President's misguided, mismanaged, and misrepresented war in Iraq is utterly without precedent in American history. It is a tragedy in a league all its own. But it was not unforeseeable or unavoidable.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1591, the U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans' Health and Iraq Accountability Act the House passed last month provides real benchmarks and consequences if the Iraqi Government fails to live up to its commitments. First, it requires the President to certify and report to Congress on July 1, 2007 that real progress is underway on key benchmarks for the Iraqi government. If the President cannot so certify, redeployment of U.S. troops must begin immediately and be completed within 180 days. If the President fails to certify that Iraq has met the benchmarks on October 1, 2007, a redeployment of U.S. troops would begin immediately at that time and must be completed within 180 days. In any case, at the latest, a redeployment of U.S. troops from Iraq must begin by March 1, 2008, and must be completed by August 31, 2008.

I have to say, Mr. Speaker, the Iraqi Government is not off to a good start. The Green Zone surrounding Baghdad remains insecure. Earlier this week, a suicide bomber managed to penetrate the security perimeter of the Iraqi Parliament and detonated a bomb that killed at least three members of the Iraqi parliament and wounded scores of others. Additionally, the market represented by Senator MCCAIN as an example of the improved security situation in Iraq was turned into a killing field within days after Senator MCCAIN's visit.

And yesterday we learned that radical Shiite Muslim cleric Muqtada al-Sadr has reasserted his political power by yanking his loyalists from the Cabinet, a move aimed at showing his supporters he retains his credentials as an opposition leader and which increases the pressure on Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki to loosen his embrace of the U.S. occupation, which many Iraqis blame for violence in the country.

These developments, Mr. Speaker, illustrate the wisdom of requiring benchmarks the Iraqi Government must meet to justify continued American blood and treasure in Iraq. Moreover, because those benchmarks are established pursuant to President Bush's policies, it is passing strange indeed that he would threaten to veto the bill since it necessarily means he would be vetoing his own benchmarks for the performance of the Iraqi government. He would be vetoing his own readiness standards for U.S. troops. The President demands this Congress send him an Iraq war bill with ''no strings.'' But the only ''strings'' attached, Mr. Speaker, are the benchmarks and standards imposed by the President himself.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to the enormous financial cost, the human cost to the men and women of the United States Armed Forces has also been high but they have willingly paid it. Operation Iraqi Freedom has exacerbated the Veterans Administration health care facility maintenance backlog; placed an undue strain on the delivery of medical treatment and rehabilitative services for current and new veterans; and exacted a heavy toll on the equipment, training and readiness requirements, and the families of the men and women of the United States Armed Forces.

The emergency supplemental acknowledged the sacrifices made by, and the debt of gratitude, we and the Iraqi people owe to Armed Forces of the United States. But more than that, it makes a substantial down payment on that debt by providing substantial increases in funding for our troops.

The supplemental includes a total appropriation of $2.8 billion for Defense Health Care, which is $1.7 billion above the President's request. The additional funding supports new initiatives to enhance medical services for active duty forces and mobilized personnel, and their family members. Included in this new funding is $450 million for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder/Counseling; $450 million for Traumatic Brain Injury care and research; $730 million to prevent health care fee increases for our troops; $20 million to address the problems at Walter Reed; and $14.8 million for burn care.

Unlike the Republican leadership of the 109th Congress and the Bush Administration, the new Democratic majority is committed to America's veterans. What's more, we back up that commitment by investing in their well-being. For example, the supplemental bill we passed included $1.7 billion above the President's request for initiatives to address the health care needs of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans and the backlog in maintaining VA health care facilities, including $550 million to address the backlog in maintaining VA health care facilities so as to prevent the VA from experiencing a situation similar to that found at Walter Reed Medical Center.

We provided an additional $250 million for administration to ensure there are sufficient personnel to support the growing number of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans and to maintain a high level of services for all veterans; $229 million for treating the growing number of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans; $100 million for contract mental health care, which will allow the VA to contract with private mental health care providers to ensure that Iraq and Afghanistan veterans are seen in the most timely and least disruptive fashion, including members of

the Guard and Reserve; and $62 million to speed up the processing of claims of veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan.

Mr. Speaker, when American troops are sent into harm's way, America has an obligation to do all it can to minimize the risk of harm to the troops. That is why it was so important that we included additional funding above the President's request to support our troops. We provided $2.5 billion more to address the current readiness crisis of our stateside troops, including ensuring that they are better equipped and trained. We included $1.4 billion more for military housing allowances and $311 million more for Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicles for troops in Iraq. And there is included in the supplemental $222 million more for infrared countermeasures for Air Force aircraft to address the growing threat against U.S. air operations in Iraq and Afghanistan

Equally important, Mr. Speaker, the supplemental contains language directing the President to adhere to current military guidelines for unit readiness, deployments, and time between deployments.

In the supplemental we passed, the Defense Department is required to abide by its current Unit Readiness policy, requiring the chief of the military department concerned to determine that a unit is "fully mission capable" before it is deployed to Iraq. The President may waive this provision by submitting a report to Congress detailing why the unit's deployment is in the interests of national security despite the assessment that the unit is not fully mission capable.

The Defense Department is also required to abide by its current policy and avoid extending the deployment of units in Iraq in excess of 365 days for the Army and 210 days for the Marines. The provision may be waived by the President only by submitting a report to Congress detailing the particular reason or reasons why the unit's extended deployment is in the interests of national security.

Mr. Speaker, to reduce the incidence of combat fatigue and enhance readiness, it is important that our troops have sufficient "time out of the combat zone and training between deployments. That is why we require the Defense Department to abide by its current policy and avoid sending units back into Iraq before troops get the required time away from the war theater. The President may waive this provision by submitting a report to Congress detailing why the unit's early redeployment to Iraq is in the interests of national security.

Mr. Speaker, the American people spoke loudly and clearly last November when they tossed out the Rubber-Stamp Republican Congress. They voted for a New Direction in Iraq and for change in America. They voted to disentangle American troops from the carnage, chaos, and civil war in Iraq. They voted for accountability and oversight, which we Democrats have begun to deliver on; already the new majority has held more than 100 congressional hearings related to the Iraq War, investigating everything from the rampant waste, fraud, and abuse of Iraq reconstruction funding to troop readiness to the Iraq Study Group Report to the shameful mistreatment of wounded soldiers recuperating at Walter Reed Medical Center.

And we will not stop, Mr. Speaker, until we are clearly on a glide path to the day when our troops come home and where we can "care for him who has borne the battle, and for his widow and orphan." And even then our work will not be done. For we must still be about the business of repairing the damage to America's international reputation and prestige. But this Democratic majority, led by the Progressive Caucus and the Out of Iraq Caucus, has ushered in a new era of oversight, accountability, and transparency to defense and reconstruction contracting and procurement.

THE LOGAN ACT

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

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I have high regard for everybody in this whole body, but when someone does something wrong, it is imperative that it be brought to light, and brought to light in a public forum.

About a week ago, the Speaker of the House, along with others, took a trip that the State Department and the White House disapproved of, to visit Syria. Syria is a terrorist state, has been on the terrorist state list for a long, long time. They have been working with Iran, they have been a transit point for weapons that went into Lebanon, weapons that killed a lot of people. They support Hezbollah and Hamas, two terrorist organizations. They work closely with Iran which has been involved in terrorism and is also on the terrorist list. And for the Speaker and others to go over there and talk with Assad, in my opinion and in the opinion of the law, the Logan Act, that it was not only the wrong thing to do and sent the wrong message, but it was a violation of an act of Congress.

I want to read to you the language in the Logan Act. It says, "Any citizen of the United States, wherever he or she may be, who, without authority of the United States, directly or indirectly commences or carries on any correspondence or intercourse with any foreign government or any officer or agent thereof, in relation to any disputes or controversies with the United States, or to defeat the measures of United States, shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than 3 years or both."

Now, I am not under any illusions that there is going to be any censorship of the Speaker or any prosecution of the Speaker, but I think the American people ought to know that she weakened the position of the United States in the Middle East, and she broke the law; and she should be held accountable for that. And tonight I hope the American people get this message and send a message to the Speaker.

She has talked recently, as I understand it, and she is thinking about going to Iran and talking to Ahmadinejad. He is one of the terrorist leaders of the world. And if she were to go over there while he is building nuclear weapons and the whole world is trying to get him to stop, it would be a sure sign of weakness on the part of the United States, and it would send such a signal that they would be more aggressive than they have been in the past.

In 1938 and 1939, Winston Churchill was looked upon as a warmonger because he warned about Hitler, and yet Lord Chamberlain went to Munich, Germany, and he signed a peace agreement on Hitler's terms, gave Hitler the Sudetenland, came back, and said, "Peace in our time," because he went and talked with Hitler and he thought he could convince him not to be aggressive. That was the green light for World War II and 62 million people died.

Talking to these terrorists without getting them to discuss and want to change and move away from their policies of mass destruction is wrong. Iran is trying to build nuclear weapons and they will already have one; they are trying to build a delivery system for intercontinental, intermediate range, and short-range missiles.

We must not send a signal of weakness. I think the Speaker did the wrong thing. I believe she violated the Logan Act because she didn't have the approval of both the White House and the Defense Department, and I hope that she won't do this again. And I certainly hope she won't go to Iran.

□ 1945

COMMEMORATING THE RUTGERS UNIVERSITY SCARLET KNIGHTS

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I came here tonight to talk about the Rutgers Women's basketball team, which I am so proud of, and I will. But I have to respond to the previous speaker.

I am very proud of the fact that Speaker PELOSI went to Syria. It is very important for us to have a dialogue with Syria. The fact of the matter is that the Iraq Study Group recommended that we have a dialogue with both Syria and Iran, and certainly we need a new direction with regard to the war in Iraq. And an effort to reach out and have dialogue is a good thing.

And there is such hypocrisy on the part of the other side of the aisle. I mean, the President and the White House criticized the Speaker. But a week before, a couple of days before, there were Republican Members of Congress that went to Syria. So this is just total hypocrisy.

It was a good thing that she went to Syria. It is the very type of dialogue that we need.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I came here this evening to honor the Rutgers University Scarlet Knights women's basketball team and applaud their character and integrity. These remarkable young

women are a class act, and I am proud to represent them and Rutgers University here in Congress.

After outrageous comments were made about the team by Don Imus on his CBS radio and MSNBC show, the team showed great courage in choosing to meet with him so he could see firsthand how wrong his sexist and racist comments were. During this emotionally and mentally exhausting ordeal, these remarkable young women were graceful and poised as they became media headlines for controversy.

And I strongly denounce Don Imus' divisive comments. They were disgusting, and they have no place in our everyday language, let alone on a nationally televised radio and television program. His comments not only affected these players, but resonated with women and African Americans across the Nation.

These were innocent student athletes living out their basketball dreams. They did not deserve to be his target. And MSNBC's decision to pull his television broadcast and CBS' firing of him displayed great moral character, and I support their choices.

His comments, Imus' comments, deprived these women of fully enjoying their accomplishments of being crowned Big East champions, going to the Final Four, and making history as the first athletic team from Rutgers to play for a national championship. All-Met Division I Player of the Year Kia Vaughn said it best when she said, ''Our moment was stolen from us.''

I want to talk about this team, Mr. Speaker. Rutgers had a Cinderella season that saw them come back from some devastating early season losses, including a 40-point loss to Duke. Under head coach C. Vivian Stringer, the Scarlet Knights finished their amazing season with a 27–9 record. The team fought improbable odds to reach the pinnacle NCAA title game, and maintained enormous composure when nasty comments overshadowed their record-breaking season.

I am immensely proud of this extraordinary team. Last week the Nation had an opportunity see a group of outstanding student athletes who were striving to reach lifetime goals, both on and off the basketball court. By excelling in academics, music and community service, they are great role models for student athletes across the Nation.

The Scarlet Knights women basketball players are excellent representatives of Rutgers University and the State of New Jersey, and they should be honored for their hard work, dedication, and heart.

Mr. Speaker, today I introduced a resolution commending the Scarlet Knights women's basketball team for their record-breaking season and their outstanding achievement off the basketball court. I am hopeful Congress will recognize these fine women by passing this resolution tomorrow.

HONORING BROWNIE SCOUT TROOP 114

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the patriotic efforts of Brownie Scout Troop 114 of Liberty Grove Baptist Church. This group of 18 young women has demonstrated a tangible commitment to supporting our troops stationed in Iraq. Last month they collected donations to send nearly 250 boxes of Girl Scout cookies to the brave men and women from their community who are serving in Iraq.

They pounded the pavement to sell cookies and find like-minded people who were willing to join them in sending cookies to a local North Carolina National Guard unit stationed near Tikrit, Iraq. I applaud the thoughtful and committed patriotism of these girls who invested their time to selflessly raise money and then send a token of appreciation to our Nation's troops.

The troops that are receiving the famous Girl Scout cookies are members of the headquarters 105th Engineer Group from Winston-Salem. For these men and women, there is no small act of kindness. No, this is much more than that. For our troops on the front line of the war on terror, to receive a package of cookies from a local Brownie Scout troop is like receiving a breath of fresh air from home. Whether or not these young women knew it, they were communicating to our soldiers that there are people who still care for our troops' welfare. They communicated that the youngest generation still values sacrifice and service to country.

I come to the floor today to celebrate this concentrated act of patriotic kindness and to honor the young ladies who have taken ownership of our Nation's great tradition of offering support to our troops serving abroad. Their example highlights what our great Nation is capable of producing in its youth.

We cannot emphasize enough how proud we are that these Scouts made this effort to brighten the days of hundreds of soldiers in Iraq. What may seem like a small token of gratitude will live on in the memory of the many troops who, in the coming weeks, will enjoy a box of Girl Scout cookies in the deserts of Iraq. I have no doubt that these men and women will look back with great fondness as they remember the day when the mail call brought them an unexpected box of sweets and a reminder that their community and their country stands behind them in this difficult time.

The members of the Brownie troop who sent this gift of baked goods are Alexandra Dillard, Reva Combs, Laken Harrold, Allison Livengood, Allie Barker, Lauren Johnson, Daniella Meeza, Kristina Meeza, Acacia Key, Charlotte York, Cheyenne Byrd, Alexis Baldwin, Erin McGee, Angela Nardini, Karlie Cranfill, Caitlyn Minton and Hope Brown.

It is my hope that their example is reproduced by many others, and that the soldiers who receive the fruit of their labors feel honored and respected by this act of young-hearted kindness.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. NORTON addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

CHILDREN: UNCOUNTED IRAQ CASUALTIES

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

Mr. MCDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, I had intended to rise this evening to focus my attention on the suicide bombing last week in Baghdad that killed and wounded several members of the Parliament, including Osama al-Nujafii. He was a member of the Iraq Parliament who participated in a historic live teleconference I hosted last month linking several of my House colleagues with several Iraq Parliamentarians. I wish him and the others wounded in the attack a speedy recovery.

That attack occurred inside the Green Zone, and it confirms that no one is safe in Iraq, no matter how many checkpoints or blast walls or press releases out of the White House. It confirms that the President's military escalation has only escalated the violence and the casualties. It confirms that the President has no control whatsoever on the events on the ground. And it confirms that the American people are right to demand that the President work with the Democratic Congress and establish a firm timetable for the withdrawal of U.S. troops.

For now, most Americans are grimly aware of the weekend of bombings and killings across Iraq. But the situation is even worse. The Iraq war will live long after the U.S. forces leave the country.

As a child psychiatrist, I was shocked to learn of a new study looking at the effects this war is having on Iraqi children. I submit the story from USA Today for the RECORD. It is the first comprehensive look at the impact the war is having on innocent Iraqi children. The Ministry of Health surveyed 2,500 primary school kids in Baghdad, and 70 percent of those young kids displayed symptoms of trauma-related stress. As the USA Today reported, many Iraqi children have been physically wounded, and many are psychologically scarred. They are the uncounted casualties of the Iraq war. Thousands of innocent Iraqi children

are uncounted casualties. But for all these innocent Iraqi children, this war will rage on for them for years to come. They will face a life of anguish, and, in fact, will be the ones who, in the future, are the future violent ones we worry about.

For all these innocent Iraqi children, this war will rage on for years to come. In some cases, these children will face a lifetime of anguish and suffering, and not one of these children is being counted as a casualty.

These children routinely walk through carnage on their way to school, when they go at all.

These children are routinely exposed to random violence and killings that burn images in their minds that will scar them for life.

As a child psychiatrist, I can only echo the conclusions of one Iraqi doctor who was interviewed by USA Today.

"Some of these children are time bombs," said Said al-Hashimi, a psychiatrist who teaches at an Iraqi Medical School.

In this excerpt from USA Today, al-Hashimi said he is concerned Iraqi children could become the next generation of fighters and fuel violence for years to come.

Because of what they are living through as youngsters, "they may think it's better to martyr themselves for religion or country," al-Hashimi said.

The only hope for these uncounted casualties is treatment.

But, as the USA Today story points out, there is only one government run psychiatric hospital in Baghdad—a city of 6 million people, or put more accurately, a city of 6 million casualties.

And then there are the uncounted casualties of Iraqi children in Basra, Rumadi, Najaf, Karbala, Mosul, Kirkuk, Fallujah, Baqubah, and all the other places Iraqi children live.

Until the war ends, there is virtually no chance that thousands of innocent Iraqi children will be treated for their war wounds.

We can only estimate how many thousands of Iraqi children need urgent psychological attention. We know they are not going to get it until this war ends.

There is a timetable for doing just that, and the President should stop listening to his discredited Vice President and start listening to reason and reality.

Now, in the face of that, our Speaker has led this Congress to set a time line that the President says, I will ignore. The President said, I will ignore the people, I will ignore the vote of 2006. No matter what the Speaker does, I am going to attack her.

So the Speaker took the Iraq Study Group's book that said we ought to talk to the people in Syria. For those of you who don't know, Syria is right up next to Iraq. And it is on the border. And there are Presidential accusations that people are coming in from Syria into Iraq, creating trouble and killing our troops. This is on its way to being the most deadly month in 5 years.

Now, for the Speaker to take her time and carefully plan and go over and talk to the leadership of Syria about attacks being made on Americans is, in my view, it is part of her legislative responsibility to the people, not only of her district, but the entire country. And for someone to come out here and accuse her of a violation of the Logan Act. Now this is a 200-year-old act that no one has ever been prosecuted under because there are real questions as to whether it prevents Members of the Congress from using their first amendment rights to talk out on behalf of the people that they represent.

In 1980, the State Department maintained that a visit to Cuba by Senators John Sparkman and George McGovern was not inconsistent with the Logan Act. Nothing in the act, they said, "would appear to restrict Members of Congress from engaging in discussions in pursuance of their legislative duties under the Constitution."

In 1976 the State Department was asked to weigh in as to whether former President Nixon violated the Logan Act by visiting China. The Department stated that Mr. Nixon's trip was taken entirely in his capacity as a private citizen and that the Department "was unaware of any basis for believing Mr. Nixon acted with intent prohibited" by the act. The Department has noted that no one has ever been prosecuted under this act.

This kind of attack on the Speaker will be answered in full again and again. Make no mistake about that.

The article previously referred to follows:

[From USA TODAY]

70% OF IRAQI SCHOOLCHILDREN SHOW SYMPTOMS OF TRAUMA

(By James Palmer)

BAGHDAD—About 70% of primary school students in a Baghdad neighborhood suffer symptoms of trauma-related stress such as bed-wetting or stuttering, according to a survey by the Iraqi Ministry of Health.

The survey of about 2,500 youngsters is the most comprehensive look at how the war is affecting Iraqi children, said Iraq's national mental health adviser and author of the study, Mohammed Al-Aboudi.

"The fighting is happening in the streets in front of our houses and schools," al-Aboudi said. "This is very difficult for the children to adapt to."

The study is to be released next month. Al-Aboudi discussed the findings with USA TODAY.

Many Iraqi children have to pass dead bodies on the street as they walk to school in the morning, according to a separate report last week by the International Red Cross. Others have seen relatives killed or have been injured in mortar or bomb attacks.

"Some of these children are suffering one trauma after another, and it's severely damaging their development," said Said Al-Hashimi, a psychiatrist who teaches at Mustansiriya Medical School and runs a private clinic in west Baghdad. "We're not certain what will become of the next generation, even if there is peace one day," Al-Hashimi said.

The study was conducted last October in the Sha'ab district of northern Baghdad. The low- to middle-income neighborhood is inhabited by a mix of Shiites and Sunni Arabs. Al-Aboudi said he believes the sample was broadly representative of conditions throughout the capital.

In the study, schoolteachers were asked to determine whether randomly selected students showed any of 10 symptoms identified by the World Health Organization as signs of trauma. Other symptoms included voluntary muteness, declining performance in school or an increase in aggressive behavior.

The teachers received training from Iraqi psychologists on how to identify and help students cope with trauma-related stress, al-Aboudi said.

The study "shows the impact of the violence and insecurity on the children and on children's mental health," said Naeema Al-Gasseer, the Iraqi representative of the WHO. "They have fear every day."

The Iraqi government is aware of the problem but largely unequipped to address it, said Ali al-Dabbagh, a government spokesman. "Until we have proper security in Baghdad, there's not much we can do to help these children," Al-Dabbagh said in Washington.

IRAQIS FEAR WAR'S LONG-TERM COST TO KIDS

(By James Palmer)

BAGHDAD—Ahmed Al-Khaffaji, 6, refused to leave his house for nearly a year after shrapnel from a mortar shell ripped through his left arm, rendering it useless.

Hussain Haider was only 5 when he stopped speaking after watching his father slowly bleed to death on the living room floor of the family's Sadr City home.

Iraqi psychiatrists worry about the long-term consequences of a generation that has been constantly exposed to explosions, gunfights, kidnappings and sectarian murders. "Some of these children are time bombs," said Said al-Hashimi, a psychiatrist who teaches at Mustansiriya Medical School.

Mental health professionals such as al-Hashimi say that there is a chronic shortage of trained psychiatrists and that schools are the front line for treating traumatized children.

Ahmed's skin was badly scarred, and he suffered burns on both legs when a mortar round slammed into his family's south Baghdad home on Jan. 1, 2006.

His mother, Safia Hussain Ali, said that for nearly a year afterward, her son feared leaving the house and often refused to eat.

Today, Ahmed attends school, but his behavior occasionally regresses, and he retreats from reality.

"Sometimes he refuses to eat and just wants to watch TV or play video games," Ali said.

Haider al-Malaki, 40, a psychiatrist at the government-run Ibn Rushd Hospital, said he has treated children as young as 6 with post-traumatic stress disorder. He said he has also seen children with sleeping and eating disorders that can be traced to the violence.

MORE AGGRESSION

"They have all experienced some kind of psychological trauma, whether they witnessed a murder or survived a kidnapping attempt," al-Malaki said. "When they witness violence, they're more likely to display aggressive and reckless behavior" later.

Al-Hashimi said he is concerned Iraqi children could become the next generation of fighters and fuel violence for years to come. Because of what they are living through as youngsters, "they may think it's better to martyr themselves for religion or country," al-Hashimi said.

Al-Hashimi set up a workshop this year to help teachers and school officials deal with students suffering from war-related trauma. He urges educators to get kids to release their emotions through activities such as academic competitions and soccer games.

"Schools in hot areas are still functioning," Al-Hashimi said, referring to volatile Baghdad neighborhoods. "Unfortunately, many people don't know how to handle the children in this situation."

Attacks on or near schools have forced Iraqi teachers and other school staff to try to protect their students.

''Children are very perceptive of teachers' moods and actions,'' said Hadoon Waleed, a psychology professor at Baghdad University. ''It's very important that teachers are trained to handle their students during stressful situations.''

Fawad Al-Kaisi, 59, headmaster at the Al-Hurriyah primary school in south Baghdad, said his staff has learned through experience.

''When explosions go off in the area, the students become very nervous,'' Al-Kaisi said. ''We try our best to create a positive environment to make them feel safe.''

Like others among Iraq's professional elite, psychiatrists are scarce, in part because they have been targets of kidnappers and assassins.

Al-Malaki, the psychiatrist at Ibn Rushd, survived two bullet wounds in his right arm from an assassination attempt in his clinic last year. He is among the few psychiatrists who have remained in Iraq and continued to work.

The Iraqi Society of Psychiatrists estimates at least 140 of the country's 200 psychiatrists were killed or have fled the country in the past four years.

LITTLE HELP AVAILABLE

A shortage of psychiatric facilities further limits the availability of mental health care. Ibn Rushd is the only government-funded psychiatric hospital in Baghdad, a city of 6 million people.

For Hussain Haider, now 7, and other children, the need is urgent. He stopped speaking for months after his father was killed in a crossfire between fighters of the Mahdi Army, a Shiite militia group, and U.S. forces April 6, 2004.

Hussain's mother, Thuraya Jabbar, said his grades have fallen, and he is awakened frequently by nightmares.

''He starts crying whenever we start speaking about his father,'' she said.

DENOUNCING THE REPREHENSIBLE COMMENTS OF DON IMUS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, first let me take a moment to offer my condolences to the families of the victims of the terrible and senseless violence at Virginia Tech. As they struggle to cope with their tremendous loss, we must give proper respect to their lives and the lives of the thousands of innocent people that are cut short every year in this country by gun violence. And let us honor their memories by committing ourselves to bringing an end to gun violence.

Before I begin, I want to commend my colleague, Congresswoman WOOLSEY, because today is the 200th time she has come to this floor to speak out against this unnecessary war in Iraq. I commend your tenacity, Congresswoman WOOLSEY, and I thank you for your leadership and your commitment to ending the occupation of Iraq and to bringing our troops home. I am proud to serve with you in this body as your colleague and as co-chair of the Progressive Caucus, and I want to say to you that your voice has become the voice of America. Thank you, Congresswoman WOOLSEY.

Let me also thank the Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, Congresswoman KILPATRICK, and members of the CBC for their leadership in addressing and denouncing the latest reprehensible comments by Don Imus.

First, I want to congratulate the Rutgers women's basketball team. We are so proud of you. Your record of achievement as women, as students, as athletes speaks for itself and no one can take away your accomplishments.

As we all know, on April 4, the morning talk show host Don Imus, who has, for years, mind you, for years, made disparaging remarks towards people of color and others, referred to the very distinguished women of the Rutgers basketball team with such disgusting words that I don't even want to repeat them.

Not only did his comments belittle the ethnicity of these women of valor, but he apparently felt entitled to denigrate these women as women. We are here today to say that there is no place for that kind of sexism and racism in our public discourse.

□ 2000

So while we acknowledge MSNBC and CBS did the right thing by firing Imus, we need to ask the question, what took so long? CBS's initial response, which was to suspend Imus 2 weeks with pay, suggested that they thought that a token punishment would appease the public outcry and demonstrated a complete disregard and insensitivity to both the women of the Rutgers basketball team and the millions of Americans who were outraged by the comments.

The fact is, this incident is just one of many Imus should have been fired for a long time ago. For example, he should have been fired 14 years ago when he referred to Gwen Ifill, who was then the White House correspondent for the New York Times, and he said, ''Isn't the Times wonderful? It lets the cleaning lady cover the White House.'' The point is this was not an isolated incident.

If you look back at what he said with regard to New York Times sports reporter Bill Rhoden, he said he was a ''quota hire.'' When you look at what he said about the tennis player, Amelie Mauresmo, he called her ''a big old . . .'' And I don't even want to say what he said there, but go back and check the record. He even admitted that he picked one of his producers to do the ''N jokes.''

You know, this is unbelievable. The point is, and I want to make this clear, this is not an isolated incident. And while I, for one, am glad that his show has been cancelled, I believe that we should be concerned with the fact that it took him so long to be taken off the air.

It is also important to understand that this is just not about Imus. There is a tendency in this country to treat racism as an issue of personal ill will so that people can say to themselves ''I don't hate black people'' and ignore all of the ways that the status quo in our society today reinforces racial inequality as well as sexism. Institutional racism and sexism don't need any personal ill will in order to continue. They rely on indifference, and people like Imus promote that indifference.

The grim reality is that women still earn 75 cents for every dollar earned by their male counterparts. The fact is that in the United States a woman is raped every 6 minutes, and women of color are especially vulnerable to sexual violence. The fact is that, in spite of all the progress we have made in America, an African American woman is still less likely to make it to college than a white woman.

What is dangerous about people like Imus, and he is only one of many, is that their racist and their sexist commentary serves to celebrate and uphold the status quo, to make it okay to be indifferent to the racism and sexism that still surrounds us. That is unacceptable.

Finally, let me just say to Imus's sponsors: Let me congratulate you again, you did the right thing. But before you get too complacent, let me remind you, Procter & Gamble and American Express and all the rest, that the makeup of your corporate board rooms reflects the indifference to institutional racism and sexism in this country, and we are looking to you to do more than stop sponsoring bigots. We are looking to you to help young women, young black women like the women on the Rutgers basketball team, to overcome the hurdles that face them and to find the opportunities that are too often denied them.

So let me thank again Congresswoman KILPATRICK for her leadership in the Congressional Black Caucus. Also let me say thank you again, Congresswoman WOOLSEY, for your leadership.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ELLSWORTH). Members are reminded to direct their remarks to the Chair.

REMARKS ON DON IMUS

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

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by expressing condolences to all of those who were directly affected by the gun violence that has just taken the lives of so many young people with so much promise. Again, I think it is an indication of a tremendous need to better regulate the acquisition and ownership of guns in our country, and I join with all of those who call for increased regulation.

Mr. Speaker, America's radios, televisions, newspapers, and Internet sites

have been consumed for the past several days over remarks by radio personality Don Imus.

Two weeks ago Imus referred to the women of the Rutgers University women's basketball team in language which can only be described as racist, sexist, and viciously offensive. Faced with an uproar of disgust and protest in response to those remarks, Imus apologized on one hand and on the other denied any racism and insisted that his words carried no malice.

Imus has a history of similar remarks and demands for him to be fired escalated by the hour and day. Under pressure from the public and advertisers, MSNBC agreed to drop the Imus show, and then, of course, CBS came to the same decision. I commend them for coming to the realization that this kind of rhetoric has no place on the public airways. I hope this outcome will be viewed as a victory for free speech and corporate responsibility.

I consider myself an apostle of the first amendment. Free speech is fundamental to our very notions of what and who we are as a people and as a Nation. Nevertheless, I believe that the outcry and protest over the Imus remarks and the demands for his dismissal are not only justified, but are totally consistent with the first amendment.

Nothing has eaten away at the soul of America, nothing has divided our Nation, and nothing has more persistently infected our democracy than the monstrous evil of racism.

Racism dehumanized and continues to dehumanize African Americans and others. Racism continues to ravage the lives of Black America from health to housing and from income to imprisonment. It has taken almost 150 years of struggle and sacrifice, but we no longer accept the racist practices and we no longer excuse racist speech.

No one is demanding that the government muzzle Mr. Imus. However, it is logical and just that large, extremely profitable media companies whose existence and whose profits are based on freedom of speech, would want to ensure that they are not profiting from the abuse of African American women, from the poisoning of relations between Americans, or from discrimination or oppression of any sector of our society.

Last week it was an outcry against Mr. Imus for his remarks. Today and tomorrow it must be against the rappers, hip-hop artists, and comedians who use vile language as a part of their public acts.

My mother used to take washing powder or soap and wash out our mouths if we were to use language that was unacceptable to her. Now, I know that we can't do this with some of our entertainers, but we certainly can sanitize and let them know that we are not appreciative of their language.

I join with those who commend the chairperson of the Congressional Black Caucus, CAROLYN CHEEKS KILPATRICK, for her leadership. And I also commend Reverend Jesse Jackson and the Reverend Al Sharpton for the tremendous roles that they played in raising this issue.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATERS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. WATERS addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

THE RUTGERS WOMEN'S BASKETBALL TEAM

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

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I was only going to speak about our Rutgers women, but I do want to also add my voice to the condolences for the Virginia Tech students. Out of the number of students who were killed, four students came from my State of New Jersey. So our hearts are heavy for all of the families, but especially for our four New Jersey students.

I also want to add my congratulations to Congresswoman WOOLSEY for being the persistent voice against the war. Day in and day out she has brought this to our attention, and I think much of what we see today in the movement against the war can directly be attributed to her tenacity.

I want to also commend Speaker PELOSI for the groundbreaking trip she took to Syria. I think that the dignity and the knowledge and the respect that were shown to her will begin to break the ground, and I hope that she continues to do that.

Mr. Speaker, as a Representative from New Jersey, I am pleased to rise here in the United States House of Representatives to praise the young women of the Rutgers basketball team, the Scarlet Knights, and their inspirational coach, C. Vivian Stringer. They are true champions not only for their academic and athletic achievements, but for the dignity, for the strength, for the class they have shown during this ordeal.

These 10 women overcame disappointing early losses in the season to advance, amazingly, to the Final Four. Around the Nation fans watched as the Scarlet Knights of Rutgers, who had lost four of their first seven games, defeated Duke's Blue Devils in an exciting 53–52 upset victory. This was after a lopsided 59–35 victory over LSU.

When the ugly incident with Don Imus cast a shadow over their success, these young women showed what they were made of. In standing up for themselves and their school and for New Jersey, they also took a stand on behalf of all young women who insist on being treated with respect and refuse to be insulted and stereotyped.

Don Imus and those of his ilk vastly underestimated New Jersey's strong and proud Scarlet Knights. He underestimated the pride we feel in New Jersey about our remarkable women on that team. As a matter of fact, during the founding of the Nation, New Jersey had a theme: ''Don't tread on us.'' Don Imus may have had a microphone, but he was no match for these young women and their coach, who so eloquently spoke up for what is right and fair. I am so proud that through their actions they were able to persuade two major networks, MSNBC and CBS, as well as numerous advertisers, that the days of using public airways to ridicule and debase anyone they choose are over.

Let me add that it is time that the FCC start doing its job by halting the use of racial and gender slurs over the public airways. As long there is weak enforcement, there will continue to be hate language used by the so-called ''shock jocks.'' In Rwanda it was the radio that urged people to kill and to go. It is hate radio that can create problems, serious problems, as we have seen, like I said, in Rwanda.

History has shown us that words matter, and once society accepts ugly language, ugly incidents will follow. We see the indecent exposure at the Super Bowl, where a tremendous amount of attention was paid. However, we let a Don Imus go on year in, year out, year in, year out, and many others. Something is wrong with that picture.

I call on the networks to examine their record of hiring minorities for top on-the-air and executive positions so that African Americans are fairly represented in the media. One reason that the networks made the decision to discontinue the Don Imus show was that the network employees let the management know how disturbed and embarrassed and offended they were by these demeaning commentaries and that they were a part of that institution, and that was the overriding factor. However, it was Rosa Parks, who 50 years ago decided that she would not sit at the back of the bus, and the people from Montgomery walked for a year, 2 years, and broke the back of the bus company. It was once again the economics that had a play in this 50 years later that people said that if you continue to advertise on that station, we will not use your product. So I am proud of the American people.

Finally, let me say that once again I am proud of these young women, one from my district in Newark, New Jersey, from the high school Shabazz that I taught at.

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200TH SPECIAL ORDER ON THE WAR IN IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today for the 200th time to express my

disgust and dismay with our Nation's policy in Iraq. And I want to thank Bart Ackeocella, who has helped me with my many, many words calling on the President of the United States to bring our troops home.

Forty-nine months after this failed Iraq policy was launched, we are still being told, Be patient. Progress is just around the corner. All of our sacrifices will somehow be worth it. But all that amounts to nothing more than desperate spin. And the American people aren't buying it; neither, apparently, are some top military brass. The administration can't find someone to take the job of war czar, a job that would coordinate the military campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan. One of the recruits for the job, retired Marine General Jack Sheehan, told The Washington Post last week that he would rather spare himself the ulcer, saying of the Bush administration, ''The very fundamental issue is they don't know where the hell they're going.''

How can the administration possibly say that Iraq is on the road to freedom and stability when a bomb goes off inside the Green Zone and kills members of the elected Parliament? If it's not safe inside the fortress of the Green Zone, just imagine what it is like in the streets of Baghdad.

How can the administration say progress is being made when the Associated Press reports that dozens of Iraqi police officers were demonstrating outside their Baghdad station chanting, ''No, no to America. Get out, occupiers.'' And now American soldiers can look forward to a few more months of trying valiantly, but in vain, to carry out this misguided mission, as the Pentagon has announced that soldiers' 1-year tours will be extended to 15 months.

I ask my colleagues who gave the President the authority to invade Iraq 4½ years ago if they weren't surprised that they voted for an occupation with no apparent end in sight. They absolutely didn't intend for our troops to be caught in the middle of a civil war that our very presence as occupiers has inspired. Four and a half years later, over 3,300 Americans who will never make it home to their families, and all at the cost of more than $375 billion to stop Saddam Hussein from using weapons of mass destruction that he didn't have.

This week, Americans sent their 2006 tax returns to the IRS, trusting that our government will send that money back to us in the form of services, benefits, stability and security. So what do we tell them? What do we tell the American people about the staggering costs they are being asked to assume for the occupation of Iraq? Can anyone possibly argue that we have somehow gotten a return on this reckless investment?

The National Priorities Project has broken down the Iraq financial burden, assuming a total of $456 billion once the latest supplemental is signed by the President. Here is what it boils down to: $4,100 for every American household; $1,500 for every man, woman and child; $275 million a day; $11 million every hour. Look what we could do with that kind of money: $928 million, 3 days in Iraq is enough to build 100 schools or 5,400 affordable housing units, or provide health care for 144,000 children for the length of the Iraq war.

And if national security is what you want to redirect the money toward, we could have used Iraq appropriations for more secure posts, for energy independence initiatives, for nuclear nonproliferation programs, for debt relief in the underprivileged areas of the world. We could have invested in real national security.

Mr. Speaker, we have sacrificed more than enough in lives, in treasure, in national stature and credibility for a mistaken ideological pipe dream.

It is time for our leaders to hear the frustration of the American people, frustration with this shameful, wasteful, futile policy. It is time to end this occupation. It is time to bring our troops home.

THE RUTGERS WOMEN'S BASKETBALL TEAM

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

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, the women's basketball team of Rutgers University had a great season going to the finals. And as one of two Members of Congress who represents Rutgers University here in Congress, I would like to pay tribute to them, not just for their athletic ability.

After the season was over, they were the subject of hateful, crude and insulting comments; and they responded with restraint, with eloquence and dignity. They were classy. These athletes and Coach Stringer distinguished themselves after the season even more than they did during their extraordinary season. And they serve as a reminder of what college athletics is all about, or should be. We hold up college athletics not for the entertainment of alumni and fans, but because we believe athletic participation builds character. These women of the Rutgers basketball team showed that they have character.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MCCARTHY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

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

DEMOCRATIC BLUE DOG COALITION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. ROSS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, tonight I rise on behalf of the 43 Member strong fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition. We are a group of fiscally conservative Democrats that are committed to restoring common sense and fiscal discipline to our Nation's government.

As you walk the Halls of Congress, Mr. Speaker, it is easy to know when you are walking by the office of a fellow Blue Dog Member because you will see this poster that says ''The Blue Dog Coalition.'' It says, ''Today, the U.S. national debt is, 8,887,793,986,597.86.'' And for every man, woman and child in America, their share of the national debt is $29,465. It is what we refer to as the ''debt tax.'' And that is one tax that cannot be cut, that cannot go away until this Nation gets its fiscal house in order. The Federal deficit continues to climb.

Mr. Speaker, it is hard now to think back and realize, but from 1998 through 2001, this country had a balanced budget; and yet under the Republican leadership for the previous 6 years, we have seen them rubber-stamp the President's budget year after year after year, giving us the largest deficit after the largest deficit after the largest deficit, record deficits. And as a result of that, we have seen the national debt grow to where it is today, approaching $9 trillion.

Why does this matter? It matters because the total national debt from 1789 to 2000 was $5.67 trillion, but by 2010, the total national debt will have increased to $10.88 trillion. This is a doubling of the 211-year debt in just 10 years. Interest payments on this debt are one of the fastest growing parts of the Federal budget. And the debt tax is one that cannot be repealed. Deficits reduce economic growth. They burden our children and grandchildren with liabilities. They increase our reliance on foreign lenders who own some 40 percent of our debt.

This chart here, Mr. Speaker, graphically depicts why the American people should be concerned about the fact that our country is nearly $9 trillion in debt. You see, our Nation spends a half a billion dollars a day, give or take a

few dollars, simply paying interest on the debt, and that is money that could be going for education, health care, veterans benefits, to properly equip our men and women in uniform and ensure that they've got the best body armor possible.

And this really graphically depicts it, as you can see. The red bar is the amount of money our Federal Government spends simply paying interest on the national debt. The light blue bar demonstrates how much money we spend educating our children. The green box indicates how much we spend on our veterans. And the purple box indicates how much we spend on homeland security. Again, you can see overwhelmingly our tax money is going to pay interest on the national debt.

It is time to get our fiscal house in order. It is time to restore common sense to our Federal Government. And once we do, we can begin to spend less of your hard earned tax money, Mr. Speaker, on paying interest on the national debt, and we can spend a lot more on educating our children, taking care of America's veterans, keeping our homeland secure, and the list of America's priorities goes on and on.

One of the co-chairs for the fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition is Allen Boyd from Florida. He is our administrative co-chair. I am delighted that he has joined me this evening for this lively discussion about restoring common sense and fiscal discipline to our national government. And part of the way we do that, we believe, is through accountability.

Throughout the evening we are going to be talking about the budget, we are going to be talking about the debt and the deficit, we are going to be talking about accountability, not only at home, but also in Iraq, and making sure that the hardworking people of this country are getting the most for their tax dollar. I don't think that is asking too much. And I think it is very appropriate that on tax day we rise on the floor of the House to demand accountability for how the American taxpayer's money is being spent.

With that, I yield to the gentleman from Florida, Mr. BOYD, the co-chair for administration for the Blue Dog Coalition.

Mr. BOYD of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my friend and counterpart, Mike Ross from Arkansas, my fellow Member of the 43 Member strong fiscally conservative Blue Dog Coalition. It is a group that I have been a member of all the years of my service, 10 years of my service here in the United States House of Representatives, and it is a group that I am quite proud of their work on behalf of the American people.

Mr. Speaker, like yourself, being raised in Indiana and Mr. ROSS in Arkansas, I was raised in a little community in north Florida on a farm by parents who taught me very early that it was important that we, as a family, live within our means. We established our priorities as a family, the things that we had to have, needed. We knew what our sources of income were, and we worked hard as a family to meet those priorities. But Mr. Speaker, you know, we were taught as young people, as children, if you don't have the money, then you don't buy things which you can't afford to pay for. Those were lessons that we learned very well at an early age, taught by our parents, that we carried on to our businesses. And let's face it, if you spend more money every year in a business than you take in, you're out of business pretty soon; your banker pulls the plug on you.

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We learned that lesson. Our local governments and State governments understand that, as well as our county governments. But something has happened in Washington in the last 6 years. In 8 tough years during the 1990s of making tough decisions relative to our priorities and spending and getting under control the deficit spending, 6 years ago, 6-plus years ago, we went on a rampage here in Washington that sent spending through the roof, far outstripping the revenues raised to pay for that spending. As a result, we had to go into the capital markets and borrow that money to pay for normal operations of our United States Government.

We have the most powerful government in the world. We have the most powerful Nation. We have the richest Nation. Our economic model is a wonderful, wonderful economic model. But we have forgotten the lessons that we all learned as children taught to us by our parents that we ought to be fiscally responsible and we ought to be accountable for how we spend our dollars.

This is really what my friend, Mr. ROSS, who is leading this special order tonight, the point that he wants to make. That is that when we take dollars from the American public in the form of taxes, and today is the day, April 17, which happens to be—since yesterday was a holiday someplace, today is the day that our taxes are due. When we take taxes from the American people, the American people expect us to spend that money wisely and they expect us to account for them and they don't expect us to waste those dollars.

That is why some of the things that I have been seeing over the last several years in the way that some of our Federal executive agencies have spent the money and been unable to account for, and I tell you, honestly, Mr. Speaker, the Department of Defense probably is the biggest offender as it relates to accountability. Many of the dollars that we have appropriated over the years for the Iraq war, for instance, the Department of Defense cannot pass an audit or account for in how they were spent.

I think you see one of the things that is happening in the last several months since the election is that Congress is beginning to ask the tough questions of the administration as it relates to how the tax dollars that are taken from the American people by the United States Government, how they are spent. Are we spending them wisely and are we accounting for them? Do we have contractors running amuck in Iraq, and are we getting our money's worth?

I think this is an important time to be thinking about accountability and good stewardship of our American tax dollars. Today is the day. Midnight tonight is the time when that filing is due. You know, the people at home that I live around, they don't mind paying taxes as long as they know as a government we are setting our priorities and we are doing a good job of stewardship and accounting for the dollars that are being spent. I think that is what this is all about tonight, accountability; and I want to thank my friend, Mr. ROSS, for leading this discussion.

And, Mr. Speaker, it is great to see you in that chair as a fellow member of the Blue Dog Coalition.

Mr. ROSS. I thank the gentleman from Florida for his insight and discussing fiscal discipline and the budget and demanding that this Congress reflects the values and the priorities of the American people.

The U.S. is becoming increasingly dependent on foreign lenders. Foreign lenders currently hold a total of $2.199 trillion of our public debt. Compare this to only $623 billion in foreign holdings back in 1993. There is a chart here that pretty much shows us where we have been and where we are going. The amount of foreign-held debt more than doubled under the Bush administration. Starting in 2001, you can see how many billions of dollars we were borrowing from foreign central banks and foreign investors, and you can see how it has gradually increased all of the way through 2006.

Putting it another way, this President has borrowed more money in the past 6 years from foreign central banks and foreign investors than the previous 42 Presidents combined. You want to talk about a national security risk, I believe that alone is a national security risk.

We are already 60 percent dependent on foreign oil. We know that. We see it every time we fill up at the pumps. And, Mr. Speaker, if we are not careful, we are also going to become too dependent on foreign countries to fund our government.

I always enjoy David Letterman's top 10 list. I have a top 10 list. My top 10 list tonight lists the foreign countries that we have borrowed money from to help fund tax cuts in this country for people earning over $400,000 a year. That's right, year after year, for the past 6 years, we have continued to pass tax cuts, not for working families, but for folks earning over $400,000 a year. We didn't have a surplus, so where did the money come from? It came from our Nation borrowing to the tune of about a billion dollars a day.

And before we borrow a billion a day, we spend half a billion every day paying interest on the debt we have already got, money that could go to our veterans, to homeland security, to education, to health care. Some 10 million children in this country today are without health care. Instead, it is going to pay interest on our national debt. Where did the money come from? A lot comes from the Social Security trust fund.

The first bill I filed as a Member of Congress was a bill to tell the politicians in Washington to keep their hands off the Social Security trust fund. Republican leadership for 6 years refused to give me a hearing or a vote on that bill. Now we know why: Because they were borrowing money from the Social Security trust fund with absolutely no provision made on how the money is going to be paid back or when it is going to be paid back or where the revenues are going to come from to pay it back.

When you go to the bank to get a loan, the banker wants to know how you are going to pay it back, when you are going to pay it back, and how much you are going to pay back on a monthly schedule, and so forth and so on.

But the top 10 list, these are the countries that the United States of America has borrowed money from to fund our government in these days of reckless deficit spending:

Japan, $637.4 billion.

China, $346.5 billion.

The United Kingdom, $223.5 billion.

OPEC, yes, OPEC, our Nation, the United States of America, has borrowed $97.1 billion from OPEC.

Korea, $67.7 billion.

Taiwan, $63.2 billion.

The Caribbean banking centers, $63.6 billion.

Hong Kong, $51 billion.

Germany, $52.1 billion.

And rounding out the top 10 countries that the United States of America has borrowed money from to fund our government, Mexico, $38.2 billion.

It is time to restore fiscal discipline and accountability to our government. And a new member of the fiscally conservative Blue Dog Coalition who is helping us do that in this new Democratic majority, we are demanding answers to tough questions, we are demanding commonsense be restored in our government. We are demanding that this new leadership governs from the middle, which is where we are as Blue Dogs and where we believe the majority of Americans are, and the new Blue Dog member who is helping us do that is the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. WILSON), and I yield to him at this time.

Mr. WILSON of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, this is a taxing time for America. As a member of the fiscally conservative Democrat Blue Dog Coalition, I welcome these opportunities to come to the floor and talk about fiscal responsibility and what we need to draw our attention to in this Nation's most pressing problem.

Mr. Speaker, it is a skyrocketing national debt. As Congressman ROSS has pointed out and indicated in numerous ways, it has just gotten out of hand. We are paying so much money of our tax dollars to pay the interest on the debt to foreign countries that we are borrowing from that it is really changing the face of America.

Tonight, Mr. Speaker, the timing is especially good because April 17 is the tax filing deadline for this year. As Americans, we race to the mailboxes with our taxes to meet the deadline, and it is important to note how our national debt affects each and every U.S. taxpayer. The average U.S. household devotes almost $2,000 a year in taxes to pay interest on our national debt, $2,000 a year just to pay the interest. That is about twice the amount they pay in taxes to help fund the Department of Education, veterans' health care, and homeland security programs.

Under this administration's budget, the picture only gets worse for American taxpayers. By 2014, the GAO says that more than two-thirds of revenues will be required just to pay the interest on our debt. Under this projection, net interest would become the largest Federal spending program, larger than Social Security, larger than our defense budget, and larger than Medicare and Medicaid combined. This defies commonsense and is not in line with our national priorities.

An approach that faces this troubling reality is long overdue, and in the first 100 days of this Congress, we have proved that we are up to the challenge. We passed bills, Mr. Speaker, that benefit small businesses, and above all, we passed a responsible budget. It funds our top priorities, like strengthening our military and our homeland security. This is commonsense and this is what the Blue Dogs stand for. We want to make a difference by requiring and demanding fiscal responsibility.

This also does something very important. It restores fiscal discipline and returns us to surplus by 2012.

Mr. Speaker, as American taxpayers, we send our hard-earned money to the IRS. They should know where it is going. Today, too much of it is going towards paying interest on our national debt. With fiscal responsibility and cost accountability in place, this Congress can change what is going on and bring real relief to America's working families.

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Ohio for his work within the fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition in trying to restore commonsense and fiscal discipline to our national government, trying to give us a budget that will return us to the days of record surpluses instead of record deficits. Hopefully, as a result of the budget passed on this floor just in the last week, we will see this number start back down once again, because it is important; it is important that we put an end to deficit spending.

One of the ways we do that is through accountability. Let me just say that if we are going to ask the American people to get up and go to work and pay taxes, we as a Congress should be held accountable and the various Federal agencies should be held accountable to ensure they are getting the most value for their tax dollars, that we truly are doing things that will honor their work and ensure that we leave this country just a little bit better than we found it for our children and our grandchildren.

□ 2045

One of the leaders in the Blue Dog Coalition, in fact, one of the founders of the Blue Dog Coalition that has done a lot in the area of accountability is the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. TANNER), and at this time, I will yield to the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. TANNER). Thank you for joining me this evening.

Mr. TANNER. Mr. Speaker, well, thank you very much.

I wanted to come tonight and join with my colleague, Mr. ROSS. I heard what you have been saying and I wish this was not true, but all one has to do is go to the Web site of the U.S. Treasury and see for one's self how much money has been borrowed in the last 60 months from foreign sources, and I heard you address that point earlier.

I want to talk about a bill that we introduced last Congress that the Blue Dogs endorsed and that we hope to introduce in the next few days in this Congress; and hopefully we can pass it this time.

It has to do with the subject of, the theme of tonight's Special Order with regard to accountability. And this is not a Democrat or Republican bill. A lot of times these Special Orders are utilized by people who want to come and blast the Democrats, if they are Republicans, or Democrats who want to blast the Republicans on the other side, and that is not what this floor is for. Politics should end here. We all represent people in this country in a public office and, therefore, all of us represent not political parties in our jobs here but citizens of this country.

This accountability bill that I want to talk about for just a few minutes, if I may, has to do with demanding that those whom we appropriate money to, any administration, Democrat, Republican, does not matter, actually manage the money so that we at least know where it goes. We may disagree as to how it is spent, but we at least, as public officials, ought to have the responsibility for ourselves and those whom we represent to understand and appreciate what it is going for.

We have here in Washington, the Congress has, an organization called the GAO, General Accountability Office. The GAO is charged with the responsibility, as a nonpolitical branch of the government, to audit, among other things, other responsibilities, audit the various Federal agencies to see what they are doing with the money that we remove from people's pockets involuntarily. And I heard you mention tax day earlier. Today is tax day. We remove the money involuntarily from the taxpayers, the citizens of this country, and then we appropriate to an administration, any administration.

Well, the GAO does audits as part of their responsibility, and they have reported to us that 18 of 24 Federal agencies could not produce an acceptable

audit in fiscal year 2005, which is the latest figures that we have.

Now, there is no private enterprise in America that could withstand that kind of either sloppy bookkeeping on the one hand, to be charitable about it, sloppy bookkeeping, or out-and-out negligence, incompetence, fraud, whatever one wishes to call it. Eighteen of 24 could not do that.

So last year, we, the Blue Dogs, designed a bill that said when that happens, when the Inspector General of any department or the GAO identifies any element or any agency of the Federal Government that cannot tell us what they did with the money that we removed from people involuntarily in the form of taxation and appropriated to them, this bill would provide that within 60 days Congress must, by law, hold a hearing to determine why it is they cannot account for the money that was appropriated to them or, in the alternative, if they cannot account for it, then it is simple: They do not get it.

That makes eminent sense to me as a businessperson at home in Tennessee. I cannot imagine going to the comptroller or the treasurer of our business and saying, here is an expenditure of X amount of dollars, what did you do with it, and they would respond, I do not know, I cannot tell you what happened to that. That would not be acceptable in any private enterprise in this country, and it should not be acceptable here in the public domain because it is all of our moneys that we are talking about, 18 of 24.

The other aspect of this bill is, in government talk, when the GAO identifies a high-risk program, what they mean is the program is being mismanaged, number one; or two, it is not doing what Congress intended it to do when the law was passed. Pretty simple. It is either the program is not working or they cannot tell us what they did with the money. In either event, Congress ought to hold a public hearing so the people of this country know that this program is either not working or that it is being so badly mismanaged, by again any administration, that we need to stop the spending.

I hope as we move through this Congress that we will be able to actually enhance and improve on it; not only that, but actually pass it into law. It needs to be done. It has everything to do with the trust that the American people have placed in us when they voted for us to come here to this arena to transact their business on their behalf.

One of the things I like so much about the Blue Dogs is that we have this quaint belief that the voting card that all of us possess as Members of Congress belongs not to either party leadership but to the people who hired us. That is, I believe, what the Founding Fathers had in mind when they created the People's House.

And so, therefore, when we have all this talk about partisan politics here, it really has nothing to do with the philosophy of the Blue Dogs in that we believe we ought to work for the people that hired us, and that is the people in our respective districts who have every right to expect that when we come here. We will not only be guardians of the country in terms of funding what is necessary for national defense, and we are very strong on that, as you know, but we also will try as best we can individually and collectively as a body to see that the moneys that are being spent are being spent in the best possible way.

I gave a talk at home over the Easter recess, and I told them, I said there are two things that are being witnessed here by this unbelievable not only spending spree, but borrowing spree that has gone on around here for the last 60 months. We have transferred so much of our Nation's treasure to interest, for which we get nothing, that we are degrading basically the tax base to the point where I am afraid in the future our country will not be able to make the two investments that I believe are necessary for our Nation's security.

One is in the area of infrastructure. One only need go to any country on the planet where there is no infrastructure, no highways, roads, bridges, water, sewer, all of the things that private enterprise in this country can build around to create the economic opportunity, the jobs, to create the commerce that will result in further tax receipts for more investment, whether it be for water and sewer and highways, airports, bridges, roads, tunnels, anything like that, to see that the government must make those investments so that private enterprise can prosper.

Nobody is prospering in these countries. We call them Third World countries, but they are nonetheless countries where there is no infrastructure. Nobody is doing any good because there is nothing to build around to create the economic activity, the commerce that must go on to make things happen. And so we are degrading our tax base by this interest that we are now paying, for which we get nothing.

The second thing is human capital. From my reading of history, there is no country in the history of civilization and mankind, or humankind, that has been able to maintain itself as a strong and free country with an unhealthy, uneducated population. We are beginning to see the budget being cut in areas where, number one, we have to have public education because all of us, as American citizens, are charged with the responsibility not only for ourselves and our families, but we are charged with making decisions for our cities, counties, State and country. Without public education for the literally millions of kids who may not get that in their homes, because of various economic factors and otherwise, we have to educate our citizens. Thomas Jefferson said it as well as anybody.

The other thing is health care. We are going to be taking up SCHIP, it is called, which is basically children's health insurance. We cannot afford in this country, in my view, to leave it better than when we found it with unhealthy, uneducated children, and so what we are trying to do is stop this ever-increasing encroachment on the tax base of interest so that we are rendered unable as citizens to do the things necessary to keep our country competitive in an increasingly globalized world. This is not just a hope. It is a necessity, in my view, that we be able to do that.

So, as we talk about fiscal responsibility, we talk about this unbelievable borrowing that is taking place, what we are really talking about is balancing the budget, not for the sake of balancing the budget, but for the sake of stopping an ever-increasing encroachment on the tax base for which we get nothing.

Last year, this country sent overseas $145 billion thereabouts. That is almost seven times as much as the so-called foreign aid bill. I do not particularly like the way we do that, but at least one can make some strategic decisions about money that is being appropriated in the foreign aid bill in terms of whether or not it will advance the interests of the United States in a given part of the world. Interest checks, on the other hand, just go to whoever bought our debt. That is a huge difference, and it is one I hope that people will relate to, understand, appreciate and hold dear when they make the decisions that they make with regard to who ought to be running our United States Congress.

Again, this bill basically does not address who controls the Congress or who controls the White House. It simply says that all of us who come here as public servants ought to have that kind of responsibility to oversee and to look after the moneys that are removed from people's pockets involuntarily in the form of taxation and appropriated to any administration.

□ 2100

I think, and I am glad that the Blue Dogs share that philosophy and share that opinion, because oftentimes, all you hear coming from these microphones is, well, the Republicans are worse than the Democrats, the Democrats are worse than the Republicans, and they did it to us, so we will do it to them. That is not getting us anywhere.

We have much more serious matters to discuss, and we ought to be talking about it in this Special Order. Tonight is one opportunity. I want to thank you again for allowing me this time to talk about these, I think, critical matters that affect us all. There is no Democrat or Republican; we are all Americans.

As Americans, we are not doing what we ought to do to do the things that I heard ALLEN BOYD talk about awhile

ago about what our parents taught us: one, live within your means; two, pay your debts; three, invest in the future. Unfortunately, we haven't been doing any of those, and it's going to catch up with us at some point if we don't reverse it.

We are trying, we need help doing it, but we are going to keep plugging away at it.

I am very proud of this Special Order that you put together. I am actually really proud of the work that the Blue Dogs are doing.

Mr. ROSS. I thank the gentleman from Tennessee for his insight and his leadership on the accountability bill to restore accountability to our national government.

Did the gentleman, I just want to make sure I understood the gentleman correctly, did the gentleman indicate that 18 of 24 major Federal agencies can't produce a clean audit of its books?

Mr. TANNER. That is according to the GAO. There were six that were compliant with the Federal management, financial management law. Commerce, Labor, the EPA, the National Science Foundation, the Office of Personnel Management, and the Social Security Administration.

The ones who were not were Agriculture, Defense, Education, Energy, Health and Human Services, Homeland Security, Housing and Urban Development, Justice, Interior, State, Transportation, Treasury, Veterans Affairs, Agency for International Development, General Services Administration, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Nuclear Regulatory Commission and the Small Business Administration.

There may be valid reasons why they could not tell us what they did, but we ought to have a hearing and find out what those reasons are. If they need help to correct it, and legislation to do so, then we at least would know that; and we could begin to work on that to try to correct this problem.

But to ignore it is, in my judgment, an act of irresponsibility by the Congress and by the administration.

Mr. ROSS. I thank the gentleman for his work on accountability within our government, Mr. TANNER from Tennessee, one of the founders of the fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition. Thank you for your leadership. Thank you for joining us on the floor this evening to talk about restoring common sense, accountability, and fiscal discipline to our national government.

Madam Speaker, as you walk the Halls of Congress, again, it's easy to know when you are walking by the office of a fellow Blue Dog member, because you will see this poster reminding the American people, reminding the Members of the Congress that today the U.S. national debt is $8,887,793,986,597 and some change. For every man, woman and child in America, their share, your share, of the national debt is $29,465.

Also, if you have any questions, comments on our Special Order this evening, I would encourage you to e-mail us at BlueDog@mail.house.gov. That is BlueDog@mail.house.gov.

This is a Special Order being hosted by the fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition talking about issues that we believe are important to the future of this country.

I am delighted to be joined this evening by a new member of the Blue Dog Coalition from the State of Indiana (Mr. ELLSWORTH).

Mr. ELLSWORTH. Madam Speaker, I had not intended to address the House, the people's House tonight. But as I sat in the chair you sit in just a few minutes ago, I looked out and listened to the other Members and reflected on why I was sent here just 90 days ago, or a little longer, and thought that it was my duty to come down and talk.

As I heard Mr. BOYD from Florida address the group and talk about the way he was raised in Florida, it was very similar to the way Mr. ROSS was raised in Arkansas and the way I was raised in Indiana. It reminds me of a story that I told a few times and PAYGO comes to mind.

I can remember when I was very young, probably in the 10-year-old range, having my eye on a Sting-Ray bicycle at Sears and Roebuck in Evansville, Indiana, at the Washington Square Mall. Those back home will know what I am talking about. It was a purple Sting-Ray, metal flake seat. I think they called it a banana seat, if I remember it correctly. It had a sissy bar on the back and high-rise handlebars.

For anybody in that age group, you will remember what I am talking about. I can vividly remember that the price tag was $55 for that bicycle. I remember going home and asking my parents if I could have that bicycle. They said, sure, when you save the $55, knock yourself out, you can go down and do that.

I cut grass, and I delivered papers with my brother, and I had odd jobs until I saved the $55 and was able to go down to Sears and purchase that bike. That's the way you did it back then. You saved your money. You paid as you went. That's the way you purchased things.

That lesson stayed with me to this day. I am proud to display that poster outside my hall, outside my office in the Cannon Building.

But it's also a stark reminder, when we are talking about trillions of dollars of debt, that every Member of this country, every man, woman and child, that their part of the national debt is $29,465, is a stark reminder of the work we have to do.

When I was asking people to hire me for this job, I can remember a couple of things they told me they wanted before they would send me here that they wanted me to guarantee them, that I would be honest, and I would be fair, and I would be fiscally conservative.

When I started looking at the Congress, and groups to associate yourself with, it became very easy when I found out about the Blue Dog Coalition, the fiscally conservative group of Members, 43 strong now, that said we have got to bring this place back to order. I can remember a gentleman in Evansville, Scott Saxe, a gentleman I used to work out with at the Fitness Zone in Evansville. He said, you know, I am a Republican, but this has gotten ridiculous, the way our country spends. He says, we have got to stop this insanity.

That is why I applied for this job, so I could come be a part of that. People come in my office every day, and good people. I call them do-gooders, because they are good people doing good things. They are looking for that Federal help that we can give them.

But we can't give it unless we have that money; we save it in the areas we can save. It's tough, because you know these people are out helping folks every day. You want to give, because that's the way America is. We give to people that are doing good, but it's tough, because we have got to make tough decisions.

But in the 3 months that I have been here, now going on 4, I see examples every day of ways that we can cut the waste, fraud and abuse, the things that we are doing that the American people, when they hear about it in the Eighth District of Indiana, they get really upset, and they should, and that is why I am here.

Just a few examples: when we send contractors, no matter how you feel about the war in the Middle East, but when we send our contractors over on our dime, and they sit 9 months and never lift a finger on the contracts they are hired for, that is money wasted that we could give, put to something else, education, to help people help people.

When we have pallets of money that are lost, pallets, skid loads of $100 bills that are lost, and we can't find them? That is not why they sent me to Congress. That is not what they expect us to do, to lose millions of dollars on pallets in the Middle East.

No-bid contracts, we have all heard about those. Companies would be getting Federal contracts that aren't paying their Federal taxes. I don't think people mind paying taxes. They will talk about it. But when they drive on I–70 through Terre Haute, or I–64 through the northern part of Vanderburgh County or I–164, they appreciate those roads.

When the FBI or Federal law enforcement agency does something good for them or the Border Patrol keeps their borders safe, they don't mind paying taxes for that. But when they are getting ripped off or losing money and are doing no-bid contracts, and we have companies being awarded Federal contracts and not paying their Federal taxes, is just plain wrong. It's not why they sent me here. It's not why they sent any of us here, and they want us to stop.

Single-source contracts, let's take, for example, our military plants, and there are two companies that make the engines, but we award to one single source. It's wrong. Competition is healthy; we need to do it. It's why I am proud to join the Blue Dog Coalition. This Congress, both sides of the aisle, needs to work together to bring some sense, some common sense and fiscal accountability back to these Halls so that we can go back to our districts, proud, Republicans and Democrats alike, saying we are spending your money wisely, we are spending it honestly and fiscally and conservatively.

Mr. ROSS. I thank the gentleman from Indiana, a new member of the fiscally conservative Blue Dog Coalition for joining me this evening and being a part of this discussion on how we restore common sense, fiscal discipline, and accountability to our government.

Mr. TANNER said it very well earlier in the evening when he said the American people are sick and tired of all the partisan bickering that goes on at our Nation's Capitol. I can tell you those of us in the Blue Dog Coalition, we don't care if it is our idea or the Republican idea. We are looking for commonsense ideas, ideas that promote accountability, ideas that make sense for the people back home.

Now, there are others that will come to this floor and talk about the Democrats being bad on this or so forth and so on, and there are Democrats that will talk about the Republicans being bad on this or so forth and so on, but the American people are sick of that. The American people get it. They recognize that we are all Americans first and we are in this together.

Talking about accountability, this is a bipartisan issue that I would like to raise in the closing minutes of this Special Order. The United States is spending about $9 billion a month in Iraq, which translates to about $275 million a day or $12 million an hour. However, even with all of this spending, many believe that the U.S. Army is not providing our troops with the most technologically advanced and effective body armor available.

If you ask 100 different people what they think about this post-war Iraq policy, you get about 100 different answers. But I can tell you that there is one thing that all of us, Democrat and Republican, should remain united on, and that is funding and supporting and properly equipping our men and women in uniform. This war has affected all of us. My brother-in-law is in the United States Air Force. He is in the Middle East region this evening.

Let me tell you that 2 weeks ago, one of my constituents, Mr. John Grant of Hot Springs, Arkansas, brought this issue to my attention. Mr. Grant has become an expert on the types of body armor that are currently available in the market due to the fact that his youngest son serves in the Army National Guard's 39th Infantry Brigade. Arkansas' 39th was recently informed that they could be deployed to Iraq by the end of the year. It will be their second deployment. I was there in Baghdad visiting them August 11, 2004, on their previous deployment, soldiers from my hometown, soldiers from throughout my district, people that I used to teach in Sunday school and people that, well, I have duck hunted with.

□ 2115

And they will be returning again, perhaps by the end of the year, and I believe that we owe it to this soldier, his family, and all soldiers and their families, to ensure that our troops are given the finest armor and equipment available.

This issue specifically involves the U.S. Army's recent testing and comparison of Pinnacle Armor's so-called Dragon Skin body armor and the Interceptor Body Armor, often referred to as IBA, currently in use by the Armed Forces. Because of equipment shortages in 2005, some troops purchased equipment at their own expense, including body armor, and Congress enacted legislation to reimburse these soldiers. However, months later, the Army issued a ''safety of use message,'' which instructed all commanders to ensure that only IBA brand is used by soldiers, prohibiting the use of any other body armor.

The Army's ''safety of use message'' also dispelled recent reports that Dragon Skin was superior to the IBA, citing that Dragon Skin has failed various tests and therefore does not meet the Army's requirements for soldier body armor protection.

Military support organizations, such as Soldiers for the Truth, of which Mr. Grant is a member, along with Dragon Skin manufacturer Pinnacle Armor, argue that Dragon Skin did not fail any test. They have stated that the testing was biased, and they continue to stand behind their assertions that Dragon Skin is superior to the IBA.

They point out that Dragon Skin has also been approved and is used by the U.S. Air Force, the CIA, the NSA, the U.S. Department of Energy officials in Iraq, the U.S. Secret Service Presidential Protection detail, some Special Forces units, and various police departments and SWAT teams around the Nation. However, our troops cannot purchase or use this body armor. I have even been informed that, as a result of this message, if a soldier purchases and uses any armor other than the IBA, this action will be construed as though the soldier has disobeyed a direct order and could, could, jeopardize his or her family receiving service group life insurance if killed in combat.

It is not certain whether this is true, but if it is, I completely disagree with this policy and believe that our combat soldiers should not be denied the use of the latest and most effective body armor if it will result in the preservation of their lives.

Therefore, for the protection of our troops, I am calling for a full investigation into whether the U.S. Army is using the most effective body armor for our troops' protection. We need an unbiased external investigation to determine whether the IBA is the most effective armor available. And if additional testing reveals that Dragon Skin body armor or any other brand is the superior product, then it should be provided to our troops.

I am extremely grateful to Mr. Grant for bringing this issue to my attention, as there is no greater obligation we have to our troops, who risk their lives on a daily basis, than to supply them with the most advanced technology and resources available.

I believe that we must demand that the most stringent test possible be conducted to resolve whether our troops are being given access to the absolute best body armor available. What might have been good in 2003 might very well be outdated today. My only goal is to protect our troops in harm's way by ensuring that they receive the most advanced body armor on the market today as they carry out their mission.

May God bless our country, may God bless and keep our soldiers safe.

THE OFFICIAL TRUTH SQUAD

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. CASTOR). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. PRICE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Madam Speaker, thank you so very much.

Before I begin, I do want to just say that our hearts, our thoughts, and our prayers are with all at Virginia Tech and in Blacksburg, Virginia, today. As you know, Madam Speaker, an unspeakable horror visited their campus, and it is absolutely impossible for any of us to know what those who were directly connected to it are going through. We were so incredibly heartened by their convocation today as we watched it, and we noted that Hokie spirit is effervescent and incredibly supportive. We are all with the Hokie Nation today. We wish them the best and know that they are comforted by each other and by God's amazing grace.

Madam Speaker, it is a great privilege for me to come to the floor again this evening. I want to thank the leadership for the opportunity to share some comments and to discuss an issue that our friends just finished talking about a little bit.

This is a remarkable day every year. Madam Speaker, as you know, today is once again the day when Americans reach deep into their pockets and they pay Uncle Sam. Many Americans may be filling out their tax forms right now, or they have just finished slogging through the maze of the Tax Code jargon and crunching numbers and filling out form after form after form. And today, Americans all across this Nation will once again trust Washington with their money, because today is tax

day. It is usually April 15; by a couple different factors it became April 17 this year. But nonetheless, Madam Speaker, it is tax day.

And I would suggest, Madam Speaker, that Americans are fed up with the status quo of today, and I and many of my colleagues believe that Americans deserve a different tomorrow. They deserve a tomorrow where they won't be taxed from the day they are born until the day that they die and at every single point in between.

Americans deserve a tomorrow where saving and investing are virtues, not vices. Americans deserve a tomorrow where taxation brings efficient and responsible representation, and they deserve a tomorrow where, when the American people do their part, they understand that paying their fair share is enough. And they deserve a tomorrow where the government respects their hard work and appreciates their sacrifice. Only then, Madam Speaker, will tomorrow be any different than today.

We are going to talk and discuss this evening the issue of taxes, the tax structure that we have in our Nation that supports so many, many things. We are going to talk about its fairness or lack of fairness. We are going to talk about the amount of money that is received and whether or not there are any options.

We are going to talk about positive solutions. And as we do so, we like, when we come to the floor, to talk about facts. I want to talk about facts. And I will remind my colleagues of one of our favorite quotes. One of my favorite quotes comes from Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan who said that ''Everyone is entitled to their own opinion, but they are not entitled to their own facts.'' And so it is, Madam Speaker, that as we come and talk about facts as they relate to taxes, it is important that we use correct figures, that we use accurate figures.

One of the figures that I ran across when looking at the tax issue and realizing how large our government has grown and how many taxes the Washington government takes, in 2005 the Federal Government took in about $2.4 trillion. That is an awful lot of money, Madam Speaker, and it is sometimes hard to kind of get your arms around what that actually means. Well, in a relatively short period of time, less than 50 years, what that means, based upon accounting for inflation and accounting for growth, is that that amount of money is larger than the entire U.S. economy was in 1959. So in less than one person's lifetime we have grown the amount of tax revenue, and this is in constant dollars, real dollars, we have grown the amount of tax revenue larger than our entire government was and the economy was in 1959. So it is truly remarkable.

And what that brings about, Madam Speaker, is that we ought to be, as representatives of the people, asking questions. Is that appropriate? Is that an appropriate policy for our Nation? Should we be modifying things? Should we be changing things? Should we be potentially more fair to the American people? What should we be doing?

And so we will be joined tonight by a number of colleagues. One of my good friends and fellow colleagues from Georgia is Congressman PHIL GINGREY. Congressman GINGREY is a fellow physician, represents a district right outside of the city of Atlanta. I served with him in the State senate, and it is a privilege to serve with him here in the United States Congress. He is one of the true fiscal conservatives, an individual who understands and appreciates the importance of tax revenue, yes, but also the importance of fairness on the part of our Federal Government.

So I am pleased to welcome my good friend from Georgia, Congressman GINGREY.

Mr. GINGREY. Congressman PRICE, I thank you so much for letting me join with you and the Truth Squad in talking about the real truth in regard to what burdens are on the American people, particularly on this day, tax day, April 17. And it reminds me that there is another date coming up pretty soon, and I think that is on April 22, and that is called tax freedom day. And that day gets later and later in the calendar year each and every year. That is how long a person has to work to pay their tax burden, not only to the Federal Government but to local and State and the entire tax burden. Almost a third of the year, Madam Speaker, people have to work to pay the tax burden.

So we in the Republican Party feel very strongly that we need to cut taxes, simplify taxes, lower taxes. And we can do that, and we have done that. We did it in 2001, we did it in 2003. And while we heard from our friends on the other side of the aisle in the previous hour, the so-called Blue Dog Coalition, in regard to the costs to the revenue stream of the tax cuts, saying that we only cut taxes for people making more than $400,000 a year, when in fact, Madam Speaker, everybody who pays taxes got a tax cut under the tax cut provisions that this President and the former majority, the Republican Party, enacted for the American people.

And while, when you crunch the numbers, that was estimated to cost $1.3 trillion, or $130 billion each and every year over a 10-year period of time, because supposedly you would be taking in less revenue, in fact it stimulated the economy; and over a 2½ year period of time, the amount of revenue that came into the Federal Government actually increased by $250 billion.

So our good friends, the Blue Dogs, play a little bit loose with the truth in regard to their calculus. And really it is not calculus, Madam Speaker, it is simple math. The gentlemen that spoke, the four or five of them in the previous hours, our friends, the Blue Dogs, they would make great red dogs. They come from States that the so-called Blue Dog Democrats are traditionally conservative, they are fiscally conservative. They are conservative on social issues.

And we had the gentleman from Arkansas, we had a Member from Tennessee, we had a Member from Indiana, we had a Member from Ohio. It doesn't surprise me that they would be sounding like Republicans, because many of them represent Republican-leaning, typically traditional districts. And when we earn back our majority, Madam Speaker, I think that the Blue Dogs that we are hearing from, the five by tonight, there are a total of 43, many of them would make great red dogs; and I look forward to the day that they join us.

But, Madam Speaker, in the meantime, I think that I need to talk to them about their math a little bit. They spent some time talking about the debt and the fact that all of this money that we have had to borrow, this $8.8 trillion worth of debt, comes from foreign countries. The gentleman from Arkansas listed, I think, the top nine. And they want to imply that all of the debt is money that we have had to borrow from rogue nations, if you will. But they are not rogue nations.

□ 2130

But the point I want to make, Madam Speaker, is that only about 25 percent of that debt is held by any foreign nation, whether we are talking about Germany or France or Spain or Portugal or, yes, China or India. Seventy-five percent of that debt is held by my mom and my dad and our Blue Dog grandparents and corporate America and the United States citizens. Americans borrow or lend that money to the United States Government because they have faith in the full credit of this great country. So this implication that only rogue nations are willing to borrow money or lend money to this country is totally ludicrous.

And if the gentleman from Georgia, my good friend and colleague, Dr. PRICE, will indulge me for a few minutes, I want to also point out another very, very misleading figure. They take that debt, that $8.8 trillion worth of debt that has accumulated over a number of years.

Don't forget, Madam Speaker, and my good friends on the other side of the aisle, they controlled this place for 40 years. And that $8.8 trillion worth of debt didn't just occur overnight.

But they take 300 million people, man, woman and child, the population of this great country, and they divide it into $8.8 trillion, and they come up with $27,000 worth of debt for every man, woman and child in this country.

Well, Madam Speaker, what is the gross domestic product, the wealth of this country? I think 2006, maybe would be the last figure that I have, it was about $13 trillion. So you divide that same number into the gross domestic product, you could say that the share of the wealth of this country of every man, woman and child is $44,000.

So, like I say, they are playing a little loose with the numbers, and they go on and talk about this budget resolution that they have got and how they are going to balance the budget and have no deficit over a 5-year period of time and actually have a little bit of money in the bank in 2012.

How do they do that, Madam Speaker? They do it by letting the tax cuts of the Republican majority and our President expire. The decrease in the marginal rate for every person that is paying taxes, the increase, the doubling of the child tax credit, the elimination, and once again, reinserting the marriage tax penalty, and that is total, when you add up every one of those tax cuts that we enacted that they intend to let expire in 2010 and 2011, it is a total, I think, and my colleague from Georgia and my other colleagues that are here tonight will agree, almost $400 billion. And I think that is the largest tax increase on the people of this country in the history of this country.

So here, again, I thank the gentleman from Georgia for bringing out the truth once again, as he does so well in the Truth Squad's discussions. And I thank him for letting me weigh in a little bit tonight. And with that I will yield back to the gentleman from Georgia.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. I thank my good friend and colleague from Georgia for your comments, for your perspective, and for the truth and the facts that you bring to the table, and you mentioned a number of them. I would just like to highlight two of them because they are incredibly important, Madam Speaker, for the American people to appreciate. The first is that Tax Freedom Day. We talk about tax day, but Tax Freedom Day has yet to arrive. Depending on what State you are in, I think the earliest State, Tax Freedom Day is April 22, which is next week. But what that means, Madam Speaker, is that every single American who has been working since the first of the year, on average, every single one, is continuing to work from January 1 until now, through at least April 22 to pay the taxes that they owe. They haven't even started to work for themselves or their family. Madam Speaker, that is a tax system that is broken and flawed.

The other fact that you brought out, my good friend from Georgia, Congressman GINGREY brought out, was that the proposal that was passed on this floor just a little over two weeks ago by our friends on the other side of the aisle, many of whom call themselves Blue Dogs. We are checking to make certain, Madam Speaker. We think they are probably lap dogs because of the bills that they have been supporting. And one of them was this budget that was passed that will result in a $400 billion tax increase for the American people, the largest tax increase in the history of the Nation. That is a fact.

I want to mention a couple of other facts and then call on a couple of other good friends who have joined me this evening. Oftentimes, Madam Speaker, you hear people say, well, the wealthy in this Nation don't pay any taxes, or they get a remarkable tax benefit, that they are given favored treatment. You hear that oftentimes by our friends on the other side.

This chart, Madam Speaker, really points out the truth. These are actual numbers and actual facts. And that is that the top 1 percent of wage earners in this Nation, the top 1 percent, pay 36.9 percent of the taxes. That is, the top 1 percent pay 36.9 percent of the taxes. If you take the top 10 percent of wage earners in this Nation, the taxes that they pay, the total revenue that they pay in terms of taxes for this Nation, 68.2 percent. And the top half, the top 50 percent pay 96.7 percent of the tax revenue that comes into this Nation. Madam Speaker, that is a fact. It is important to appreciate that because our good friends on the other side of the aisle so often want to play class warfare. They want to pit one side against the other. And what this shows very, very clearly is that individuals all across this Nation are paying their fair share and then some.

I have been joined by many good friends who will comment about various aspects of our tax system and tax policy, as well as the budget that has been proposed. And right now I would like to ask a good friend from Texas to join me, and look forward to his comments, Congressman KEVIN BRADY from Texas, who has a wonderful business background and appreciates the importance of appropriate government policy and making certain that we allow all Americans, all Americans, the greatest opportunity in this wonderful Nation. Congressman BRADY, thanks so much for joining us.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Well, thank you. And I appreciate joining the two gentlemen from Georgia who continue to look out every day for the family's pocket books, rather than Washington's pocket books, which I fear is too deep. And the point I always try to make, I am in my 11th year in Congress, serve on the Ways and Means Committee, have worked on all of President Bush's tax relief. And I am convinced that Washington has all the money it needs. It just doesn't have all the money it wants. And there is a big difference between the two.

And tonight, as you and I talk, millions of Americans are scrambling at the last minute to file their taxes, rummaging through cabinets and drawers and bank statements, anxious to try to comply with the complicated Tax Code. And they are willing to pay their fair share. But our code is so complex that they worry.

Paying taxes is bad enough. But the time wasted in figuring them is almost worse. You shouldn't need an accountant to do your taxes, and you shouldn't live in fear of just making an honest mistake. For our sanity's sake, and I think for our children's sake, we really need to sunset this awful Tax Code and replace it with something far more simple, like a flat tax or my preference, a retail sales tax. And I love the retail sales tax because, can you imagine, can you imagine never having to fill out a tax return again in your lifetime? Never. Can you imagine the IRS being completely, totally out of your life forever?

And as we talk about how complex this code is, let's not forget we need to keep our taxes low. Tax Freedom Day for Texas families is this Thursday. And that is the first day since New Year's that Texans will start working for themselves and not for the government. For the rest of the country, on average, you have still got two more weeks, April 30. In fact, most families in America will get to the fifth month of the year. Can you imagine? The fifth month of the year before they stop working for the government and start working for their dreams, for their families, for what they want to accomplish in life. And I think most of us would feel better if we felt that Washington wasn't wasting so much of our hard-earned money.

My families are worried that the new Democrat budget allows President Bush's tax relief to expire, which would increase taxes on families in Texas $2,700 a year; $2,700 more for each, a typical Texas family.

I talked over the April work period with Kirk and Sandy Noyes of the Woodlands; visited with Marty and Ty Drake in their home in Livingston; Buck and Ava Anderson of Cleveland in their living room; sat down in the kitchen with Ed and Connie Heiman of Magnolia; Elmer and Pauline Hensley of Lumberton; Pat and Ashley Canfield of Huntsville. We talked about what that $2,700 would mean to their families, and they talked about the medical bills for their young children because co-pays and deductibles add up so quickly. They talked about car insurance, how expensive that is. Marty Drake is a police officer. He said, You know, I will work overtime, all of my high school football games, use all that money just to pay that extra bill.

One woman, who is it? Connie Heiman in Magnolia, she works at a doctor's office just so she can pay the health care. And she said, We don't have any extra money. And her husband runs the flooring store in Magnolia. He said, I can't work longer. I work 6½ days a week as it is.

And my belief is that we are, despite what Washington thinks, we are an overtaxed Nation. And all you need to do is look at your own day to understand it. We wake up in the morning, get in the shower, we pay a water tax. We grab a cup of coffee, pay a sales tax. Drive down to work, pay a fuel tax. At work we pay, not just payroll tax but income tax as well. Get home at night, flip on the switch, walk in the door, turn on the lights, pay the electricity tax, pick up the phone, pay a telephone tax, turn on the TV, pay cable tax, kiss

our wife goodnight, pay a marriage penalty tax and we do that every day of our life. And when we die, we pay a death tax. We are an overtaxed Nation.

And in my belief, we need to continue, not just for our economy, but for our families, we need to continue President Bush's tax relief because our families can't take this extra hit. The marriage penalty will come back to life. That is wrong. In fact, Ways and Means, and I will finish with this, because we have other Members who need to visit as well. But we did the tax relief not for grins and giggles, but for two important reasons. One was fairness. The marriage penalty is unfair. The death tax is unfair. The State and local sales tax structure, it was unfair for other States to have an advantage. And another reason is to spur this economy. After 9/11, we took three big hits: 9/11, the recession and the wonderful Enrons and WorldComs of the world. Our economy took huge hits. We targeted tax relief, and we have had 40 straight months of job growth, created 7.5 million new jobs. We are going to risk that? We are going to risk this strong economy raising taxes on families and small businesses? It doesn't make sense. My belief is Washington needs to tighten its belt before we ask our families and small businesses to tighten theirs.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. I thank the gentleman from Texas for his wonderful summary of the remarkable taxes that each and every one of us are exposed to on a daily basis, everything we do. And that is why I say that the American people deserve more than that. They deserve a government that is more fair than that, especially in the area of taxation. The $2,700 for each individual in Texas is about what they would pay, if the policies of the other side go through, about what they would pay in the State of Georgia as well. And the folks have a lot of ability to figure out what they ought to do with that money and a greater priority that they ought to do with that money, as opposed to what the government ought to do with that money. So as most people understand and appreciate, they know how to spend their money better than the Federal Government.

And somebody mentioned earlier today that the Federal Government, whenever they do anything on behalf of the American people, it costs three times as much as it would in the private sector. So that even gets to the point more about what the facts of the situation are and why they belie what we are doing, why they would draw anyone to the appropriate conclusion that we are taxed too much as a Nation.

I have got a few other folks who have joined me, and I appreciate it so much. And I am joined by my good friend from North Carolina, Congressman MCHENRY, who also is an individual who has served in the State legislature and knows well the importance of fiscal responsibility and the importance of making certain that we don't overtax our Americans all across this Nation. I welcome you. I look forward to your comments.

Mr. MCHENRY. I thank my good friend from Georgia, Dr. PRICE. Thank you for your leadership and for being here on the floor and being so active. Your constituents should be proud of you. And I thank them for electing you.

Madam Speaker, here on Tax Day, in 2007, I hearken back to the words that Ronald Reagan said. He said, our Federal Tax Code is, in short, utterly impossible, utterly unjust, and completely counterproductive. It reeks with injustice and is fundamentally un-American and has earned a rebellion, and it is time we rebelled.

□ 2145

That is a quote from Ronald Reagan in 1983.

Well, I think it is high time we rebel. Today is one day in every American's life where they realize how complex and how horrible our Federal Tax Code is. The Tax Code stands at an astonishing 16,485 pages in length, and there are 1,638 different tax forms on the IRS's Web site. That is outstandingly horrible for the American people.

In 2006, the average taxpayer spent 37.8 hours crunching numbers to complete even the most basic tax form, Form 1040. That is nearly an entire work week spent in filing taxes. Even worse, small businesses spend about 80 hours in preparing their tax returns. That is a 2-week vacation for the average working American family.

And, in total, the American people in a recent poll think the Tax Code is obscene. Eighty percent think the Tax Code is too complicated while only 3 percent believe the Tax Code is just fine the way it is. I concur with that 80 percent, Madam Speaker.

Although just empowered a few months, the new Democratic majority in the House with our new Speaker, they have proposed the largest tax increase in American history. The largest tax increase in American history. They propose a $2,066,675,000,000 tax increase. What does that mean for the average American? Well, the average American, a family of four making $50,000 a year, will see a tax hike of roughly $2,092 this year. What is worse is that my constituents back home in North Carolina will see an average tax increase of $2,671 per year. That is money they could be spending on education. That is money they could be spending on their kids. That is money they could be spending in their community. Instead, the Democrats want that money to come here to fund the bloated bureaucracy in Washington, D.C.

Now, you understand the Republicans have cut taxes over the last decade, and that is very positive. Actually, as the Republican majority for 12 years, we proposed a tax cut every year. Every single year we proposed that. Now, Democrat President Bill Clinton didn't support it, but once we got George Bush in office in 2001, he proposed a massive tax cut.

What has that done? Well, the Democrats say that it is not enough money coming into government. Well, they are wrong. They are absolutely wrong. The Democrats are wrong when they say government doesn't have enough money.

Just this last year, government income amounted to over $2.4 trillion. Now, let's put this in historical context. That is the largest income to any government in the history of the planet. Now, let's think this thing through. $2.4 trillion, is that enough to fund our Federal bureaucracy? According to the Democrats, the answer is ''no.'' They want more. They want the American people to give more to the Federal Government.

Let's put that $2.4 trillion in context. Well, there are only two countries on Earth that have economies larger than our Federal Government. Aside from ours, Germany and Japan are the only countries on Earth that have economies larger than our Federal income. Now, the scary part is that Germany only barely beats the Federal Government with its roughly similar size economy.

There is a lot of talk about how the Chinese economy is booming and it is on the rise. Well, it is true and it is a big threat to our jobs here in the United States, and it is a big economic concern for us as a nation. But the Chinese economy, though booming, is only $1.9 trillion, and that means it is a half trillion dollars smaller than our Federal income. The total gross domestic product of China is smaller than the income to our Federal Government.

So, Madam Speaker, if we look at a recent poll by Pew Research, people were asked what they thought was the best way to reduce the Federal deficit, and in that poll the result was pretty simple. Only 9 percent said that tax increases were the best way. A combined 69 percent said they would rather see government reduce spending. Now, not only do I agree with the 80 percent of the American people that say the Tax Code is too complex, that it is obscene; I also agree with that 69 percent that say the way to reduce government is to reduce spending. That is pretty simple. It is common sense to the American people.

Madam Speaker, I urge this Democrat majority to rethink their tax increase strategy, because it is going to raise taxes on every American who pays taxes. And, furthermore, those that are in the low income of our economy are actually going to see their taxes increase as well because they are going to roll back all the Bush tax cuts over the last 7 years. I think that is the wrong thing for the American people. It is the wrong thing for my constituents of western North Carolina. And I think that that is something that is going to harm our economy, the strength of our growing economy. So I

think the Democrats should rethink their tax increase strategy and do what is right for the American people. Reform the Tax Code. Cut taxes at the very least, but reform the Tax Code so we can actually inject more capital into the marketplace and allow people to keep more of what they earn because it is good for their families and good for our economy, and I think it is generally good for America.

With that, I thank you, Congressman PRICE, for hosting this important hour, especially on such an important day to the American people when they have to go file those tax returns. We know how frustrated they get because we have to file those same tax returns, and it is important that we remind our constituents that we are subject to the same laws that they are, and that is a very good thing and a great motivation for tax reform.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I thank my friend from North Carolina and I appreciate his perspective. And I think he said a couple of important things. One was that he pointed out that the average American spends almost 40 hours preparing his or her taxes. That is one whole week's worth of work. That is 2 percent of the productive time of each and every American spent just on the unproductive activity of preparing their tax returns. If that doesn't scream for reform, Madam Speaker, I am not sure what does.

I am pleased to be joined by another good friend, a new Member of Congress, a freshman Member from Tennessee, Congressman DAVID DAVIS, who I know has run a business and understands the importance of the economy's being vibrant, of the appropriate level of taxes not just for businesses but for individuals.

And I appreciate your joining us tonight and look forward to your comments.

Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Georgia for yielding.

Congressman PRICE, you do such a great job. Thank you for your leadership. Thank you for your willingness to spread the truth.

I welcome the opportunity to speak to Americans on tax day. I know some of us, as we draw near to midnight here, a lot of people still working on those forms, trying to get them down to the post office. It reminds me of what Ronald Reagan said back in the early 1980s. Ronald Reagan said, ''We don't have a trillion dollar debt because we haven't taxed enough. We have a trillion dollar debt because we spend too much.'' That seems like commonsense to me, and I think the people that are listening to us tonight understand that. They understand they have to sit around the kitchen table and decide how much money is coming in and how much money goes out.

Small business owners have to do the same thing. They sit around sometimes at a little break room table and decide, am I going to hire that next person or am I going to have to lay somebody off? Am I going to be able to afford another machine to be more productive so I can grow the business and be good for the economy? We understand that as Americans.

Today, tax day, families across America are feeling the cost of the Federal Government. I know we feel it. I know the American people are feeling it. It is one of the reasons I decided to run for Congress. I did own a small business, and I have actually owned a couple. I grew up in a small community in a little county called Unicoi County in East Tennessee, up in the mountains near North Carolina. And I worked my way through college. I actually worked two jobs, went to school full time, and was fortunate enough from that to start some businesses. And I sold one of those businesses.

And one of the reasons I decided to run for Congress was because the government took too much of my money. And I really looked at it as being my money because I earned it. My wife and I started the business. We took the risk. We put our home up. If that business hadn't succeeded, the bank could have come and taken our home. And when I sold the business, I should have been able to keep the proceeds and take care of my two children. It shouldn't have gone to the government. And I decided that I needed to get involved.

According to the Congressional Research Service, President Bush's program of comprehensive tax relief was well timed to respond to a weak economy. Do you remember back in the early 2000s we had just been hit by terrorist extremists, and we had natural disasters. So those tax relief packages that he put in place have actually worked. Tax relief enacted in 2001 granted immediate tax rebates, reduced marginal tax rates, and lowered the marriage tax penalty. The tax relief of 2003 accelerated much of the 2001 growth which would ultimately strengthen our economy.

We are residing and living in a strong economy. The Republican tax cut relief has seen nearly 4 straight years, 21 straight quarters, of economic growth, while adding 7.5 million new jobs. Seven point five million new jobs, that excites me. And we were able to do that because people are allowed to keep their money at home.

You see, government really doesn't create jobs. Government takes money. But if you leave that money back in local communities, that money is put to work and it does good things.

The Congressional Budget Office confirmed that the tax cuts of 2003 have helped boost the Federal revenues by 68 percent. Commonsense again. If you allow people to keep their tax dollars at home, the economy grows. And this should be understood by both sides of the aisle. This actually works for Democrats and Republicans. It worked for President Kennedy, it worked for President Reagan, and it has worked for President Bush. This is bipartisan. We all ought to understand that keeping taxes low, keeping spending low, the economy will grow and the coffers of government will grow. I think that is a good thing.

We should all work to make the successful tax cuts of 2001 and 2003 permanent. If they are not made permanent, which I am convinced that this new ''hold on to your wallet Congress'' has in mind, we are going to have a problem in our economy. For example, 84 million women will see their taxes increased by $1,970. Now, we all say here for the low and middle income, but if you are a woman, with this new tax increase of $400 billion, your average tax is going to go up $1,970.

We are going to see 48 million married couples' taxes increased by $2,726. It seems inherently unfair to me. Forty-two million families will see their taxes go up by $2,084. And I thought we were here for the low and middle income. These are the people that are paying taxes.

Twenty-six million small business owners will see a devastating tax increase of $3,637. The small business owner that runs the little store down the street or creates five jobs on the corner, who probably employs some of your friends in your local community, they are going to see their taxes go up over $3,600. And where are they going to get that $3,600 to send up to Washington? They are going to get it from you, the American people. They are going to either increase the cost of goods and we are going to see inflation, or they are going to decide they can't hire that last employee or maybe they have to let that last employee go.

Five million low-income individuals and couples will no longer be exempt from Federal income taxes.

□ 2200

This is going to hurt the very people that we say we are trying to help.

Again, we should work in a bipartisan manner, Republicans and Democrats, to make sure that the tax cuts of 2001 and 2003 are made permanent. I am very concerned if we don't do that, that we are going to see our economic growth go into a slide, and we are going to have a problem that we are going to have to deal with.

Just two weeks ago, Washington Democrats passed a fiscal blueprint that raises taxes on Americans in one fell swoop. As part of this ill-gotten budget, taxpayers in Tennessee, my home State, will not be allowed to deduct their sales tax from their Federal income tax, which is only fair because we don't have an income tax. It makes us equal with all the other States. Taxes on small businesses in east Tennessee will go up. The child tax credit will decrease from $1,000 to $500. The marriage penalty is coming back. Residents of the First District of Tennessee's average expense in taxes is going up over $2,000. The definition of a

small business will decrease from $400,000 to $200,000. Dividends will no longer be taxed at the personal gains rate, thereby increasing double taxation of dividends by as much as 62 percent. People all across America voted for change, but they are not getting the change they voted for.

We have a choice between bigger economy or bigger government, and the majority party has made it their choice to have a bigger government. And if anyone tells you that Americans aren't paying their fair share for a civilized society, they must remember that Americans pay more in their taxes than they do for housing, clothing and heating combined. And also remember that Americans this year will have to work until the last week of April in order to pay their taxes. That is over 114 days just to cover their tax bills. So on tax day, today, when we feel it the most, everyone needs to remember, we need to hold the line on spending, reduce earmarks, and pass line item veto, and crack down on worthless pork barrel spending and be good stewards of the taxpayers' money. And again I remind you, Ronald Reagan said, ''We don't have a trillion dollar debt because we haven't taxed enough; we have a trillion dollar debt because we spend too much.''

And with that, I yield back.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. I thank my friend from Tennessee for his eloquent comments and for really bringing perspective to the issue.

It really befuddles me as to how our friends on the other side of the aisle can say that they need to raise taxes to raise revenue, because if you look at this chart, Madam Speaker, what you appreciate is that as revenues were going down in the early part of this decade, what the solution was, as it is always a solution, is to lower taxes and you allow people to keep more of their hard-earned money. You put more money back in the pockets of American people and what happens? The economy flourishes, and lo and behold we have a record $2.4 trillion of revenue to the Federal Government because of decreased taxes.

I am so proud to be joined by my good friends tonight to talk about this issue. And we are pleased to welcome once again Congresswoman MARSHA BLACKBURN from Tennessee, an individual who also knows and appreciates the importance of fiscal responsibility and the importance that allowing individuals to keep more of their hard-earned money means to their own freedom and their own liberty. I welcome you and look forward to your comments this evening.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. I thank the gentleman from Georgia.

Madam Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to be on the floor tonight and talk a little bit about what the hold-on-to-your-wallet Congress is doing to Americans as we come to this tax day. You know, we circle April 15 on the calendar every year. I tell you, everybody knows that. They look forward to that day with dread. And I have said so many times I think the only thing good that happens that day is my nephew, Chip Wedgeworth, has a birthday every year on April 15. So that is the highlight of our April 15.

I think the reason that Americans look at April 15 with that sense of dread is because they know, our constituents know, that we are overtaxed. They know that the government is overspent. It is plain and simple to them. They know that the government does not have a revenue problem, they've got a spending problem. And they never take the time to go through the disciplines that are necessary to reduce what the Federal Government spends. Those are things that American men and women who are working know. They know that government is overspent; they know that they are overtaxed. They know that the government doesn't have a revenue problem, that it has a spending problem. And Americans do mark this date on the calendar. They resent what it stands for.

I thank the gentleman from Georgia for what he is doing on this issue.

Madam Speaker, it is so nice to be on this floor and be joined by my colleagues who are real people, who live real lives, as the gentleman from Tennessee was talking about his business; people that understand what it takes to start a business, to run a business, to maintain a business. They are not part of the liberal elite. They are part of real people, this wonderful American middle class that makes this Nation run.

You know, I think another thing that kind of gets to people as they are sitting there trying to get those taxes in the mail tonight and figure these forms out, these thousands upon thousands upon thousands of pages of the tax form, you know, I had one of my constituents in a town hall meeting say he couldn't read the Tax Code, it was bigger than the King James version of the Bible and he has never been able to get through the Bible, and so he definitely couldn't get through the Tax Code. That is how big and unwieldy this thing has become.

But they look at this and they know that what we've got is a bureaucracy that is out of control. It is unresponsive; it is out of control. And the liberal elites who have created this bureaucracy think they are smarter than everybody else. They think that they know what should be happening for and to the rest of the country. And you know, I am right in there with them, don't like that very much.

I think that our constituents all know, too, that just as we are talking about, they know that they are overtaxed and government is overspent. They know that government is never going to get enough of their money.

And my colleague from Tennessee mentioned sales tax deductibility. Madam Speaker, I think it is just really so very sad that this Congress chose to let those tax deductions expire, which in effect will enact the largest tax increase in history on the American people, all to put more into the coffers of a government so that the liberal elites get their hands on it and they spend it. There again, the people know that they are overtaxed and they know government is overspent.

As we talk about what is before us today, I think that it is important. I was looking at one of the gentleman's posters that he has down there about mandatory spending growth. Isn't it amazing that we see this mandatory spending growth? The budget that our colleagues across the aisle, the Democrats, have chosen to pass makes our tax reductions temporary, makes tax relief for all of our families temporary, and makes spending permanent.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Will the gentlewoman yield?

Mrs. BLACKBURN. I would gladly yield.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. I brought along a number of charts. And we are not getting to a lot of them, but some of them we will.

This chart is an important one because this shows the mandatory spending growth, something I like to coin actually ''automatic spending growth'' because it is not mandatory. The Federal Government has determined that that is where we are going to spend money. And it automatically increases. These are the automatic programs, which are basically Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid; and unless they see reforms, what we will have seen from 1995 to 2017 is an increase from 48.7 percent to 62.2 percent of our economy.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. If the gentleman will yield?

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. I would be happy to yield.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. I think what we see here is so important, and what you've just said speaks to the issue. Because a budget should reflect not the priorities of the government, but the priorities of the people. And what we have seen in the budget that our friends across the aisle brought that eliminated the tax reductions, that increased the taxes, that adds to that, knowing that people are overtaxed, knowing that government is overspent, is the fact that all of these automatic increases, mandatory spending growth, not addressing entitlement reforms that are needed, but allowing that to be put on autopilot, and increase and increase and making that spending permanent while you make the tax reductions temporary.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Will the gentlelady yield?

Mrs. BLACKBURN. I will yield.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. This chart really points that out, ''Ignoring Entitlement Reform,'' which is exactly what occurred 2½ weeks ago when our friends passed our budget.

When the Republicans were in charge, with the Balanced Budget Act

we passed in 1987 we saved nearly $130 billion. With the Deficit Reduction Act just a few short years ago in 2005, about $40 billion. With the budget that was adopted 2½ weeks ago, none, zero. No entitlement reform. No automatic spending reform. And consequently, what you know and what I know is that we are on track to spend that 62.2 percent in a few very short years.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. The gentleman is exactly right. That is why we have to look at that budget document on this tax day and say, they laid the marker down. They showed us what their priorities are. Their priorities are a bigger government and higher taxes on the American people.

I would invite all of them to join us, join us in reducing taxes. Join us in making these tax reductions permanent. Join us in making sales tax deductibility permanent. Join us in being certain that middle-class Americans get first right of refusal on their paycheck, that it is not the Federal Government that gets first right of refusal on that paycheck. Before those deductions are taken out, let's be certain that the American people have the opportunity to sit down at that kitchen table and decide how they are going to spend those hard-earned dollars, because it is their work.

You know, American families, individuals in my district in Tennessee, we talked a lot about taxes as we went through this district work period. I had one of my constituents stand up in one of our meetings and he said, MARSHA, I've got sweat equity in my paycheck; I've got a lot of sweat equity in my paycheck when I get it. And it just galls me every time I see a little bit more of that paycheck going to Washington, D.C. for programs that don't work. He talked about the spinach farmers and the fisheries and the peanut storage people and Katrina relief and all these things that were the waste; and the additions and the add-ons and the pork barrel spending that got put into the bill that would have funded our military.

On this tax day, as people are going to the mailboxes tonight, they know that they are not undertaxed, they are overtaxed. They know that government is not underspent, it is overspent. And they know that the Democrats laid down a marker. They made a choice when they did this budget. That budget choice was, do you want to stand with the American families and let them have first right of refusal on that paycheck, or do you want to give first right of refusal to the bureaucrats and the liberal elites in Washington, D.C.? And they made their choice.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. I thank the gentlewoman for her perspective and for her passion for appropriate policies here out of Washington on behalf of the American people.

And you've heard a lot about what our friends on the other side of the aisle have proposed. And it is important to the look at the numbers, Madam Speaker, the numbers on what has been proposed by our good friends on the other side of the aisle when the clock strikes midnight on December 21, 2010.

They have proposed and they have enacted a budget that will result in increasing the ordinary income rates from 35 percent to 39.6 percent; increasing capital gains from 15 percent to 20 percent; increasing dividends from 15 percent to 39.6 percent; increasing estate taxes from zero percent to 55 percent; decreasing the child tax credit from $1,000 to $500; and, amazingly, increasing the lowest tax bracket from 10 percent to 15 percent. A remarkable $400 billion in new taxes, a remarkable display of, frankly, lack of appreciation and lack of respect for the American worker.

Now what is the solution? A lot of things can be done. What we would propose and have proposed is something that respects American values and I believe results in increasing American vision, and that is a taxpayer bill of rights, a Federal taxpayer bill of rights. Many folks will recognize the sound of that because there are some States around this Nation that have indeed enacted a taxpayer bill of rights. The problem at the State level, however, is that all they can address is State revenue, State money.

□ 2215

But, Madam Speaker, because of the actions of our friends on the other side of the aisle and because they want to dig deeper, we believe strongly that a taxpayer bill of rights is appropriate for the Federal Government. We believe that taxpayers have a right to a Federal Government that does not grow beyond their ability to pay for it. That means that the Federal Government ought not grow more than the population grows or more than the cost of living increases, and that can be put into law and that is what part of the taxpayer bill of rights does.

We also believe that Americans have a right to receive back every single dollar that they entrust to the American people for their retirement. That is the Social Security issue, Madam Speaker. Right now the Federal Government, right now Washington spends money that the American people send to Washington to cover for their Social Security compensation, and what does Washington do, oftentimes it spends it on other programs. That is not right and it is not fair. I hear about it when I am back home, and I suspect you do as well.

We believe taxpayers have a right to a balanced budget without raising taxes. You can balance the budget in one of two ways. You can raise taxes to try to increase revenue, which doesn't actually work, but you can have it work on paper. You can increase taxes and say, well, we will balance the budget that way, which is what our friends on the other side of the aisle have done. They say we will increase taxes $400 billion, and that is the way we will balance the budget.

Madam Speaker, there is another way you can balance the budget, and that is by decreasing spending, and that is what we would propose through a taxpayer bill of rights.

Fourth, we would propose fundamental and fair tax reform. My good friend from Texas mentioned earlier the proposal for a flat tax. That is one way to do it. I support the fair tax, the national retail sales tax, something that would do away with the IRS, do away with that organization that so many Americans dread and results in so much pain and heartache on the part of the American people.

Finally, a taxpayer bill of rights that would require a supermajority for any increase in taxes for our Nation, something that was in effect until the very first day of this Congress when this new majority said, ''no,'' we ought not have a supermajority to increase taxes, we ought to let a simple majority do it which results in a huge opportunity for an increase in taxation and has resulted in, by this new majority, policies which will significantly increase taxes.

So, Madam Speaker, what we have done tonight is outlined the problem, outlined the history, talked about what kinds of solutions can be proposed and what we would propose in the way of an appropriate Federal taxpayer bill of rights.

I would like to close with a quote from Thomas Jefferson who had a perspective on taxation. He said: ''To take from one because it is thought his own industry has acquired too much, in order to spare others who have not exercised equal industry and skill is to violate arbitrarily the first principle of association, the guarantee to everyone the free exercise of his industry and the fruits acquired by it.'' That was Thomas Jefferson, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, each and every one of us is remarkably privileged to serve in this House of Representatives. It is an honor to represent my constituents, as I know each Member feels it is an honor to represent theirs. We live in a wondrous and glorious nation, the longest surviving democracy in the history of the world, a nation that has resulted in, because of its actions, more freedom and more prosperity for more individuals than any nation in the history of mankind.

It is commonsense and responsibility on behalf of the Members who represent all of the constituents across this Nation that have resulted in those policies. I, as I know my colleagues who have been here this evening, look forward to working with Members on both sides of the aisle to bring about that accountability and responsibility, and to bring about the kind of credit and honor to our constituents that they so richly deserve by their labor.

Madam Speaker, I look forward to making certain that we hold each other accountable to establish the

kinds of policies that are appropriate and the kinds of policies that will result in the greatest amount of prosperity and freedom for future generations of Americans.

REMEMBERING VICTIMS AT VIRGINIA TECH UNIVERSITY AND HONORING HISPANIC WORLD WAR II VETERANS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. CASTOR). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. RODRIGUEZ) is recognized for half the remaining time until midnight.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Madam Speaker, tonight we will be highlighting the courage and honor of our Hispanic World War II veterans.

But before we begin tonight, I would like to take this moment to honor the victims of the unbelievable tragedy at Virginia Tech University. We have only just begun to hear the incredible stories of the heroism and tragedy, and begun to learn the names and faces of those who died and those whose survived, but whose lives will forever be changed.

Today we have also seen how remarkable and how resilient they are. To the Virginia Tech University community, the students, the staff, the family members and the loved ones who are suffering today, please know that you are in our prayers and thoughts tonight.

I ask for a brief moment of silence.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of my Special Order tonight.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Madam Speaker, I rise this evening, joined by my colleagues, to honor and pay respect and tribute to the contributions of the Latino and Hispanic soldiers who served so valiantly during World War II.

World War II was a major turning point for the United States Latinos, changing the world views of an entire generation. Approximately half a million Hispanics served in the Armed Forces during World War II. Unfortunately, many Latino soldiers who returned home found the same discrimination they had left behind, a system that held Latinos to a lower status.

Latinos and Latinas who worked in military installations and in other jobs previously denied them also questioned the status quo.

Understanding the importance of getting an education to better adapt after their tour of duty, many veterans used the GI bill to earn college degrees. In the years following World War II, those men and women made astonishing civil rights advancements for their people through school desegregation, in voting rights, and in basic civil rights.

Powerful organizations grew out of this era, including the American GI Forum founded by Dr. Hector Garcia of Corpus Christi in 1948 to advocate for veterans' rights.

Another organization that came out of the World War II generation of Latinos was the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund in 1968. This came about after Mexican American World War II veterans, including people such as Pete Tijerina; Gregory Luna, a Senator from Texas; Ed Idar and Albert Armendariz, among others, found that their clients, mostly low-income Mexican Americans, were being denied justice in the legal system.

For Puerto Ricans, World War II brought new questions in which the United States came to appreciate Puerto Rico's military importance in the Caribbean. The United States maintained that it needed to keep its sovereign power over the islands for reasons of national security, and World War II strengthened that position. However, over 53,000 Puerto Ricans served within the United States military with dignity. Soldiers from the island, serving in the 65th Infantry Regiment, participated in combat in the European theater in Germany and central Europe.

World War II was also the first conflict in which women other than nurses were allowed to serve in the United States Armed Forces. However, when the United States entered World War II, Puerto Rican nurses volunteered for service, but were not accepted into the Army or the Navy Nurse Corps, and it was not until 1944 that the Army Nurse Corps decided to activate and recruit Puerto Rican nurses so the Army hospitals would not have to deal with language barriers.

Sadly, Madam Speaker, the stories of these men and women have been virtually untold either in the mass media or in the scholarly writings, and that is why my colleagues and I are here this evening to begin sharing the stories of the Hispanic and Latino World War II veterans, so all Americans can learn about and appreciate their contributions.

Within our own body of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus I am proud to honor, to recognize the service of four of our own who have served the military with dignity: Chairman SILVESTRE REYES, Chairman SOLOMON ORTIZ, the Honorable JOHN SALAZAR, and the honorable chairman of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, JOE BACA.

Chairman JOE BACA, who represents the 43rd District of California, was drafted in 1966 and served in the Army as a paratrooper with both the 101st and the 82nd Airborne Divisions from 1966 through 1968.

I want to take this opportunity to yield to our chairman, and I thank him for being here tonight.

Mr. BACA. Madam Speaker, first of all, I would like to thank our Chair of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus on Veterans Affairs for addressing this important issue of those men and women who served during World War II, and that is our chairman, Ciro Rodriguez. It is important that people realize the contributions of many of our Hispanics who served during that period of time, that we are visible and that we were not invisible during that period of time and that we made many contributions to this country during that period of time.

So I rise today in honor of the over 500,000 Hispanics who bravely served our country during World War II with honor and with integrity and were proud to wear the uniform. And for those of us who wore that uniform, men and women who were willing to ultimately sacrifice for this country, it is an honor for us and our family members when we put on that uniform and fight for this country.

Madam Speaker, 65,000 Puerto Ricans also served during that period of time. Thirteen Medals of Honor were given out, 11 were Mexican American, two were Puerto Ricans. So when you can look at the contributions of these individuals and many others, as a veteran, I am proud of our heritage and our long history of continuing to fight for this country.

More Hispanics fought for this country's freedom and security during World War II, and I state that is an important fact to understand, and it is important that it be included in part of our history of the contributions that Hispanics have made. More Hispanics than any other minority group have served this country with distinction.

Just one example is Company E of the 141st Regiment of the 36th Texas Infantry Division. This company was made up entirely of Hispanics, bilingual individuals who were willing to serve for this country. After 361 days of combat in Italy and France, the 141st Infantry Regiment sustained 1,126 casualties, 5,000 wounded and more than 500 missing in action.

In recognizing their extended service and valor, the members of the 141st were awarded three Medals of Honor, 31 Distinguished Service Crosses, 12 Legions of Merit, 492 Silver Stars, 11 Soldier's Medals, and 1,685 Bronze Stars. We were, and are, visible and participated and gave our lives during World War II. And that is an important fact for many of our children and others to know the contributions of many of our men and women who served us, who sacrificed for this country.

Hispanic women also made a huge contribution to the American war effort. Madam Speaker, 200 Puertoriquenas served during the Women's Army Corps, which was one of the first service opportunities for women in American history.

□ 2230

Bilingual Hispanic women also worked in important positions within

the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps in areas like communications and interpretation. They also worked as specialized bilingual nurses and logistics specialists all over the world, providing the United States military the services vital to the war effort and to this country.

Hispanic veterans have made huge contributions to American society after serving our country in this war.

Dr. Hector P. Garcia of Corpus Christi founded the American GI Forum in 1948 to advocate on behalf of veterans rights, and as our chairman indicated, many veterans who came back home, who served this country, were trying to buy homes and trying to receive the same benefits that many other individuals were given in this country but yet were denied those same rights, whether to buy a home, obtain a education, have the same rights as others. I know because I experienced the same thing when I returned back after serving this country and was trying to rent a home, and they would not rent to me, and of course, they rented to my wife. In doing so, the GI Forum became an important civil rights organization for Mexican Americans.

Another organization that came out of the World War II generation of Latinos was the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, or MALDEF, in 1968. Mexican American World War II veterans, such as Pete Tijerina, Ed Idar and Albert Armendariz, came together to advocate for low-income Mexican Americans who needed fair treatment within the American legal system.

As a Hispanic, a veteran and as chair of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, I cannot tell you how humbled I am by the sacrifice of these brave men and women who came before me, who ultimately gave the sacrifice, who believed in this country and continue to believe in this country and will continue to fight for this country because we know it is an honor to serve for the United States and its principles and what it stands for.

I am particularly honored to know of a dear friend of mine who served during World War II, David Guerra Galvan, who recently passed away on March 23 when I went back to the district. He was born in my district and was a resident of Rialto, my hometown, for 50 years.

David served his country in the Army during World War II as a paratrooper and in the 101st Airborne Division. During his European tour, David was also transferred to the 82nd Airborne Division as part of a detachment for the personal protection of General Dwight Eisenhower. After his military service, David continued to serve his country as a data communications operator at Norton Air Force Base. He retired after 40 years of outstanding service to the Armed Forces in 1990.

David was a dear friend of mine, and he is a perfect example of the hundreds of thousands of veterans that we are honoring today who have served our country and will continue to serve our country.

David Galvan was a Hispanic, he was an American and a proud American, and he loved this country. He spent his entire life serving our Nation and his community and his family; as well as my brother Abilio Baca who served in the Armed Forces in the Army during the Korean conflict; as well as my brother-in-law, Ted Dominguez, who served during World War II.

I feel honored to have followed in David's footsteps by serving in the 101st and 82nd Airborne during my military service, and I thank him and I thank all of the many men and women who served during World War II. They are our heroes. They are our role models. They have paved the way for generations of proud Hispanics. They are the ones who ultimately paid the sacrifices so that we can enjoy the freedoms that we have here today because they were willing to step up to the plate. They stepped up to the plate and were willing to die for this country. That is why we have the freedoms that we have today, and we must not forget the legacy of what they have left for us. They have opened the door. They paved the way. They provided that for us. Let us remember those veterans who have served this country.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Madam Speaker, let me take this opportunity also to congratulate Congressman BACA not only as chairman of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus but for his service to his country, and he continues to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives. I thank Congressman BACA.

Let me take this opportunity also to just share with you that also I mentioned earlier Chairman Sylvestre Reyes, who also served in the military, now chairman of the Intelligence Committee, who represents the 16th District of Texas. He is a Vietnam combat veteran, and he was stationed in Marble Mountain in DaNang, and he served as a helicopter crew chief within the 282nd Combat Assault Helicopter Company from March 1967 to April 1968. I know that he was unable to be here tonight, but I know that he also cherishes and recognizes those individuals who served our country.

Let me take this opportunity to recognize a friend from San Antonio, Texas, which represents a community that has multitude and is known as Military U.S.A., San Antonio, because of the support that we have for our military with Lackland Air Force Base, Randolph Air Force Base, Fort Sam Houston, Brooks that used to be here, and the military support and all the families there, Congressman Charlie Gonzalez.

Mr. GONZALEZ. Madam Speaker, I want to express my thanks of course to my colleague Ciro Rodriguez, my neighbor and fellow San Antonian for his great service in this Congress and, of course, as past chair of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus.

I first would like to digress from the remarks that I have had here prepared to highlight the life of a great man. The individual that I will be highlighting taught me as a very young man and as a young lawyer that if you have something to say, say it; if you believe in something stand up and state it.

While we were awaiting our call to have our Special Order, some of my colleagues from the other side of the aisle were representing certain figures and facts, demonstrating that the practices of the Democratic party and Democratic leaders simply resulted in deficit spending, not having a balanced budget, runaway spending and so on. The only problem with those facts and those figures is that the Republicans have been in the majority since 1995. It was only last year in 2006 that we were able to take back the majority. So, if there was too much spending, if there was irresponsibility in the way of fiscal policy, they had the majority.

Let us talk about the expiration of certain tax programs that were passed back in 2005. Was it truly necessary to say they would expire in 2005? Now, I understand that we do things in 5-year increments often enough, but they had the majority. Make them permanent; they never did. Extend them; they never did. You wonder why.

It is complaining that this bus is being driven in an erratic manner and the wrong destination. The problem is you were driving it. They controlled Congress and nothing was done.

The last time we had a balanced budget was under the Clinton administration, and it was because of President Clinton's leadership that we were able to balance the budget because of good, solid economic policy and tax policies that really were fair to all Americans.

I leave you with a couple of thoughts here. First of all, what we are proposing in the first few months of being in the majority is to maintain and make sure that we still have the child tax credit that would not expire, that we make sure that the marriage penalty relief would not expire. Why? Because that truly is just. That truly is fair.

What is not fair is what I am going to read to you now that appeared back in 2005. Back on the 8th day of December 2005, the Republican tax reconciliation bill, the Tax Policy Center, run jointly by the Brookings Institution and the Urban Institute has concluded that the bottom 80 percent of households would receive 15.5 percent of the House tax cuts. The top 20 percent would receive 84.2 percent of the benefit. Households earning more than $1 million would get 40 percent of the tax cut relief, or an average reduction of nearly $51,000. If you believe that is fair tax policy, something is truly, truly wrong, and we are going to correct that as we assume the majority.

Now, who taught me that? I will go now into my remarks because we are

here to honor and to spotlight the service of Hispanics and especially in World War II.

Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure today to participate in this Special Order honoring Hispanic veterans of the Second World War. As we have already heard, the contributions made by Hispanic Americans to the war effort against the Axis Powers were significant. A half million Hispanics served, and I fear that their contributions are often forgotten.

It is important that all Americans, including Hispanics, enjoy recognition and our historical dialogues commensurate with the contributions they made to our Nation. When we fail to be inclusive, our histories are incomplete. They are only half-truths. We owe it to past and future generations to make our histories whole. When history is complete, it is also fair and it is just.

Today, I am honored to make a small contribution to our country's World War II dialogue on behalf of the war's Hispanic veterans in hopes that their stories come to occupy a place in history proportionate to their service and to their sacrifice.

Like their African American brothers-in-arms, Hispanic Americans served the United States in World War II with honor and distinction, despite the fact that they had yet to enjoy the full fruits of the liberty they defended.

Back in the 1940s, in the late 1940s also, most of the services offered to the American public by our national, State and local governments were segregated between whites and minorities, including Hispanics. But despite the fact that the services to which they were entitled were often withheld or inferior, Hispanics did not withhold their service to the American people. They fought for our country even as schools they attended, jobs they worked, wages they earned, and living conditions they tolerated reflected systematic inequality that denied them full rights of citizenship. Despite the inequality endured by Hispanic veterans before and after World War II, their stories of courage and heroism during that troubling time are the equal of any that can be told.

I regret that I have time to share with you the story of but one of the hundreds of thousands of Hispanic veterans who so courageously defended the liberty of humankind during those darkest hours.

The Honorable Mike Machado enjoyed a lengthy career of public service to the United States, to the State of Texas and to the residence of his beloved home city of San Antonio. He was born in San Antonio on September 4, 1923, and attended Sydney Lanier High School where he excelled as a student athlete.

Like so many young men of his generation, Mike Machado entered service to his country during the earliest days of his adulthood by enlisting in the United States Army Air Corps at 17. He became a nose gunner on a B–24, battling the Germans over the skies of Nazi-occupied Europe. By the summer of 1944, he had flown over 40 missions.

On June 13, 1944, Mike Machado's B–24 was heavily damaged over Munich. Despite the desperate nature of their situation, the crew stayed with their aircraft rather than parachute into enemy hands.

□ 2245

Mike Machado and his comrades crossed the border into northern Italy before they were forced to make a crash landing. Upon impact, fire engulfed the B–24. Mike Machado carried two of his fellow airmen to safety that day, saving them from the flames. In the process, he received severe burns to his upper body and arms that would limit the use of his hands for the rest of his life.

My personal observation that I would like to make is that even I practiced before Judge Machado. It was obvious that this is someone who had suffered horrific, disfiguring and incapacitating injuries.

The French Underground provided sanctuary for Mike over the following months, hiding him from Nazi forces and eventually securing his return to the United States Army. His strength and his resilience, combined with the rudimentary medical care provided by his French companions, allowed him to survive his injuries from the fire and the flack.

After his return to the United States Army, he began a 36-month long recuperation at Beaumont General Hospital in El Paso. The ordeal included 23 skin graft operations that only partially repaired the injuries incurred during his heroic rescue efforts. Mike Machado's story of heroism does not end with his discharge from the Army. His injuries did not deter him from his pursuit of an education, in law, especially, and a career of public service, as a city attorney and as a judge at the municipal and State district court levels.

Judge Machado used the GI Bill to enroll at Saint Mary's University and graduated from Saint Mary's University Law School in 1952. He soon became a prosecutor. In 1957, he was appointed as a municipal court judge where he served for 20 years. In 1977, he became a judge for the newly created 227th State district court. That same year he was honored by Pope Paul VI with a knighthood in the Pontifical Order of Saint Gregory the Great. He served as a district judge for 21 years until the time of his death.

When he died on July 29, 1998, Judge Machado had amassed over a half century of public service to our country, as an airman, and as an assistant DA, and a municipal and district court judge. He was just shy of his 75th birthday and would have been retired from the bench, as Texas law requires, on September 4 of that year.

While Texas law mandated his retirement from the judicial branch, it could not squelch Judge Machado's desire to serve the public, knowing that mandatory retirement was fast approaching.

What did he do? Well, prior to the brain aneurysm that took his life, he had announced at the age of 74 his candidacy for district attorney in Bexar County on the Democratic ticket. Judge Machado was highly regarded in the community, as evidenced by the over 1,000 mourners that attended his funeral.

As a judge, he performed marriage ceremonies for thousands of San Antonio couples. He welcomed the public into his chambers with open arms, often quite literally. What I mean by that, it was a big giant bear hug that he would give you, and he made himself available to individuals in need of help.

Believe it or not, even ex-convicts that he had sentenced would seek his advice at times. He was a man of the people and a man who befriended everyone. I am honored to have had the opportunity to share with you the story of Judge Mike Machado, a courageous man and a servant of his country.

My colleague, Congressman RODRIGUEZ, who organized this opportunity to recount the bravery of Hispanic veterans of World War II, should be commended for his efforts today and in the past, because this is not the first time that Congressman RODRIGUEZ has risen to the defense of the Hispanic warrior in recognizing and remembering these servicemen, including Judge Mike Machado.

As I indicated earlier, we did not offer these comments tonight solely to highlight the virtues of specific individuals. We realized as Judge Machado's son has said of his dad, ''My father and many more of his generation would be embarrassed at the prospect of receiving special attention for doing what they consider to be a privilege, that is, serving this great country.'' When we honor individuals like Judge Mike Machado, we honor a symbol really of something much more. We honor them because their courage symbolizes the courage and sacrifice to which the Hispanic community and the Nation at large aspire.

We honor the service of Hispanic veterans of World War II specifically today in order to solidify their place in World War II history and ensure that their patriotic virtues receive the appreciation they deserve, that Judge Machado and hundreds of thousands of his fellow World War II veterans, Hispanic and non-Hispanic alike, look back on their valiant service to our country as a privilege and an honor, and should be an inspiration to all Americans.

Let our recognition of their sacrifices motivate us to a greater appreciation of the contributions made during World War II by Americans, regardless of their racial or ethnic backgrounds. None of their brave soldiers will ever be forgotten.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Congressman CHARLIE GONZALEZ, I want to personally thank you tonight for bringing the story of Judge Machado, a great leader

in San Antonio. I also want to thank you for your comments as you regressed and talked a little bit in terms of the deficit. You have talked in eloquence, and I couldn't help but remember your dad, Henry B. Gonzalez, as he spoke in this House about the important issues that confront us.

I know that previous groups had talked about the deficit, knowing full well that this particular administration went into office with a surplus, one of the largest surpluses in recorded history. Now we find ourselves without that surplus and find ourselves in an $8.9 trillion debt.

That being said, let me also take this opportunity to mention a little bit about some of our own veterans here on the House, Chairman SOLOMON ORTIZ, who sits on the Armed Services Committee, represents the 27th District of Texas.

As a result of his father's death at the age of 16, Chairman ORTIZ dropped out of school to find a job to assist his mother in paying the family bills. Shortly thereafter, Chairman ORTIZ joined the Army, because, as he put it, it was the one place that would give him free room and board and let me send my check back home to my mother.

It was in the Army that Mr. ORTIZ, SOLOMON, ever conscious of the needs for an education, got his GED. He received his basic training at Fort Hood, Texas, and was sent overseas to France for his tour of duty. He later found himself reassigned to the 61st Military Police Company, Criminal Investigation Office, a move that would color much of his future professional life. He remained as an investigator for the duration of his tour of duty, receiving his advanced military police training at Fort Gordon, Georgia.

Congressman JOHN SALAZAR, who represents the Third District of Colorado, graduated from Centauri High School in La Jara, Colorado. In 1973 he joined the Army. After serving in Heidelberg, Germany, SALAZAR received an honorable military discharge in 1976. Congressman SALAZAR is proud to be a veteran and proud to be both the son and father of men who have served. The Salazar family is honored to have served our country. Congressman SALAZAR tells a story of his father, a veteran of World War II, requesting to be buried in his uniform.

Today's generation of Hispanics and Latino American soldiers look to the brave men and women, veterans, who fought before them, as true inspiration. In the State of Texas alone, there are 197,173 World War II veterans who have fought so bravely and honorably to defend our beloved country. According to the 2000 census, the VA reported and recognized Texas as having 14,871,550 civilian population over the age of 18 and a total veteran civilian population of over 1.7 million.

Within the 23rd Congressional District, which is the district that I represent, a district that is one of the largest in the country that stretches from San Antonio to El Paso through Eagle Pass and the border, has some 700 miles of the border with Mexico. I represent the VA reports in their county estimates and projections of living veterans report, that as of September 30, 2006, there are currently 53,012 living veterans within the 23rd Congressional District.

Therefore, my colleagues, I stand today, this evening, in honor of the extraordinary service these men and women should be recognized for what they do. In so recognizing their efforts, we also need to recognize them in terms of what we provide them with.

Before I do that, let me take this opportunity to also tell a story of my father-in-law. Daniel Sanchez Pena was born on January 11, 1919, as the youngest son of Manuel Pena and Catarina Sanchez Pena in Las Colonias of Karnes County, Texas. He grew up in his parents' ranchito doing all the types of farm chores that kids do in a farm. He only went to the second grade in school. He learned to play the guitar at 14 and played at community and farmhouse dances around the community. He would use his skills while in the Army to entertain himself and his fellow soldiers.

To this day, he still enjoys, at 87, playing the guitar there at home. Daniel Sanchez Pena was registered on the 16th day of October, 1940. He reported to the Local Board No. 1 in Karnes County, Texas, at the courthouse, on March 25, 1942. This was part of the 35th precinct of what is referred to as the Robstown, Texas, ward. At the age of 23, in June of 1942, he was at the headquarters of the Armed Forces Replacement Training Center in Fort Knox, Kentucky, Company A, for training. Being a farm boy, he was an expert shooter and got excellent points for marksmanship. He still talks about the beautiful mountains in Kentucky that he recalls and the green valleys.

After training, he was sent to New York to board the ship and go overseas. This was a real adventure to Daniel. Daniel had never traveled far from his home, much less across the Atlantic Ocean. He still talks about the amazement of seeing the dolphins and the whales and other large fish that he saw. He recalls how seasick they were and how at night, how he looked on that floating city of lights. Coming from a small town, that seemed like a large city.

He served in the U.S. Army for 3 years. He was a rifleman in the infantry. He remembers crawling in the sand, freezing in the snow, climbing the steep mountains and the high mountains in Italy and forever marching, dodging bullets and digging fox holes. He saw his friends from Karnes County, a young man at that point that he talks about, and always remembers him, who was killed in front of him. To this day, he still remembers that specific incident when that occurred.

He recalls the many tragedies of the war for both soldiers and civilians. He remembers having to hold his plate of food so that they would not be stolen by the starving civilians and children who appeared around the camps when they went through both Africa and into Italy. He often wondered why he got out alive.

Truly, he experienced every emotion known to man, from profound sorrow to wondrous awe. Only in the last 2 to 3 years has he started to talk about these experiences. As he talks about his experiences, he remembers parts of the comments and the language, the Italian language that he picked up and some of the words. He returned from service in 1945, receiving the European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal with four bronze service stars, the World War II Victory Medal, and the Honorable Service Lapel Button for World War II.

He married Dora Mansanalez in September of 1947, another young lady who lived at another farm adjoining their farm. His father had seven children, three girls and four boys. Two of the boys, Roberto and Guillermo, my brother-in-laws, served in the Army. Carolina, his daughter, is my wife.

□ 2300

And so I mention Daniel Pena because he is typical of a lot of the veterans, a lot of Hispanic veterans who have served our country, who never spoke of the war until now as he reaches 87 years of age he begins to talk about those incidents.

Let me also take this opportunity, Madam Speaker, as featured by Gebe Martinez, a longtime journalist in Washington. I would like to share with you a story which she featured of a soldier from my own 23rd District of Texas, Nick Arzola.

Nick Arzola was defined as a skinny kid from Del Rio, Texas; service in World War II was the pride of his life. He never forgot the precise time he left New York for the war, 5 p.m. on October 7, 1943. Arzola went through the choppy seas, pitched in his ship so violently that he was sick for the entire 18 days' voyage to Scotland.

On land, he went from cooking on a gas stove on the battlefront to moving grenades and bombs at a munitions depot. Arzola was a proud American from Del Rio, even if he was considered the only Mexican with a bunch of Yankees, as he used to say. He was good natured despite the stereotype. His war buddies first thought he looked Filipino. Then, they called him Pancho Villa and they called him Casanova, according to the tales.

When he returned to Texas after the war, he traveled a road that would later be named for Cleto Rodriguez, the first Hispanic to receive the Medal of Honor for his bravery in the battle in Manila.

Nick opened a barbershop in Del Rio and painted signs freehand, including billboards for rising Texas politicians

such as Lloyd Bentsen. A veteran, he never missed an election and rounded up voters to take part in freedom as he campaigned.

Until he died in 2005, he was part of the uniformed honor guard at the funeral of Del Rio's war veterans, one where to this day you have a large number of veterans there in Del Rio that continue to volunteer as their veterans pass away and do the honors of burying them.

Nick Arzola's story may not seem unlike that of other veterans, but this is a representation of part of America's history that has too often been forgotten. His story, like the stories many colleagues have shared, have not been told. Nick never missed an election and rounded up votes as he worked and will continue to do so.

So I want to take this opportunity to also mention, as I have a few minutes left, we talked the last few weeks about the situation that we find ourselves with as PBS has a 14-hour program on World War II that will be released in September. There has been a great deal of concern about the lack of Hispanic participation in that particular program. We have had meetings with Ken Burns and others and have been pleased that we have been able to make some inroads. There is still a lot of work to be done.

I do want to mention that I am also concerned that within our own population we don't know the history of the role that Mexican Americans and Hispanics have played, not only in World War II but throughout all the wars.

I want to mention a group of Mexicans, these are truly Mexicans from Mexico that played a very significant role in World War II in defense of the United States and that was referred to as Escuadron 201, the Aztec Eagles, as they were called. The 201 Escuadron was a group of 300 Mexicans that were trained in the United States and fought on behalf of the United States, with some 38 Mexican pilots that were trained in this country.

On December 8, 1941, the day after the attack on Pearl Harbor, Mexico severed its ties with Germany, Italy, and Japan. And in May 1942, the Nazis also sank a Mexican tanker, and Mexico declared war against the Axis powers. During that time, Mexico participated in the war, and one group was the Escuadron 201. This group of 300 individuals that were Mexicans were trained in this country. The 201 successfully participated in the Allied efforts to bomb Luzon and Formosa, known as Taiwan now, to attempt to push the Japanese out of the island.

Assigned to the 58th Fighter Group of the United States Fifth Air Force, the Aztec Eagles, as they were called, were also used in ground support efforts after the aerial threat from Japan weakened. During those ground assignments, the men of the squadron saw firsthand the fearlessness and war mentality of the Japanese soldiers. Japanese soldiers were often captured after trying to come into the U.S. military campsites for food, as they recalled during the stories. Several of these soldiers such as Captain Reynaldo Gallardo and others continue to remember their efforts.

I want to mention, on Veterans Day Carlos Faustinos, a former member of the Escuadron 201, always is proud of flying not only Old Glory but the Mexican flag, because he, as a Mexican, fought on behalf of the United States against the Japanese. He was also known for being able to down six Japanese Zeros, which basically makes him an ace, and was able to get credit and receive La Cruz de Honor, the Cross of Honor, which is equivalent to the U.S. Medal of Honor award in this country.

Very few Americans know of the 201 Escuadron. Very few of them know of the Aztec Eagles, these Mexicans who fought with the U.S. troops as troopers and fought over the sea in the Pacific. They continue to engage and continue to meet, and I know the G.I. Forum has recently honored their efforts, but much more needs to be done.

Let me take this opportunity in closing to indicate that as we honor our troops, it is not just sufficient for us to honor them with our words. We have to honor them with our acts. And that is why I am extremely proud to announce that this legislation has put more money for our veterans service than any other in history. I am glad that the budget for 2008 has $6.6 billion, and I know that the House of Representatives will be voting on that. That $6.6 billion is the resources that are essentially needed at this present time to help.

And for 2007, I am also proud to say that we were able to take that particular piece of legislation that should have been passed last year, that was passed by this Congress, the concurrent resolution, and that we added to that bill after we struck all the line items that were placed on that bill the previous year by the previous Congress, we struck every single line item, and we added $3.6 billion for the VA.

So I am pleased not only that we did that, but I am also pleased to announce that the supplemental that the President will hopefully eventually sign has an additional $1.7 billion for our troops for health care. That is the way to honor our troops not only with our words but with our deeds.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Madam Speaker, I am honored to join my colleagues in honoring the tremendous contributions of World War II Veterans.

During World War II Americans responded to a call of service that resulted in a generation of leaders that has since never been seen. As our country faced the war, all citizens stood united and ready to contribute. Without exception, Hispanic Americans were also there to seize the call their country had laid before them. Not only did Hispanic Americans serve our country during a time of war, their leadership after service resulted in huge civil rights advancements for the Hispanic community.

It is with great privilege that I take the opportunity to especially recognize the noble service and high sacrifices of the approximately 500,000 Hispanic Americans who served in the Armed Forces during World War II. One of whom was my brother-in-law, Manuel Musquiz—a bombardier.

During World War II Hispanic participation was at a higher percentage than any other minority. Of these, at least 65,000 were Puerto Rican and the majority of the Hispanics were Mexican-Americans. Thirteen Medals of Honor were awarded to Latinos in World War II, eleven to Mexican Americans, and two to Puerto Ricans. When Hispanic soldiers returned home they utilized the GI Bill to advance their education.

Unfortunately, many Latino soldiers who served during WWII also received a rude awakening as they returned home. They faced the same discrimination they had left when they heeded the call to serve. Latino soldiers returned home to exert their rights, through numerous civil rights efforts, to create greater opportunities through activism. Powerful organizations grew out of this era, including the G.I. Forum and the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF). A wealth of gratitude is entitled to these national heroes and their families who not only fought for democracy but fought for equality.

I would also like to recognize my fellow colleagues of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus who also have served our country: Representatives ORTIZ, REYES, BACA, and SALAZAR.

We pause to remember the noble service and high sacrifices of those who have worn our nation's uniform. We must not allow our children to forget about those who have served and the millions of living military veterans in the United States, those residing in California, and Hispanic veterans in the U.S. Our thoughts and prayers are also with tomorrow's veterans—our servicemen and women serving in Iraq and Afghanistan and across the world.

Let us remember the service of all our veterans, the ones that wars—and peace—cannot be won without. And let us renew our national promise to fulfill our sacred obligations to our veterans and families who have sacrificed so much so that we can live free.

Mr. HINOJOSA. Madam Speaker, I first want to express my deepest condolences to all of the families who lost loved ones in yesterday's tragedy at Virginia Tech University. This horrific event has affected Americans all over this country and we all mourn for those who were lost and pray for the swift recovery of those who were injured.

Tonight I join my colleagues from the Congressional Hispanic Caucus in paying tribute to the thousands of Hispanic veterans who have fought and died defending this country. My Congressional district has lost many young men in this most recent conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan.

They are but the latest in a long line of patriots from South Texas who have given their lives in the defense of America.

Tonight I want to pay tribute to a young man from my district who received this Nation's highest award, the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Alfredo Cantu Gonzalez, known to his friends and family as ''Freddy'', was born in 1946 in Edinburg, Texas in the Rio Grande Valley. His mother was a waitress, who had to raise her son alone.

Freddy worked in the cotton fields as a teenager to help his mother. He attended Edinburg High School, where he was an outstanding football star.

After graduation, he enlisted in the Marine Corps. After his initial training, he was sent to Vietnam in 1966 where he served as a rifleman and squad leader. He was quickly promoted from private to lance corporal to corporal.

He returned to the States in 1967 where he was given the task of training recruits in guerilla warfare. Freddy told his mother and friends he did not want to return to Vietnam and would not re-enlist.

A few months after his return from Vietnam, he learned that an entire Marine platoon had been killed, including a group of men who had served under him during his first tour of duty. He was saddened by their loss and immediately volunteered for a second tour of duty.

On July 1, 1967 he was promoted to sergeant and shipped back to Vietnam.

On January 31, 1968, Sergeant Freddy Gonzalez and his men were assigned the task of protecting a truck convoy that was bringing relief to a major Vietnamese town. The truck convoy was attacked by the Viet Cong with mortars and machine gun fire.

Although Sergeant Gonzalez was wounded, he ran through heavy fire to rescue a wounded Marine who fell off the tank.

On February 3, Sergeant Gonzalez was wounded again but refused medical treatment until all of the other wounded Marines were treated.

The next day, on February 4, Sergeant Gonzalez and his Marine platoon were pinned down by the Viet Cong, who were firing at the Americans with rockets and automatic weapons from a church.

Sergeant Gonzalez, utilizing a number of light anti-tank assault weapons, fearlessly moved from position to position, firing numerous rounds at the heavily fortified enemy emplacements, almost single-handedly neutralizing the enemy.

All appeared quiet and Sergeant Gonzalez approached to make sure that the church was secure when the hidden lone enemy survivor killed him. At the age of 21, Sergeant Freddy Gonzalez had given the ultimate sacrifice for his country.

In 1969, his mother, Dolia Gonzalez, was escorted to the White House to receive the Congressional Medal of Honor awarded to her son posthumously because of his tremendous heroism in saving the men in his platoon.

He was also awarded numerous other medals including the Purple Heart, the Vietnam Presidential Unit Citation, the National Defense Service Medal, the Vietnam Service Medal with 2 bronze stars and the Vietnam Gallantry Cross with palm.

Long after his death, his courage, his patriotism and his sacrifice are still remembered. In the Rio Grande Valley there are schools, roads and parks named after him.

In 1996, the Navy commissioned the USS *Gonzalez*, a guided-missile destroyer and the first modern destroyer named for a Mexican American. Freddie was one of 13 Hispanics who were awarded the Medal of Honor for their service in Vietnam.

Hispanics have a proud tradition of patriotism and have always been willing to answer America's call to duty, often when they were not even citizens. Freddy Gonzalez' story is just one of the many thousands of stories that make up the heritage of our Hispanic veterans.

I urge all of my colleagues to join me in thanking all of these brave men and women, as well as their families and loved ones, for their service.

Mr. ORTIZ. Madam Speaker, Hispanic veterans represent our love of this nation . . . they represent the best of our community . . . and their service is a frequent path to greater opportunities for them and their families.

I am a veteran, inspired by another veteran who inspired so many of us: Dr. Hector P. Garcia who created the GI Forum, a powerful platform that represents Hispanic veterans who labor on the battlefield for our nation. Dr. Hector Garcia was a personal hero to me.

He served the nation on the battlefield . . . and he served us again by making people understand that a soldier is a soldier—that race makes no difference among Americans, particularly when they wear the uniform of the United States. If he were here today, he would have a great deal to say to PBS about the omission of Hispanics when putting together a special on WWII.

WWII was the moment in time when Hispanics found their place in U.S. society and found our voice in demanding equality among troops . . . and elsewhere in the American family. And it was Dr. Hector's audacious vision that began a decades-long march in advancing civil rights, voting rights and school desegregation for Hispanics in Texas and around the nation.

Here's how it all began . . . the family of Felix Longoria—a brave and fallen U.S. soldier from WWII—wanted his body buried at Three Rivers Cemetery in Three Rivers, Texas. Yet segregation's profound and evil roots ran deep in the heart of Texas then, reaching all the way into cemeteries, and Longoria's burial was refused; he was not white and could not be buried alongside those with whom he had fought in the war.

Dr. Hector laid bare the raw racism inherent in the U.S. after this nation fought a global war to protect democracy and our way of life, when even cemeteries were segregated. The fight to bury this war hero was successful and that effort begat the GI Forum, the very first Hispanic civil rights organization in this nation.

I was so pleased that—after the Hispanic Caucus engaged PBS in a serious conversation about the lack of inclusion of the story of Hispanics in the story of WWII—PBS understood the enormity of that decision. They will now include the extraordinary exploits of Hispanic warriors in the story of the last declared war our nation fought.

Yet, it was not only WWII in which Hispanic Americans were heroes in securing freedom; there were many examples of Hispanic war heroes throughout our history. Today we should also honor our forefathers who played a large part in making—and then keeping—the United States free and democratic; for as long as there has been a United States, Hispanics have played major roles in building our country and defending it.

From the American Revolution that freed the United States from England—to today's operation against al Qaeda—Hispanics proudly and bravely served the United States. When the Colonies on the East Coast of what is now the United States rebelled against England, Hispanics played a pivotal role.

As Governor of the Louisiana Territory, General Benardo de Gálvez sent money, gunpowder, rifles and other supplies to General George Washington to aid in the revolution. He later served gallantly in the War for Independence by capturing both Mobile and Pensacola—at a pivotal point in the war.

Captain Jorge Farragut came to the United States to seek his fortune by fighting the British—first in the Revolution, then in the War of 1812—as part of the U.S. Navy.

Hispanics also raised special collections and taxes to aid the fight for independence. After the Revolution was won, Mexican pesos aided in the construction of St. Peter's Church in New York City to celebrate the end of the war. As in the Revolution, Hispanics served proudly in each war and conflict in which the United States participated.

In the course of that service, 38 Hispanics have been awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor, our country's highest award for military bravery and service.

In the Civil War, David Glasgow Farragut, son of Jorge Farragut, won fame as a Union hero by blockading Southern ports, destroying Rebel ships anchored in New Orleans, and by capturing Mobile for the Union.

His contributions prompted Congress to create the title of Rear Admiral to reward him as the first man to ever hold that rank. Farragut was commissioned Vice Admiral in 1864, then Admiral in 1866.

Federico Fermández Cavada, a Lieutenant Colonel for the Union Army, fought bravely at Gettysburg. Rafael Chácon also served with the Union Army, and attained the rank of Major.

Santos Benavides—originally from Laredo—fought for the Confederacy. His rank of Colonel was the highest of any Mexican-American Army officer in the Civil War.

Major Manuel Antonio Chavez forced the Confederate Army to retreat down the Rio Grande, preventing the rebels from carrying out their plans to seize the gold mines of New Mexico and California.

Lieutenant Colonel José Francisco Chaves of the Union Army assisted in recapturing Albuquerque and Santa Fe.

One of the most interesting soldiers in the Confederacy was Loretta Janet Velázquez, who fought disguised as a man. Upon discovery and discharge, she continued her service as a Confederate spy.

In 1973, Lieutenant Colonel Mercedes Cubria retired from the Army—she was the first Hispanic woman to achieve that rank. Hispanics served bravely for the cause of freedom and democracy in World War I, World War II, Korea, and Vietnam.

Around 500,000 Hispanics served the United States during World War II, and it is on the shoulders of these great men that the rest of us could see the future.

In the years to come, when the military service of Hispanics is viewed through the prism of history, there are certainly a number of young Hispanics whose service to this nation in this new war will distinguish themselves among great U.S. warriors in the 21st Century.

Mr. COSTA. Madam Speaker, I join my colleague Representatives DEVIN NUNES in honoring the life of Mr. Louis Flores Ruiz from Dinuba, California, who passed away peacefully at his home on Sunday, April 1, 2007. Mr. Ruiz was loyal, compassionate and worked hard to make the American Dream a reality in his life.

Mr. Louis Flores Ruiz was born on October 30, 1918 in Chihuahua, Chihuahua, Mexico. At the age of five, he and his family immigrated to the United States and after successfully serving his country by joining the U.S. Army, he was granted United States Citizenship on December 17, 1944. During his time in the Army, he served as a Military Police escorting prisoners-of-war and civilians in combat areas as well as investigating theft. His stellar service to our country made Mr. Ruiz a recipient of the Philippine Liberation Ribbon, one Bronze Service Star, an Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with Bronze Service Stars, and a Good Conduct Medal.

Upon his return from his service, Mr. Ruiz first worked as a grocery store owner, then as an insurance salesman. After that, he joined his brothers and brother-in-law in Tulare, California and co-founded a large tortilla factory where they pioneered the automation of tortilla production. An entrepreneur and innovator at heart, Mr. Ruiz went on to co-found what has become the largest frozen food Mexican manufacturing firm in the United States, the second largest Hispanic-owned manufacturing firm in the United States, and the largest manufacturing plant in the state of California. Ruiz Foods has also helped establish programs of charitable giving within the community to many organizations that enhance the quality of life for the people of the Central Valley.

In 1983 Mr. Ruiz had the distinctive honor of meeting with President Ronald Reagan and Vice President George Bush in the Rose Garden of the White House, as he accepted the U.S. Small Business Administration's Small Business Person's of the Year Award. In 2003, Mr. Ruiz had the pleasure of hosting President George W. Bush at Ruiz Foods in Dinuba, CA. Other major highlights in Mr. Ruiz's life include, placing a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington Cemetery at the request of President Reagan and being named the 14th person to the Tortilla Industry Association Hall of Fame—a distinction reserved for those who have made positive contributions to the tortilla industry through technical or significant innovations in products, equipment or ingredients while attaining business success.

Mr. Ruiz is survived by JoAnn, his wife; their daughter and son-in law, Shannon and Eric Weller; brother and sister-in-law, Carlos and Olga Ruiz; brother and sister-in-law, Edward Sr. and Dolores Ruiz; brother and sister-in-law, Oscar and Alice Ruiz, sister, Margaret Tarasas; and daughter-in-law, Luisa Ruiz; the mother of his four children, Rose; and their daughter and son-in-law, Rose Margaret and Paul Doherty; son and daughter-in-law, Fred and Mitzie Ruiz; daughter and son-in-law, Anna and Dennis January; and daughter Carrie Ruiz. Louis was also blessed with numerous nieces, nephews, godchildren, grandchildren, great grandchildren, a wonderful care provider and many dear friends.

Although the passing of Mr. Louis Flores Ruiz brings sadness to his family, friends, and community, we believe his legacy of hard work and kindness will forever live on, through those whose lives he so graciously lived.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Madam Speaker, thank you for allowing me to be here at this time.

STEM CELL RESEARCH

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. CASTOR). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY) is recognized for the time remaining until midnight.

Mr. GINGREY. Madam Speaker, I am very happy to be before my colleagues on the House floor this evening to talk about a hugely important issue that we will be dealing with once again this week in all probability.

As you know, Madam Speaker and my colleagues, I am talking about the issue of stem cell research. Last week the Senate was in session, and once again the bill that passed on the House floor in the 109th Congress, the Castle-DeGette bill, which would require Federal funding, taxpayer funding for embryonic stem cell research that was obtained by the destruction of the so-called ''throwaway embryos'' from infertility assisted reproductive technology clinics that couples say they did not want, that these were extras. Well, that bill that passed last year on this House floor passed the Senate last week, and, Madam Speaker, we will be seeing that bill very soon once again.

So, I want to be present tonight to talk about this very, very important issue with my colleagues and anyone that has an opportunity within ear distance of what we are speaking about tonight to help bring an understanding to this issue and to try to convince my colleagues that we can do this; that is, we can do stem cell research as we have been doing over the last several years.

Since President Bush's first term in office way back in 2001, we have been spending Federal tax dollars on stem cell research. But what the President said in August of 2001 was that he would not allow Federal tax dollars, your tax dollars, my tax dollars, those of my family, my parents, my constituents, to be used to fund stem cell research that resulted in the destruction of a human life.

What President Bush did say back then was that embryonic stem cell research that was ongoing, that was a result of cell lines developed from human embryos that had already been destroyed could continue; and Federal tax dollars could be used through the NIH to give grants to these researchers as they applied to use these existing cell lines, which indeed did come from the destruction of human life, as I believe life begins at conception, in these embryos that were taken from fertility clinics.

In fact, Madam Speaker, I want to emphasize that point because it is so important that our colleagues understand that, especially new Members on both sides of the aisle that weren't here for the debate last year, that got the impression maybe they and their constituents felt that this administration and the former leadership of this Congress in the 109th was spending nothing, was refusing to fund stem cell research whether it was adult or embryonic.

But the facts are really brought home by this first slide, Madam Speaker, that I want to present. And this is basically what it says: Our government invested in lifesaving research. The Federal Government has spent $161 million since 2003 on human embryonic stem cell research. As I pointed out, Madam Speaker, the President was willing to allow that funding to continue on those embryonic stem cell lines that had already been created. And there was some 60 of those stem cell lines where researchers could get a grant from the Federal Government and begin that important research on these stem cells.

Before that, no administration, no President, at no time in the 40 years that the Democrats controlled the Congress, certainly not during President Clinton's 8 years, was one dime of Federal tax dollars spent on embryonic stem cell research. Some was spent on adult stem cell research. But when it was suggested by scientists that maybe the embryonic stem cells had more potential to develop into a lot of different tissues and ultimately organs that could possibly help people with diseases, and we have all seen those television spots with celebrities in some cases, Michael J. Fox, who is suffering severely from Parkinson's disease.

□ 2315

The life of Christopher Reeves, we all know about the tragic injury and the quadriplegic state that he suffered in for many years before his tragic death last year.

When you see those things, you know, you think, well, we are not doing anything. But the truth is, and it is very important for us to understand this, that under President Bush, indeed, since 2003, some $608 million has been spent on stem cell research. And a lot of that, as I point out, because of those previous embryonic stem cell lines, a lot of it has been on embryonic stem cell research, and he is the only President that allowed that.

Now, we have great Members in both bodies and on both sides of the aisle. And I have a tremendous amount of respect, Madam Speaker, for the two Members in this body, in this House, that felt that because maybe these embryonic stem cell lines that were previously created that were being used for research would exhaust themselves, that we would use up all those stem cells. We certainly haven't, at this moment. I think there is still 20 of those stem cell lines in existence. Some were found to be contaminated. Originally, I think, back in 2001, we estimated that there were 60 of those lines, and now we are down to 20. So I can understand the concern that maybe we would exhaust that supply.

So Congressman CASTLE, a Republican Member, Congresswoman DEGETTE, a Democratic Member, along with the Senate colleagues, Senator

REID, Senator KENNEDY, Senator SPECTER, in a bipartisan way, felt the same thing. So these two bills came before the respective bodies in the 109th Congress. We did pass the Castle-DeGette bill, but the Senate failed to deal with that, until finally it was decided that they would go ahead and pass a companion bill, and then my colleagues, of course, know that the President, as he had said all along that he would veto that bill, and he did.

But what I want to make sure that the new Members understand is that people like myself, who are pro-life Members of this body, we support stem cell research, with only one exception. We don't support research that requires killing of a human life. And last year, I, along with Congressman Roscoe Bartlett, the gentleman from Maryland, a Ph.D. physiologist who knows more about this subject, I guess, than anybody in this body, and we worked together to develop an alternative bill that would allow us, we the Federal Government, to fund research programs that would use embryonic-like cells to get to the same point without destroying human life. And some of the things that were suggested in the Bartlett-Gingrey bill that we voted on, in this House, in the 109th Congress, were to obtain an embryonic cell from a stem cell from an embryo without destroying that embryo, to be able to, essentially, biopsy with a fine needle and obtain those embryonic cells without killing or even harming in any way that little embryo which had the potential, of course, for human life. We didn't want to destroy that life.

And this was part of the Roscoe Bartlett-Gingrey bill. And we felt that this was sort of a win/win situation, Madam Speaker and my colleagues, because we would be able to get to the same point without any collateral damage. And of course the collateral damage that I am talking about is the destruction of a human life.

And I want to go through a few of the posters that we have, and I want to point out, Madam Speaker, that a lot of our colleagues who are in support of destroying those human embryos, kind of indiscriminately, so that we can obtain the embryonic cells that hopefully can lead to cure of some of these diseases that I mentioned, would say in their argument, look, 75, 80 percent of the American people are in favor of this. How could we deny that overwhelming show of support when you ask the American people do they want us to do this, and therefore, we think we should, and we are going to pass this bill, over the President's objection.

Well, Madam Speaker, as we all know, in regard to a response, it really sort of depends on how you ask the question. If you ask the question, and maybe a person sitting at home gets a telephone call of a pollster, and they have been watching television, and they have just seen a clip of Michael J. Fox and the ravages of Parkinson's disease, or Christopher Reeves, as he sits there with the breathing machine, struggling to talk to the American people about his struggles, and then they get that call, and it is a pollster and they say, would you be in favor of using embryonic stem cells in research to help cure these diseases? And of course that individual may also just happen to have a family member who is in the nursing home suffering from something like Alzheimer's is an example.

And sure, I mean, Madam Speaker, if I were one of those individuals that got that call, I would say, absolutely. Absolutely. So I am surprised the number was only 75 percent. I would think it would be 95 percent, if you phrase the question in that way.

Now, on the other hand, if you said, and you prefaced that with, would you be in favor of your tax dollars going to fund this research on embryonic stem cells that might help cure one of these devastating diseases, then no doubt that number would go down a little bit. I don't know how much, but no doubt. When you start saying, well, now, it is your money. It is not somebody else's money, in the abstract. It is your money. Now, do you want to spend your money, the numbers would not be as high.

But in this, the point I am getting to, Madam Speaker, in this next slide, if you ask the question this way, and this is the only fair way to ask this scientific question, say to the individual, stem cells are the basic cells from which all of a person's tissues and organs develop. Congress is considering the question of Federal funding for experiments using stem cells from human embryos. The live embryos would be destroyed in their first week of development to obtain these cells. Do you support or oppose using your Federal tax dollars for such experiments? That is the question that should be asked. And when it was asked, in a poll conducted by the International Communications Research in May of 2006, this is what the survey said. Those who support that, 38 percent. Those who oppose it, 47.8 percent. So, Madam Speaker, that really is the crux of what we are talking about in regard to, do the American people support research using embryonic stem cells that result in the wanton, indiscriminate destruction of a human embryo, the so-called extra, and I will get into that point later in the discussion, extra, throwaway, nobody wants them, little babies.

And if you believe as I do that life begins at conception, these embryos are several days to a week, maybe even 10 days old, long past the moment of conception.

We are blessed tonight, my colleagues, to have one of our colleagues join me in this discussion. And she just happens to represent a wonderful district in North Carolina that includes the Wake Forest Baptist University and Medical Center. And I want her to share with us some of the research that is going on there at Wake Forest and the Wake Forest School of Medicine.

I had an opportunity, Madam Speaker, as I was returning to Washington yesterday, to stop at Wake Forest and to visit with Dr. Anthony Atala, who is the president of the Institute for Regenerative Medicine at Wake Forest University, and to spend about 3 hours with Dr. Atala, to have an opportunity to meet with Dr. Hatch, the president of Wake Forest University, and Dr. Richard Dean who is the dean of the medical school. And with the 150, they weren't all there, but quite a few were, Ph.D. and M.D. scientists that are working there at that great university, and some of the things that they are doing to give us an opportunity to obtain pluripotent, almost embryonic-like stem cells that will help us do this kind of research that our colleagues want us to continue, and the President wants to fund, with no collateral damage.

So at this point I want to yield to my colleague, VIRGINIA FOXX from North Carolina, to tell us a little bit more about that program and take as much time as she wants. And we will continue our dialogue. And I yield now to my good friend, VIRGINIA FOXX.

Ms. FOXX. Thank you, Dr. GINGREY, Congressman GINGREY. I appreciate your starting off this hour this evening on this important issue. I also appreciate your having gone to Wake Forest to visit the Institute for Regenerative Medicine. Some of the most important research that is happening in the area of stem cell research is occurring at the Institute for Regenerative Medicine at Wake Forest University. And I am very proud to represent them here in the Congress.

I am going to talk a little bit about what they are doing, but I want to reiterate some of the things that you have been saying. I got out my file today on this and looked back at my notes, and it was almost 2 years ago that I stood on this floor one evening, a little earlier than this, and spoke for about 40 minutes about the issue of stem cell research. And I have told this story many, many times to people, because many may wonder why we are here speaking sometimes to very few of our colleagues who are here in the Chamber. But I tell this story because it was about 9 o'clock at night, and as I said, I spoke for about 40 minutes. And when I got back to my office, the staffer said to me, you just had a call from a gentleman from Maryland who had never watched C–SPAN before, was channel surfing and saw this woman standing on the floor of the House and wondered how in the world did she get to be on the floor of the House when he thought only Members of Congress could speak on the floor of the House. And I didn't look like I was a Member of Congress, so he stopped the channel surfing and watched and listened to me talk about the issue of stem cell research and

called my office and said that he was so grateful for that because he had not understood the issue like I had explained it.

□ 2330

And he wanted to just call and thank me for that. And that has been one of the things that has kept me going and doing these Special Orders at night, thinking that even if we only reach a few people who are watching, it is important to do that, and it is particularly important on this issue.

And I think how you described, Dr. GINGREY, the way the survey question should be asked, explaining to people exactly what is going to happen as a result of the research, is very, very important because we all know you get about whatever results you want to from a survey depending on how you ask the question. But I think describing what stem cell research is, is extremely important, and talking about what is being done. You have presented some facts and figures there already, and I want to do it again. I just think that every time we talk about it, we need to talk about it.

People who are pro-life support stem cell research. I support stem cell research. You do. Every other person here who considers himself or herself a pro-lifer supports stem cell research. But what we want is research that does not require the killing of human life. That is what is important to us. We also know, as you have pointed out, that a lot of money is being spent on embryonic stem cell research. A lot of Federal dollars are being spent on that. And I think, frankly, that we are paying more than our fair share for research that many people find to be morally repugnant.

You gave some statistics. Mine are not long-term statistics. I have the 2006 numbers.

In 2006 NIH spent $38 million on embryonic stem cell research, compared to $200 million on human nonembryonic stem cell research, adult and cord blood research. That is very important research. That is the research that has given us some results in terms of curing disease. We have gotten no positive results from embryonic stem cell research, and that is the point I think that needs to be made over and over again.

And one of the reasons I am very excited about the research that Dr. Atala and his team are doing is because they are doing research that doesn't require the destruction of human life. Dr. Atala, who came to Wake Forest from Harvard and brought a large team, as you said, with him, is a tissue engineering specialist, and he has found that amniotic fluid stem cells have those pluripotent properties that you pointed out earlier and grow as fast as embryonic stem cells. And I know that he talked to you about the research, particularly in growing bladders, that has occurred there and the tremendously positive response that he has gotten.

Mr. GINGREY. Reclaiming my time, on that point for just a second, Dr. Atala's research in regard to amniotic fluid cells, which that study was published just this January of 2007 in the journal Nature Biotechnology, was an amazing accomplishment in what Dr. Atala says. And I know this, as an OBGYN physician from the great State of Georgia in my prior life where I practiced for 26 years, delivering 5,200 babies. What Dr. Atala is doing, you can obtain this amniotic fluid from a pregnant mom, pregnant woman, in the process of trying to make sure that she is not carrying a baby that has a genetic defect. A lot of times this is done if a woman is a little older. She is not old at age 35 but is considered a little older for childbearing and the increased risk of genetic defects. So a lot of women do have this amniocentesis done. And if not an amniocentesis, a biopsy actually can be taken of a part of the placenta through the cervix as early as 9 weeks of the pregnancy or obtain the amniotic fluid with a very fine needle as early as 10 or 11 weeks of the pregnancy.

So I just wanted to point that out to my colleague that we are just talking about a few weeks more mature in getting those cells, which are almost embryonic because they are so early.

Ms. FOXX. Right. Well, thank you again for pointing out more of the scientific evidence that we have. And I think it is very important that a person with your background as an OBGYN physician can understand this issue so well and explain it. I think that all the physicians on our side of the aisle are very strong pro-lifers and are working very hard to get the information out about this issue.

As you point out, those stem cells, those coming from the umbilical cord and those coming from the placenta and the amniotic fluid, have shown tremendous results.

The other thing that the media does not point out and that people who are proposing that we go to embryonic stem cell research with government funding, they don't point out the fact that over 70 diseases have been treated by adult stem cells and zero treatments have come out of embryonic stem cell research, even though embryonic stem cell research just passed the 25-year mark. For over 25 years, scientists have been looking into using embryonic stem cells, and we have really gotten nothing but negative results from that, and we have gotten tremendously positive results from adult stem cell research.

So that is why it is so important that we always distinguish between adult stem cell research and embryonic stem cell research. We must do that when we talk about it. Again, it is like what you have said, pointing out the questionnaires and the surveys, making sure that people get asked the right question and that we describe the issue very, very well. We need very much to educate the American public on this issue so that they won't think that the President is being very arbitrary when he vetoes the bill and that we are not being arbitrary when we uphold that veto, which I hope that we will do. And we need to explain to people the ethical questions that we are dealing with.

As I pointed out in my comments a couple of years ago, and I want to say it again, never in this country have we sanctioned research that would harm other human beings. There was the research done in the 1930s that was wrong. We have condemned it. Since that time we have had very, very strong and ethical programs to protect adults from diseases that would cause them harm and from diseases that would cause them death. And yet people don't see the same problem when they are dealing with embryos, and we have to do that. We must do that. We are crossing an ethical Rubicon when we sanction using embryos for research or creating embryos for this research. I think that it is really going over the line, and we must tell people that, and we must have them understand the long-term implications of that for our society and for the human race. We don't believe in doing that in this country.

□ 2340

I think that we have to be very careful again that we explain we can get better results from doing things ethically than we are going to get from doing things unethically, and we don't start down a slippery slope of treating human beings in the wrong way.

I want to thank you again for coming tonight and starting this discussion on this very, very important issue. I hope there is at least one gentleman out there or one person out there, whether they are in Maryland or some other State, who is watching this for the first time and understanding the issue and the distinction that we are making between doing ethical research on adult stem cells and what most of us consider is unethical research on embryos, which will destroy them; and that we can continue to use funds to support programs like Dr. Tony Atala's research at Wake Forest University and other places where they are seeing excellent results. And if we take that money away, we may be denying the kinds of cures that many people say they want to get; but by ignoring the adult stem cell research victories, we may be slowing up the great results that we could get. And I yield back to you.

Mr. GINGREY. I thank the gentlelady from North Carolina who I said represents Wake Forest University and Dr. Atala and his team there.

And her closing comments, Madam Speaker, segue really into my next slide in this poster that I've got. What Ms. FOXX said is we have to not go down that slippery slope. We have to consider the collateral damage of what we do. We have to be very, very careful that we are not playing God. And I say

that with all honest, sincerity, that we have an opportunity to do ethical stem cell research; and by that I simply mean balancing life and science.

Ms. FOXX talked about a number of the techniques. She talked about obtaining stem cells from umbilical cord blood. She talked about obtaining adult stem cells from bone marrow or from blood. And she talked about the many successes utilizing research with adult stem cell research. And the cures, I think she mentioned 70 different diseases, including Type I diabetes. There was just a study from Brazil where 13 of 15 Type I juvenile, we call it, it is not always in children, but a lot of children get juvenile diabetes, the severe kind of diabetes that almost always requires insulin therapy, and even with good control, leads to devastating complications, such as blindness, kidney failure, the need for a kidney transplant. Thirteen out of 15 of these Type I diabetics in Brazil who were treated with adult stem cells were found to be months later developing insulin on their own. These stem cells went to the pancreas and became the so-called islet cells, and now 13 out of 15 of those patients are not having to use insulin at all to control their diabetes.

So some of the ethical ways. And then of course we talked about Dr. Atala, who happens also to be chairman of the Department of Urology and operates every day on what you might call routine things, but at the same time is spending a lot of his effort running the Institute for Regenerative Medicine, where they are studying ways to obtain, through amniotic fluid, cells that are neither completely embryonic nor completely adult, but they have qualities that are very similar to both, in being similar to embryonic cells, those that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle mostly, although some Republicans supported the Castle-DeGette as well, the need to use these cells. Well, if you can get the amniotic cells, they can double every 36 hours just like the embryonic cells that we are talking about in destroying a human embryo. But also, similar to an adult cell, they do not form tumors. And that is one of the huge problems that the research on embryonic cells has resulted in.

How do you solve that problem? Well, with Dr. Atala's research, we wouldn't have that problem. These cells would double every 36 hours, and they don't form tumors. The best of both worlds.

I see my colleague from Texas has joined us. He is a fellow insomniac, although it is a little earlier out in Texas and maybe his constituents are still up, certainly some are in California; but it is great to have him with me tonight.

At this point I would like to yield to the gentleman from east Texas and let him join in on this very, very important topic.

Mr. GOHMERT. Well, I appreciate my good friend from Georgia, the good doctor, yielding.

And I, like our friend Ms. FOXX, appreciate so much the time you spent in explaining this, Dr. GINGREY.

You know, when you and I discussed this, and if we could exchange in a colloquy here for a moment, but you and I discussed this back at the time when we were having a vote on this matter.

I came to the floor very excited because this amniotic fluid stem cell information was just exciting because it didn't grow tumors. It wouldn't require throwing away embryos. That was exciting news. And I just felt in my heart, you know, we just get this information to the floor and let those folks, most of them on the other side of the aisle, but all the people who are saying we have got to dispose of embryos, we have got to kill these unborn children in order to get the stem cells that are embryonic stem cells. Here is this great research, the great information that shows these are better than embryonic, these amniotic stem cells. And that is exciting. Nobody has to die to provide stem cells for anybody else to live. We got to the floor, and my heart was broken. They didn't care. They didn't care.

Mr. GINGREY. If the gentleman would yield, and I really so much appreciate him pointing that out.

I think what the gentleman is saying is, no tumor formation, no collateral damage, no destruction of life, lives that could be adopted and become a ''snowflake'' baby, we have a slide later on to show. But I wanted to mention to my colleague, and I like his comments on this. In addition to the work that Dr. Atala is doing at Wake Forest, and I didn't know this, this is the last year, I say to the gentleman from Texas, but in my great State of Georgia, at the University of Georgia, a Ph.D. researcher, Dr. Steve Stice, has a project whereby embryonic stem cells from embryos can be obtained if it is an embryo that once it is rethawed and there is maybe an attempt to place that in a mother's womb, but if you look at it under the microscope, he can tell if that embryo has the potential for further generation. It is not dead, but you might equate it to, say, a person who has no brainwave activity, the other extreme of life, and has no chance of recovery. Well, Dr. Stice, his research would be to obtain those embryonic stem cells from those embryos so you wouldn't be destroying human life.

And I yield back to my colleague because I wanted to make him aware of that. Our Senator, our junior Senator, who is so prescient and has a way of solving problems when you've got a divide like this, Senator JOHNNY ISAKSON, along with Senator NORM COLEMAN from Minnesota, introduced a bill in the Senate last week and it passed overwhelmingly. I think it got 75 votes. And I hope that we will have an opportunity to vote on that bill in this House if, Madam Speaker, Ms. PELOSI, will allow that to come to voice for a vote; because I can't see why any Member, Republican or Democrat, pro-life, pro-choice, would not want to support that, where it is a win-win situation. I yield back.

Mr. GOHMERT. Thank you. I appreciate the gentleman from Georgia yielding.

And I know we both share that hope that springs eternal in the human breast, that this is beginning to soak in. In fact, you know, you wonder who is listening, who is paying attention. Are other people getting it? I was talking to seven friends that are here from Smith County with Sky Ranch, a Christian camp, and every one of them get it. They understand.

□ 2350

They know the value of human life, and they are passing that on. And those with whom they deal, they are getting it. So the message is getting out here. And I really believe with the optimism that my dear friend from Georgia has and that we have, that there are so many good people in this body, and I was so pleased to learn that when I got here, that I believe in the end they will get it. They will understand we don't have to make that terribly difficult, unethical decision to end some life in order to take something from that one because we have made the philosophical decision that we think that this person means more to us than this other person, so we take this organ, we take those stem cells and kill them to allow this one to live, and we shouldn't have to go there. And the amniotic fluid stem cells I think provide that kind of excitement.

I thank the gentleman from Georgia and appreciate your interest and care and love for life, all life, even life on both sides of the aisle and for what you are doing here.

Mr. GINGREY. Judge Gohmert, I thank you for your kind remarks; and of course you are here not to praise me but to praise God and life and the sanctity of life at the extremes, the embryo and the senior citizens as well.

My colleagues, Madam Speaker, I cannot over-emphasize the point as I look at this and reference you to this next slide. No lives, no lives are thrown away.

We have heard, all of our colleagues have heard people speak on this floor and say there are 400,000 of these extra throw-away embryos available for this research, and they are going to be and I have even heard people say, thrown down the toilet, that they are garbage. I have heard the expression, and I know this is appalling, Madam Speaker, but to hear the expression that it is nothing but medical waste and they are going to be thrown away anyway, I know that gives many of us and you and me and many of my colleagues chill bumps to think about that.

But the point is of these 400,000, those are not all extra and scheduled for the trash can and available for the harvesting of embryonic stem cells. The fact is in April 2002, there were a total of 396,000 embryos that had been placed

in storage, frozen for possible later use. Of those, and that is what this slide points out, 88 percent of these frozen embryos, in fact close to 350,000, are being held for future family building by the donors. They have not completed their family. Maybe they have not gotten pregnant yet. They have not conceived. So 88 percent are going to remain preserved in a frozen state so that hopefully these infertile couples will hopefully at some point in the future become parents.

And only 2.8 percent, about 8,700 of the frozen embryos, are designated for destruction. Couples a lot of times are asked the question: Well, would you like to give this baby up for destruction so that we can get these embryonic stem cells, or would you rather just throw them away? Well, half of the people that own those embryos would say for whatever reason, maybe the same reason that folks sometimes say no, I don't want an autopsy on my loved one; or no, I don't want to donate an organ when I am in a massive automobile accident and I am brain dead. A lot of people will say, look, I don't want my embryo, my child, to be put in a blender for the sake of obtaining those embryonic stem cells. I would rather it be thrown away.

So this business of 400,000 available, it is nothing near that amount. It is very important for people and our colleagues to understand and to put that in perspective.

Madam Speaker, I know our time is running short. We are rapidly approaching the time that this body will be adjourning for the day, a busy day. And I have one poster in particular that I want my colleagues to take a close look at. This is the one that I am presenting now with these precious children.

These were frozen embryos. These were part of the so-called medical waste that was going to be thrown away; or, indeed, put in a blender and churned up, destroying these little lives. Thank God the ones on this poster were adopted by infertile couples, with the permission from the couples who owned those embryos. These are what we refer to as the snowflake babies.

Last year when we were debating this issue, many of them, the parents went out of their way to take time off work, to buy an airline ticket and fly up here with these toddlers, some months old, and some a few years old. And I saw at the White House, as President Bush vetoed this bill last year, he was holding a set of snowflake baby twins. Indeed, throw away medical waste. I think not.

These little children on this poster look a lot like my six grandchildren. I have three precious granddaughters and three precious grandsons, and I think how precious life is.

We need to think about this very, very closely. I want to ask my colleagues this question, just like the survey, the polling done and you ask the question in the right way: some of us are pro-life. Some of us are pro-choice. Some of us are Democrats, some of us are Republicans. But if we have an opportunity to obtain embryonic stem cells, maybe they do have more potential than the adult stem cells. I don't know. I do know they have this problem with tumor formation. But if the argument is our hands have been tied, although we have funded embryonic stem cell research on those existing cell lines, but if the opportunity is there and we considered that tonight and talked about Dr. Atala's work on obtaining nearly embryonic, nearly totipotential cells, we also can do things like biopsy an embryo, that is called pregenetic diagnosis, and we do that all the time now.

If an embryo is from a family that has a congenital defect like hemophilia or muscular dystrophy, you can biopsy that embryo to make sure that condition does not exist. If you can do that without harming the embryo, and it has been done thousands of times, we ought to be able to do the same technique and get embryonic stem cells. It takes some research.

If we can continue to fund scientists like Dr. Stice at the University of Georgia in regard to using those essentially brain dead embryos that don't have any potential for further life and get those embryonic stem cells, we don't have to get into this argument, Madam Speaker, between the pro-life and pro-choice community.

Isn't that, my colleagues, the way to go? I hope there is an opportunity this year in the 110th Congress to vote on that bill and give the President something that he can sign and get back to us and make it law.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. HIGGINS (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for today and the balance of the week.

Mr. HILL (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for today on account of official business in the district.

Mr. WALSH of New York (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today and the balance of the week on account of family reasons.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. PALLONE) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Ms. KILPATRICK, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. WYNN, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. PALLONE, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. NORTON, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. LEE, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. WATERS, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. PAYNE, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. WOOLSEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. MCDERMOTT, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DEFAZIO, for 5 minutes, today.

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. KUCINICH, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. HOLT, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. POE) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. MORAN of Kansas, for 5 minutes, April 18.

Ms. FOXX, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. JONES of North Carolina, for 5 minutes, April 23 and 24.

(The following Member (at her own request) to revise and extend her remarks and include extraneous material:)

Ms. KAPTUR, for 5 minutes, today.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. GINGREY. Madam Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at midnight), the House adjourned until today, Wednesday, April 18, 2007, at 10 a.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 8 of rule XII, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

1076. A letter from the Secretary, Department of the Treasury, transmitting a 6-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to persons who commit, threaten to commit, or support terrorism that was declared in Executive Order 13224 of September 23, 2001, pursuant to 50 U.S.C. 1641(c); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

1077. A letter from the Secretary, Department of the Treasury, transmitting the semiannual report detailing payments made to Cuba as a result of the provision of telecommunications services pursuant to Department of the Treasury specific licenses, pursuant to 22 U.S.C. 6032; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

1078. A letter from the Assistant Legal Adviser for Treaty Affairs, Department of State, transmitting copies of international agreements, other than treaties, entered into by the United States, pursuant to 1 U.S.C. 112b; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

1079. A letter from the Assistant Legal Adviser for Treaty Affairs, Department of State, transmitting copies of international agreements, other than treaties, entered into by the United States, pursuant to 1 U.S.C. 112b; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

1080. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting a report entitled ''Supporting Democracy and Human Rights: The U.S. Record 2006-2007,'' pursuant to Public Law 107-228, section 665; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

1081. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting pursuant to section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act, certification regarding the proposed license for the export of defense articles and services to the Government of Russia (Transmittal No. DDTC 036-07); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

1082. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting pursuant to section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act, certification regarding the proposed license for the export of defense articles and services to the Government of Vietnam (Transmittal No. DDTC 016-07); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

1083. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting pursuant to section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act, certification regarding the proposed license for the export of defense articles and services to the Government of Japan (Transmittal No. DDTC 037-07); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

1084. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting pursuant to section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act, certification regarding the proposed license for the export of defense articles and services to the Governments of Russia, Ukraine, and Norway (Transmittal No. DDTC 035-07); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

1085. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting a report mandated in the Participation of Taiwan in the World Health Organization Act, 2004 (Pub. L. 108-235), Section 1(c); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

1086. A letter from the Deputy CHCO/Director, OHCM, Department of Energy, transmitting a report pursuant to the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

1087. A letter from the Deputy CHCO/Director, OHCM, Department of Energy, transmitting a report pursuant to the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

1088. A letter from the Deputy CHCO/Director, OHCM, Department of Energy, transmitting a report pursuant to the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

1089. A letter from the Deputy CHCO/Director, OHCM, Department of Energy, transmitting a report pursuant to the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

1090. A letter from the Deputy CHCO/Director, HCM, Department of Energy, transmitting a report pursuant to the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

1091. A letter from the Deputy CHCO/Director, HCM, Department of Energy, transmitting a report pursuant to the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

1092. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Energy, transmitting the Department's determination and findings of the site at Yucca Mountain for the development of a geologic repository for spent nuclear fuel and high level radioactive waste, pursuant to 41 U.S.C. 253(c)(7); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

1093. A letter from the Director, Office of Civil Rights and Diversity, Department of Energy, transmitting the Department's annual report for Fiscal Year 2006, Fiscal Year 2005, and Fiscal Years 1999-2004 prepared in accordance with Section 203 of the Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act of 2002 (No FEAR Act), Public Law 107-174; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

1094. A letter from the Assistant Administrator, OARM, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting a report pursuant to the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

1095. A letter from the Board Members, Railroad Retirement Board, transmitting the Board's annual report for FY 2006 prepared in accordance with Section 203 of the Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act of 2002 (No FEAR Act), Public Law 107-174; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

1096. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; McDonnell Douglas MD-11 and -11F Airplanes [Docket No. FAA-2006-25089; Directorate Identifier 2006-NM-091-AD; Amendment 39-14873; AD 2007-01-02] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received March 15, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1097. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Model A300 B2 and B4 Series Airplanes [Docket No. FAA-2006-25670; Directorate Identifier 2006-NM-027-AD; Amendment 39-14868; AD 2006-26-10] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received March 15, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1098. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Stemme GmbH & Co. KG Model S10-VT Gliders [FAA-2006-26518; Directorate Identifier 2006-CE-84-AD; Amendment 39-14874; AD 2007-01-03] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received March 15, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1099. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Sikorsky Aircraft Corporation Model S-61L, N, R, and NM Helicopters [Docket No. FAA-2006-25824; Directorate Identifier 2004-SW-23-AD; Amendment 39-14876; AD 2007-01-05] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received March 15, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1100. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Boeing Model 707-100 Long Body, -100B Long Body, -100B Short Body, -E3F, -300, -300B, and -300C Series Airplanes; Model 727-100 and -200 Series Airplanes; Model 737-200, -200C, -300, -400, and -500 Series Airplanes; Model 747-100B, 747-200B, 747-200C, 747-200F, 747-300, 747-400, 747-400D, 747SR, and 747SP Series Airplanes; Model 757-200 and 757-200PF Series Airplanes; and Model 767-200 and -300 Series Airplanes; Equipped with Observer or Attendant Seats [Docket No. FAA-2006-24948; Directorate Identifier 2005-NM-030-AD; Amendment 39-14871; AD 2006-26-13] (RIN: 2120-AA64) Received March 15, to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1101. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; BAE Systems (Operations) Limited Model BAe 146 and Avro 146-RJ Airplanes [Docket No. FAA-2006-25851; Directorate Identifier 2006-NM-133-AD; Amendment 39-14872; AD 2007-01-01] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received March 15, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1102. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Raytheon Aircraft Company Model 390 Airplanes [Docket No. FAA-2006-25745; Directorate Identifier 2006-CE-47-AD; Amendment 39-14866; AD 2006-26-08] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received March 15, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1103. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; PZL-Bielsko Model SZD-50-3 ''Puchacz'' Gliders [Docket No. FAA-2006-25810; Directorate Identifier 2006-CE-49-AD; Amendment 39-14838; AD 2006-24-09] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received March 15, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1104. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Air Tractor, Inc. Models AT-501, AT-502, AT-502A, AT-502B, and AT-503A Airplanes [Docket No. FAA-2004-19961; Directorate Identifier 2004-CE-48-AD; Amendment 39-14839; AD 2006-24-10] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received March 15, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1105. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; International Aero Engines AG (IAE) V2522-A5, V2524-A5, V2527-A5, V2527E-A5, V2527M-A5, V2530-A5, and V2533-A5 Turbofan Engines. [Docket No. FAA-2006-26013; Directorate Identifier 2003-NE-21-AD; Amendment 39-14841; AD 2006-25-01] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received March 15, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1106. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Raytheon Aircraft Company Models 1900, 1900C, and 1900D Airplanes [Docket No. FAA-2006-26258; Directorate Identifier 2006-CE-67-AD; Amendment 39-14840; AD 2006-24-11] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received March 15, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1107. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Model A330, A340-200, and A340-300 Series Airplanes [Docket No. FAA-2006-25389; Directorate Identifier 2006-NM-059-AD; Amendment 39-14870; AD 2006-26-12] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received March 15, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1108. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Turbomeca Model Arrius 2B1, 2B1A, 2B2, Turboshaft Engines [Docket No. FAA-2006-26138; Directorate Identifier 2006-NE-38-AD; Amendment 39-14865; AD 2006-26-07] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received March 15, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1109. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives ; Boeing Model 737-200, -300, -400, and -500 Series Airplanes [Docket No. FAA-2005-22629; Directorate Identifier 2005-NM-089-AD; Amendment 39-14867; AD 2006-26-09] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received March 15, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1110. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Raytheon Aircraft Company Models C90A, B200, B200C, B300, and B300C Airplanes [Docket No. FAA-2006-25157; Directorate Identifier 2006-CE-34-AD; Amendment 39-14814; AD 2006-23-02] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received March 15, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1111. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Bombardier Model DHC-8-400 Series Airplanes [Docket No. FAA-2006-25723;

Directorate Identifier 2006-NM-007-AD; Amendment 39-14858; AD 2006-25-17] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received March 15, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1112. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Bombardier Model CL-600-1A11 (CL-600), CL-600-2A12 (CL-601), and CL-600-2B16 (CL-601-3A and CL-601-3R) Airplanes [Docket No. FAA-2006-25645; Directorate Identifier 2005-NM-201-AD; Amendment 39-14857; AD 2006-25-16] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received March 15, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1113. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Boeing Model 777 Airplanes [Docket No. FAA-2006-23817; Directorate Identifier 2005-NM-176-AD; Amendment 39-14846; AD 2006-25-05] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received March 15, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1114. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Columbia Aircraft Manufacturing Models LC41-550FG and LC42-550FG Airplanes [Docket No. FAA-2006-26400; Directorate Identifier 2006-CE-71-AD; Amendment 39-14948; AD 2006-25-08] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received March 15, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1115. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Model A300 Airplanes [Docket No. FAA-2006-25423; Directorate Identifier 2006-NM-029-AD; Amendment 39-14845; AD 2006-25-04] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received March 15, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1116. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Agusta S.p.A. Model AB139 Helicopters [Docket No. FAA-2006-25703; Directorate Identifier 2006-SW-20-AD; Amendment 39-14747; AD 2006-17-51] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received March 15, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows:

Mr. RAHALL: Committee on Natural Resources. H.R. 886. A bill to enhance ecosystem protection and the range of outdoor opportunities protected by statute in the Skykomish River valley of the State of Washington by designating certain lower-elevation Federal lands as wilderness, and for other purposes (Rept. 110–89). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union.

Mr. RAHALL: Committee on Natural Resources. H.R. 309. A bill to direct the Secretary of the Interior to establish a demonstration program to facilitate landscape restoration programs within certain units of the National Park System established by law to preserve and interpret resources associated with American history, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 110–90). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union.

Mr. RAHALL: Committee on Natural Resources. H.R. 865. A bill to grant rights-of-way for electric transmission lines over certain Native allotments in the State of Alaska (Rept. 110–91). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union.

Mr. RAHALL: Committee on Natural Resources. H.R. 285. A bill to establish the Steel Industry National Historic Site in the State of Pennsylvania; with an amendment (Rept. 110–92). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union.

Mr. RAHALL: Committee on Natural Resources. H.R. 249. A bill to restore the prohibition on the commercial sale and slaughter of wild free-roaming horses and burros (Rept. 110–93). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union.

Mr. RAHALL: Committee on Natural Resources. H.R. 162. A bill to adjust the boundary of the Barataria Preserve Unit of the Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve in the State of Louisiana, and for other purposes (Rept. 110–94). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union.

Mr. RAHALL: Committee on Natural Resources. H.R. 319. A bill to establish the Journey Through Hallowed Ground National Heritage Area, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 110–95). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union.

Mr. McGOVERN: Committee on Rules. House Resolution 301. Resolution providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1257) to amend the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 to provide shareholders with an advisory vote on executive compensation (Rept. 110–96). Referred to the House Calendar.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida: Committee on Rules. House Resolution 302. Resolution providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1361) to improve the disaster relief programs of the Small Business Administration, and for other purposes (Rept. 110–97). Referred to the House Calendar.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. LAMBORN (for himself and Mr. BUYER):

H.R. 1863. A bill to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to conduct at two-year pilot program to use a mobile processing unit to perform certain services of the Department of Veterans Affairs; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. LAMBORN (for himself and Mr. BUYER):

H.R. 1864. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide for the automated processing of veterans disability compensation claims; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia (for himself, Mr. TURNER, Mr. TOWNS, Mr. MORAN of Virginia, and Mr. BILBRAY):

H.R. 1865. A bill to amend title 31, United States Code, to allow certain local tax debt to be collected through the reduction of Federal tax refunds; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. CUELLAR (for himself and Mr. AKIN):

H.R. 1866. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide payment under part A of the Medicare Program on a reasonable cost basis for anesthesia services furnished by an anesthesiologist in certain rural hospitals in the same manner as payments are provided for anesthesia services furnished by anesthesiologist assistants and certified registered nurse anesthetists in such hospitals; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BAIRD (for himself, Mr. EHLERS, Mr. GORDON, Ms. HOOLEY, Mr. BILBRAY, Mr. MCNERNEY, and Mr. HILL):

H.R. 1867. A bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal years 2008, 2009, and 2010 for the National Science Foundation, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Science and Technology.

By Mr. WU (for himself, Mr. GINGREY, Mr. GORDON, Mr. HALL of Texas, Mr. MITCHELL, and Mr. EHLERS):

H.R. 1868. A bill to authorize appropriations for the National Institute of Standards and Technology for fiscal years 2008, 2009, and 2010, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Science and Technology.

By Ms. VELÁZQUEZ:

H.R. 1869. A bill to enhance the ability of community banks to foster economic growth and serve their communities, boost small businesses, increase individual savings, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services, and in addition to the Committees on Ways and Means, and Small Business, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. TOWNS (for himself, Mr. WAXMAN, Mrs. MALONEY of New York, Mr. KUCINICH, and Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut):

H.R. 1870. A bill to amend title 31, United States Code, to prohibit delinquent Federal debtors from being eligible to enter into Federal contracts, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mrs. GILLIBRAND (for herself, Mrs. BONO, Mr. HIGGINS, Mr. MCNERNEY, Mrs. BOYDA of Kansas, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mr. BARROW, Mr. PETERSON of Minnesota, Mr. LINCOLN DAVIS of Tennessee, Mr. PATRICK MURPHY of Pennsylvania, Mr. ARCURI, Mr. BOSWELL, Mr. SHULER, Mr. ELLSWORTH, Mr. ALTMIRE, Mr. WILSON of Ohio, Mr. CARNEY, Mr. MCNULTY, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Ms. SUTTON, Mr. MAHONEY of Florida, Ms. HARMAN, Ms. CASTOR, Mr. WALZ of Minnesota, Ms. CLARKE, Mr. HARE, Mr. ISRAEL, Mr. CROWLEY, Mr. HINCHEY, Mr. DONNELLY, Mr. YARMUTH, Mr. LOEBSACK, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. PERLMUTTER, Mr. COURTNEY, and Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia):

H.R. 1871. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to increase, expand the availability of, and repeal the sunset with respect to, the dependent care tax credit; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia:

H.R. 1872. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to give investigators and prosecutors the tools they need to combat public corruption; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. BRALEY of Iowa (for himself, Mr. CHABOT, and Ms. VELÁZQUEZ):

H.R. 1873. A bill to reauthorize the programs and activities of the Small Business Administration relating to procurement, and

for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business.

By Mr. ANDREWS:

H.R. 1874. A bill to amend chapter 44 of title 18, United States Code, to require microstamping of all firearms manufactured in or imported into the United States, and ballistics testing of all firearms in the custody of the Federal Government; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. BOREN (for himself and Mr. SULLIVAN):

H.R. 1875. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to permanently extend the Indian employment credit and the depreciation rules for property used predominantly within an Indian reservation; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. ANDREWS (for himself and Mr. LEWIS of Kentucky):

H.R. 1876. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exclude from gross income of individual taxpayers discharges of indebtedness attributable to certain forgiven residential mortgage obligations; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BECERRA (for himself, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. EHLERS, and Mr. SHIMKUS):

H.R. 1877. A bill to authorize the cancellation of Perkins Loans for students who perform public service as librarians in low-income schools and public libraries; to the Committee on Education and Labor.

By Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida (for herself, Mr. CONYERS, and Mr. ETHERIDGE):

H.R. 1878. A bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to permit States, at their option, to require certain individuals to present satisfactory documentary evidence of proof of citizenship or nationality for purposes of eligibility for Medicaid, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. CARTER:

H.R. 1879. A bill to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to convey the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center located in Marlin, Texas, to the State of Texas; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Ms. DELAURO (for herself, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, Mr. TOWNS, Mr. MCDERMOTT, Ms. MATSUI, Mr. SHAYS, Mr. HINOJOSA, Mr. HONDA, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, and Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut):

H.R. 1880. A bill to amend the National and Community Service Act of 1990 to establish a Summer of Service State grant program, a Summer of Service national direct grant program, and related national activities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and Labor.

By Mr. DOYLE (for himself, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. ENGEL, and Mr. PICKERING):

H.R. 1881. A bill to improve support and services for individuals with autism and their families; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. EVERETT (for himself, Mr. BONNER, Mr. ROGERS of Alabama, Mr. CRAMER, and Mr. BACHUS):

H.R. 1882. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to authorize agricultural producers to establish and contribute to tax-exempt farm risk management accounts in lieu of obtaining federally subsidized crop insurance or noninsured crop assistance, to provide for contributions to such accounts by the Secretary of Agriculture, to specify the situations in which amounts may be paid to producers from such accounts, and to limit the total amount of such distributions to a producer during a taxable year, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on Agriculture, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. FOSSELLA:

H.R. 1883. A bill to codify procedures regarding naturalization ceremonies conducted by the Secretary of Homeland Security; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. GORDON (for himself and Mr. PITTS):

H.R. 1884. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide for the participation of optometrists in the National Health Service Corps scholarship and loan repayment programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. GRIJALVA (for himself and Ms. GIFFORDS):

H.R. 1885. A bill to establish the Santa Cruz Valley National Heritage Area in the State of Arizona, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. HINCHEY:

H.R. 1886. A bill to prevent public financing of oil or gas field development projects, surveying or extraction activities, processing facilities, pipelines, or terminals, or other oil and gas production or distribution operations or facilities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services, and in addition to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. HINCHEY:

H.R. 1887. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend the financing for Superfund for purposes of cleanup activities with respect to those Superfund sites for which removal and remedial action is estimated to cost more than $50 million, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committees on Energy and Commerce, and Transportation and Infrastructure, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. HOEKSTRA (for himself, Mr. BAIRD, Mr. WALSH of New York, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. AKIN, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. KNOLLENBERG, Mr. CLAY, Mr. MOORE of Kansas, Mr. CHABOT, Mr. ROGERS of Michigan, Mr. EHLERS, Mr. GARY G. MILLER of California, Mr. MCHUGH, Mr. UPTON, Mr. SOUDER, Mr. GILLMOR, Mr. MCCOTTER, Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky, Mr. GERLACH, Mr. DOYLE, Mr. KELLER, Mr. CALVERT, Mrs. MUSGRAVE, Mr. PLATTS, Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania, Mr. GONZALEZ, and Mr. LARSON of Connecticut):

H.R. 1888. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a shorter recovery period for the depreciation of certain systems installed in nonresidential buildings; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. HOLDEN (for himself, Mr. LOBIONDO, Mr. ELLSWORTH, Mr. MURTHA, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Ms. KILPATRICK, Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, Mr. MILLER of Florida, and Mr. LAHOOD):

H.R. 1889. A bill to require prisons and other correctional facilities holding Federal prisoners under a contract with the Federal Government to make the same information available to the public that Federal prisons and correctional facilities are required to do by law; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. HOLDEN (for himself, Mr. LOBIONDO, Mr. ELLSWORTH, Mr. MURTHA, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Ms. KILPATRICK, Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, Mr. MILLER of Florida, and Mr. LAHOOD):

H.R. 1890. A bill to ensure that the incarceration of inmates is not provided by private contractors or vendors and that persons charged with or convicted of an offense against the United States shall be housed in facilities managed and maintained by Federal, State, or local governments; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. KENNEDY (for himself, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Mr. LANGEVIN, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California, Mr. GONZALEZ, and Mr. COHEN):

H.R. 1891. A bill to promote the development of disaster plans that will protect the maximum number of citizens; to foster public trust, confidence, and cooperation with these plans; and to encourage greater public participation in homeland security by allowing the American people to have a direct and influential role in developing and modifying community disaster preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation plans in collaboration with government officials, emergency managers, health authorities, and professional responders, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and in addition to the Committees on Energy and Commerce, and Homeland Security, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. LIPINSKI (for himself, Mr. MCINTYRE, Mr. SHULER, Mr. ELLSWORTH, Mr. MELANCON, and Mr. DONNELLY):

H.R. 1892. A bill to direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to provide for the establishment and maintenance of a National Amniotic and Placental Stem Cell Bank; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mrs. LOWEY:

H.R. 1893. A bill to amend the Federal Hazardous Substances Act to require the inclusion of warning labels on Internet and catalogue advertising of certain toys and games; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York:

H.R. 1894. A bill to provide for the construction and renovation of child care facilities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York:

H.R. 1895. A bill to improve the tracking of stolen firearms and firearms used in a crime, to allow more frequent inspections of gun dealers to ensure compliance with Federal gun law, to enhance the penalties for gun trafficking, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota (for herself, Mr. OBERSTAR, and Mr. ELLISON):

H.R. 1896. A bill to amend the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act to fully fund 40 percent of the average per pupil expenditure for programs under part B of that Act; to the Committee on Education and Labor.

By Mr. PAUL:

H.R. 1897. A bill to protect the second amendment rights of individuals to carry firearms in units of the National Park System, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. PAUL:

H.R. 1898. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow individuals a credit against income tax for medical expenses for dependents; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. PAUL:

H.R. 1899. A bill to amend part A of title XVIII of the Social Security Act to clarify that facilities designated as critical access hospitals may use beds certified for such hospitals for assisted living; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. RAHALL:

H.R. 1900. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to extend eligibility for pension benefits under laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to veterans who received an expeditionary medal during a period of military service other than a period of war; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. RAHALL:

H.R. 1901. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to extend eligibility for pension benefits under laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to veterans who served during certain periods of time in specified locations; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. RUSH (for himself, Mr. WAXMAN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Mr. DOYLE, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, and Mr. DINGELL):

H.R. 1902. A bill to prohibit brand name drug companies from compensating generic drug companies to delay the entry of a generic drug into the market, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. TOWNS:

H.R. 1903. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act and Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 to require that group and individual health insurance coverage and group health plans provide coverage for reconstructive prosthetic urology surgery if they provide coverage for prostate cancer treatment; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Education and Labor, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mrs. WILSON of New Mexico (for herself and Mr. UDALL of New Mexico):

H.R. 1904. A bill to provide assistance to the State of New Mexico for the development of comprehensive State water plans, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York (for herself, Mr. PLATTS, Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California, Mr. MICHAUD, and Mr. ELLISON):

H. Con. Res. 112. Concurrent resolution supporting the goals and ideas of a National Child Care Worthy Wage Day; to the Committee on Education and Labor.

By Mr. CARNEY (for himself, Mr. JONES of North Carolina, Mr. HOLDEN, Mr. REYES, Mr. MELANCON, Mr. MEEHAN, and Mr. DOYLE):

H. Con. Res. 113. Concurrent resolution recognizing the important contributions and tremendous potential of military ground robotics and expressing the support of the Congress for continued funding and development of Unmanned Ground Vehicles; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. CLEAVER (for himself, Mr. RANGEL, and Mr. BLUNT):

H. Con. Res. 114. Concurrent resolution encouraging recognition of February 13th of each year for the founding for the Negro Leagues in Kansas City, Missouri; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. HASTINGS of Florida (for himself, Ms. KAPTUR, and Mr. LEVIN):

H. Con. Res. 115. Concurrent resolution urging all sides to the current political crisis in Ukraine to act responsibly and use dialogue to resolve the crisis and ensure a free and transparent democratic system in Ukraine based on the rule of law; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. MCDERMOTT (for himself and Mr. WELLER):

H. Res. 299. A resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that Congress should increase public awareness of child abuse and neglect and should continue to work with the States to reduce the incidence of child abuse and neglect through such programs as the Child Welfare Services and Promoting Safe and Stable Families programs; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. PALLONE (for himself, Ms. KILPATRICK, Mr. SIRES, Mr. HOLT, Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. ROTHMAN, Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey, Mr. FERGUSON, Mr. LOBIONDO, Mr. SAXTON, Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN, Mr. ANDREWS, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Ms. WATSON, Mr. MCDERMOTT, Ms. LEE, Mr. HINCHEY, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Ms. CARSON, Mr. COHEN, Mrs. JONES of Ohio, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California, Mrs. CAPPS, Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida, Ms. SOLIS, Mr. HOYER, Mr. TOWNS, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. WYNN, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, and Ms. SCHAKOWSKY):

H. Res. 300. A resolution commending the achievements of the Rutgers University women's basketball team and applauding the character and integrity of their student-athletes; to the Committee on Education and Labor.

By Mrs. GILLIBRAND:

H. Res. 303. A resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that a day ought to be established to bring awareness to the issue of missing persons; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. BECERRA:

H. Res. 304. A resolution electing a Member to a certain standing committee of the House of Representatives; considered and agreed to.

By Mrs. DRAKE (for herself, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. THORNBERRY, Mr. HAYES, Mr. MCINTYRE, Mr. SKELTON, Mr. HUNTER, Ms. CASTOR, Mr. CONAWAY, Mr. SAXTON, Mr. KLINE of Minnesota, Mr. COOPER, Mr. ELLSWORTH, Mr. ORTIZ, Mr. TURNER, Mr. MILLER of Florida, Mr. CALVERT, Mr. MARSHALL, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. ANDREWS, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, and Mr. UDALL of Colorado):

H. Res. 305. A resolution honoring the 53,000 soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines, and civilians that comprise the Nation's special operations forces community; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. BOUCHER (for himself, Mr. WOLF, Mr. MORAN of Virginia, Mr. GOODLATTE, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia, Mr. GOODE, Mr. CANTOR, Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS of Virginia, Mr. FORBES, and Mrs. DRAKE):

H. Res. 306. A resolution offering heartfelt condolences to the victims and their families regarding the horrific violence at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Virginia, and to the students, faculty, administration and staff and their families who have been deeply affected by the tragic events that occurred there; to the Committee on Education and Labor.

By Mr. DAVIS of Illinois (for himself, Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia, Mr. MARCHANT, Mr. CLAY, Mr. CUMMINGS, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, Mr. WAXMAN, Mr. WYNN, Mr. REYES, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Mr. FATTAH, Mr. MORAN of Virginia, Mr. SARBANES, Mr. HOYER, Mr. ORTIZ, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mrs. MALONEY of New York, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. HOLT, Ms. NORTON, Mr. MCHUGH, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. CARNEY, Mr. RANGEL, and Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California):

H. Res. 307. A resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that public servants should be commended for their dedication and continued service to the Nation during Public Service Recognition Week, May 7 through 13, 2007; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. DAVIS of Illinois:

H. Res. 308. A resolution remembering and honoring the life and achievements of Jackie Robinson on the 60th anniversary of integrated Major League Baseball; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. ENGEL (for himself and Mr. KIRK):

H. Res. 309. A resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the United States should support independence for Kosovo; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. HASTINGS of Florida (for himself, Mr. ROGERS of Michigan, Mr. LANTOS, Mr. REYES, Mr. HOEKSTRA, Ms. ESHOO, Mr. ISSA, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Mr. FILNER, Mr. KENNEDY, Ms. SOLIS, Ms. KILPATRICK, Ms. LEE, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. BECERRA, Mr. RODRIGUEZ, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. WEXLER, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mr. TIERNEY, and Mr. BOYD of Florida):

H. Res. 310. A resolution condemning in the strongest terms the terrorist attacks that occurred in Casablanca, Morocco, on April 10 and 14, 2007, and in Algiers, Algeria, on April 11, 2007; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. LATHAM:

H. Res. 311. A resolution congratulating Iowa State University for its efforts to refurbish and rededicate Morrill Hall; to the Committee on Education and Labor.

By Mr. LOEBSACK (for himself, Mr. BOSWELL, Mr. LATHAM, Mr. BRALEY of Iowa, and Mr. KING of Iowa):

H. Res. 312. A resolution congratulating Zach Johnson on his victory in the 2007 Masters golf tournament; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. ORTIZ (for himself, Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mr. TAYLOR, Mrs. BOYDA of Kansas, Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California, Mr. HARE, Ms. CLARKE, Mr. WOLF, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Ms. BORDALLO, Mr. SHAYS, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, Mr. BOSWELL, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland, Mr. HINOJOSA, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, Mr. BRALEY of Iowa, Mr. HAYES, Mr. ABERCROMBIE, Mr. UDALL of Colorado, Mr. LAMPSON, Mr. REYES, Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, and Mr. MCNERNEY):

H. Res. 313. A resolution recognizing and commending all of the volunteers and supporters of Our Military Kids, Inc., for their efforts in awarding grants to over 1,100 school-aged children of deployed and severely injured National Guard and Reserve personnel in 49 states and the District of Columbia; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. WEXLER (for himself, Mr. FEENEY, Mr. BERMAN, Mr. COBLE, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. GOODLATTE, Mr. SMITH of Texas, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mrs. BONO, Ms. WATSON, and Mr. ISSA):

H. Res. 314. A resolution supporting the goals of World Intellectual Property Day, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions as follows:

H.R. 19: Mr. DEAL of Georgia.

H.R. 23: Ms. CARSON, Mr. LOBIONDO, Mr. OBERSTAR, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, Mr. COSTELLO, Mr. WAXMAN, Mr. SALAZAR, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, Mr. MCCOTTER, Ms. SUTTON, Mr. MARCHANT, and Ms. DELAURO.

H.R. 25: Mr. BILBRAY.

H.R. 45: Mr. LANTOS.

H.R. 63: Mr. WHITFIELD and Mr. CHABOT.

H.R. 67: Mr. SOUDER.

H.R. 91: Mr. JONES of North Carolina and Mr. GORDON.

H.R. 154: Mr. ENGEL.

H.R. 156: Mr. RAHALL, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, and Mr. CARNEY.

H.R. 174: Mr. COHEN and Mr. ABERCROMBIE.

H.R. 176: Mr. GRIJALVA, Mrs. CHRISTENSEN, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. MEEHAN, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. TOWNS, Mr. LANTOS, Mr. CONYERS, Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. BURTON of Indiana, Mr. MCDERMOTT, Mr. DELAHUNT, and Mr. WATT.

H.R. 178: Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. COHEN, Mr. WAXMAN, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Mr. CONYERS, and Ms. CARSON.

H.R. 180: Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. NADLER, Mr. LAHOOD, and Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ.

H.R. 192: Mr. SHAYS.

H.R. 219: Mr. TANCREDO and Mr. GERLACH.

H.R. 221: Mr. SALI.

H.R. 241: Mr. SESSIONS and Mr. WAMP.

H.R. 255: Mr. ISSA.

H.R. 278: Mr. MOORE of Kansas and Mr. DOGGETT.

H.R. 281: Mr. WU, Mr. MCNERNEY, Mr. ABERCROMBIE, Ms. CLARKE, Ms. BERKLEY, Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California, and Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California.

H.R. 303: Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York.

H.R. 346: Mr. BROWN of South Carolina, Mr. SHUSTER, and Mr. SCOTT of Georgia.

H.R. 359: Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota and Mr. WAXMAN.

H.R. 367: Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS.

H.R. 404: Mr. GOODLATTE.

H.R. 405: Mr. WAMP, Mr. ETHERIDGE, Mr. HINOJOSA, and Ms. HIRONO.

H.R. 406: Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Mr. MORAN of Virginia, Mr. SHERMAN, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. LANTOS, Mr. CUMMINGS, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, and Mr. KILDEE.

H.R. 418: Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York.

H.R. 436: Mr. SMITH of Nebraska, Mr. FOSSELLA, and Mr. PITTS.

H.R. 443: Mrs. EMERSON.

H.R. 445: Mrs. EMERSON.

H.R. 463: Mr. MCINTYRE.

H.R. 464: Mr. COHEN and Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin.

H.R. 468: Mr. HINOJOSA.

H.R. 503: Mr. EMANUEL, Ms. CLARKE, Mr. CONYERS, Mrs. LOWEY, Ms. NORTON, and Mr. PRICE of North Carolina.

H.R. 522: Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ.

H.R. 526: Mr. RAHALL.

H.R. 549: Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Mr. MCNERNEY, Ms. SUTTON, and Mr. TIAHRT.

H.R. 583: Mr. CAPUANO, Mr. MCINTYRE, Mr. CHANDLER, Mr. EMANUEL, Mr. ISSA, Mr. HODES, Mr. JONES of North Carolina, Mr. HAYES, Mr. WU, Mr. CANNON, Mr. KILDEE, Mr. TAYLOR, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, and Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York.

H.R. 592: Mr. HIGGINS and Mr. CUMMINGS.

H.R. 612: Ms. SHEA-PORTER.

H.R. 618: Mr. BURTON of Indiana.

H.R. 628: Mr. FORBES, Mr. GOODLATTE, and Mr. LINCOLN DAVIS of Tennessee.

H.R. 633: Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia.

H.R. 657: Mr. MARSHALL.

H.R. 667: Mr. LANTOS and Mr. WYNN.

H.R. 676: Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. KILDEE, and Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida.

H.R. 690: Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, Mr. ROSS, Mr. JINDAL, and Mrs. CAPPS.

H.R. 695: Mr. BECERRA, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota, Mr. WEXLER, Mr. ABERCROMBIE, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. OLVER, Mr. CONAWAY, Mr. LOBIONDO, Mr. HOYER, Ms. DELAURO, Ms. LEE, Mr. CAPUANO, Mr. WYNN, Mrs. JONES of Ohio, and Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas.

H.R. 711: Mr. BAKER.

H.R. 718: Mr. UDALL of Colorado, Mr. MILLER of North Carolina, Mr. OBERSTAR, Mr. JINDAL, Mrs. TAUSCHER, Mr. POE, and Mr. WAMP.

H.R. 728: Mr. PETERSON of Minnesota, Mr. CUMMINGS, and Mr. Carney.

H.R. 729: Mr. WAXMAN.

H.R. 734: Mr. COLE of Oklahoma, Mr. SHAYS, and Mr. ORTIZ.

H.R. 736: Mrs. CAPITO.

H.R. 741: Mr. MCCOTTER, Mr. SARBANES, Mr. HINCHEY, Mr. NADLER, Mr. HIGGINS, Mr. PETRI, Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin, Mr. BISHOP of New York, and Mr. KUHL of New York.

H.R. 743: Mr. SMITH of Nebraska.

H.R. 748: Mr. LEVIN, Mr. RAMSTAD, Mr. BERRY, Mr. RAHALL, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mr. SNYDER, Mr. WHITFIELD, and Mr. MARSHALL.

H.R. 758: Mr. WAMP, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. COHEN, and Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN.

H.R. 760: Mr. LYNCH, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. HINCHEY, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, Mr. WU, Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York, Mr. STARK, Mrs. MALONEY of New York, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mrs. CAPPS, and Mr. RUSH.

H.R. 769: Mrs. MUSGRAVE.

H.R. 782: Mr. REYNOLDS.

H.R. 784: Mr. CANTOR, Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky, Mr. ROSS, Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia, Mr. BOYD of Florida, Ms. KILPATRICK, and Mr. ROGERS of Alabama.

H.R. 806: Mr. RAHALL.

H.R. 811: Mr. SAXTON, Ms. CARSON, Mr. SIRES, Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin, Mr. HILL, Mr. YARMUTH, Mr. BARROW, and Mr. SARBANES.

H.R. 821: Mrs. MALONEY of New York, Ms. NORTON, and Mr. MEEKS of New York.

H.R. 823: Mr. ISRAEL, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Ms. MATSUI, Mr. INSLEE, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Mr. ELLISON, and Mr. WYNN.

H.R. 829: Mr. CARNEY.

H.R. 878: Mr. LEVIN.

H.R. 882: Mr. HINOJOSA, Mr. JINDAL, and Mr. HINCHEY.

H.R. 891: Ms. ESHOO, Mr. KING of New York, Mr. OLVER, Mr. ARCURI, Mrs. TAUSCHER, and Mr. ENGEL.

H.R. 897: Mr. DAVIS of Illinois.

H.R. 916: Mr. ROTHMAN and Mr. MEEK of Florida.

H.R. 917: Mr. LATHAM.

H.R. 923: Mr. HINOJOSA and Mr. MCCOTTER.

H.R. 943: Mr. MOORE of Kansas, Mr. MAHONEY of Florida, and Mr. LINCOLN DAVIS of Tennessee.

H.R. 947: Ms. DELAURO.

H.R. 962: Mr. WAXMAN.

H.R. 970: Mr. EHLERS and Mrs. BONO.

H.R. 971: Mr. REHBERG, Mr. ARCURI, and Mr. BISHOP of New York.

H.R. 980: Mr. WEXLER, Mr. COOPER, Mr. GONZALEZ, Mr. KIRK, Mr. MILLER of North Carolina, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. MEEK of Florida, Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee, Mr. RAHALL, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Mr. POMEROY, Ms. SOLIS, Mr. GORDON, Mr. MEEKS of New York, Mr. BISHOP of New York, Mr. COURTNEY, Mr. PETRI, and Mr. BRALEY of Iowa.

H.R. 989: Mr. LINCOLN DAVIS of Tennessee, Mr. JINDAL, and Mr. SESSIONS.

H.R. 997: Mr. REGULA, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Mr. INGLIS of South Carolina, Mr. GOHMERT, Mr. GRAVES, Mr. DEAL of Georgia, Mr. LINCOLN DAVIS of Tennessee, and Mr. SOUDER.

H.R. 1017: Mrs. CAPPS and Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California.

H.R. 1023: Mr. HASTINGS of Florida.

H.R. 1026: Mr. PAYNE, Mr. BOUSTANY, Mr. BONNER, Mr. PAUL, Mr. BERRY, Mr. BOSWELL, Mr. GORDON, and Mr. WALZ of Minnesota.

H.R. 1028: Mr. PETERSON of Minnesota and Mr. HINOJOSA.

H.R. 1031: Mr. FILNER.

H.R. 1032: Mr. ALLEN.

H.R. 1056: Mr. MILLER of Florida.

H.R. 1057: Mr. MILLER of Florida.

H.R. 1058: Mr. MILLER of Florida.

H.R. 1061: Mr. SHAYS.

H.R. 1064: Mr. MILLER of North Carolina, Mr. OLVER, Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California, Ms. WOOLSEY, Mr. PERLMUTTER, Mr. GONZALEZ, Ms. SUTTON, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. GONZALEZ, Ms. SUTTON, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. EMANUEL, Mr. DOYLE, Ms. BEAN, Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, Ms. CARSON, Mr. HIGGINS, Mrs. CAPPS, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, Mr. GORDON of Tennessee, Mr. WALZ of Minnesota, Ms. MATSUI, Mr. ROTHMAN, Mr. LANTOS, and Mr. HALL of New York.

H.R. 1070: Mr. COHEN and Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas.

H.R. 1072: Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California and Mr. JACKSON of Illinois.

H.R. 1073: Mr. LOBIONDO, Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida, Mr. MCCOTTER, Mr. HIGGINS, Ms. SUTTON, and Mr. ROTHMAN.

H.R. 1076: Mr. LARSEN of Washington, Mr. MANZULLO, and Mrs. GILLIBRAND.

H.R. 1084: Mr. BERMAN.

H.R. 1092: Mr. FERGUSON, Mrs. TAUSCHER, Mr. FILNER, Mr. FATTAH, Mr. LANTOS, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. PERLMUTTER, and Mr. HARE.

H.R. 1093: Mr. BERRY.

H.R. 1094: Mr. JONES of North Carolina.

H.R. 1095: Mr. TERRY.

H.R. 1098: Mr. CARNAHAN and Mr. ABERCROMBIE.

H.R. 1102: Mr. TIBERI, Mr. HIGGINS, Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California, and Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania.

H.R. 1103: Ms. DEGETTE, Mr. WAXMAN, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. PAYNE, Mrs. CAPPS, and Mr. BLUMENAUER.

H.R. 1108: Mr. BRALEY of Iowa.

H.R. 1142: Mr. LANTOS, Mr. MCNERNEY, Mr. PORTER, Mr. BOREN, Mr. MILLER of North Carolina, Mr. PATRICK MURPHY of Pennsylvania, and Mr. RAHALL.

H.R. 1157: Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. REYNOLDS, Mr. HIGGINS, Mr. UDALL of Colorado, Mr. PATRICK MURPHY of Pennsylvania, and Mr. FOSSELLA.

H.R. 1187: Mr. WAXMAN, Mrs. CAPPS, and Ms. ESHOO.

H.R. 1190: Mr. BOREN, Mrs. MALONEY of New York, Mr. JEFFERSON, Mr. MARSHALL, Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York, Ms. NORTON, Mr. BURTON of Indiana, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Mr. CLAY, and Mr. DOYLE.

H.R. 1192: Mr. FILNER and Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas.

H.R. 1194: Mr. MEEK of Florida, Mr. MANZULLO, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, Mr. JEFFERSON, Mr. FATTAH, Mrs. CAPPS, Mr. BERRY, Ms.

BALDWIN, Mr. STUPAK, Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas, and Mrs. JONES of Ohio.

H.R. 1197: Mr. GORDON and Mr. MILLER of Florida.

H.R. 1199: Ms. HIRONO.

H.R. 1216: Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California, Mr. SHAYS, Mr. GINGREY, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. BISHOP of New York, Mr. REHBERG, Mr. GONZALEZ, Mr. KLEIN of Florida, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mr. MOORE of Kansas, and Mr. REYES.

H.R. 1222: Mr. HIGGINS and Mr. GINGREY.

H.R. 1225: Mr. BLUMENAUER and Mr. MICHAUD.

H.R. 1228: Mr. ROGERS of Alabama and Mr. RAHALL.

H.R. 1237: Mr. HINOJOSA, Mr. MCNULTY, Mr. SHIMKUS, Mr. WELDON of Florida, and Mr. BOUSTANY.

H.R. 1239: Mr. PITTS, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. MARSHALL, and Ms. KAPTUR.

H.R. 1261: Mr. SOUDER, Mr. JOHNSON of Illinois, and Mr. SALI.

H.R. 1264: Mr. HOLDEN, Mrs. EMERSON, and Mr. MANZULLO.

H.R. 1280: Mr. WOLF.

H.R. 1281: Mr. PRICE of North Carolina.

H.R. 1283: Mr. CLEAVER, Ms. SUTTON, and Mr. CAPUANO.

H.R. 1293: Mr. INGLIS of South Carolina, Mrs. MYRICK, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland, Mr. WAMP, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. LATOURETTE, and Mr. KENNEDY.

H.R. 1304: Mr. ISSA.

H.R. 1308: Mrs. CAPPS.

H.R. 1324: Mr. HAYES.

H.R. 1333: Mr. BROWN of South Carolina.

H.R. 1343: Mr. MATHESON, Mr. SIRES, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. EMANUEL, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Mr. ABERCROMBIE, Mr. HINOJOSA, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Ms. BORDALLO, Ms. NORTON, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, Mr. MICHAUD, Mr. EHLERS, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. MCNULTY, Mr. MCDERMOTT, Mr. GOODE, Mr. STARK, Mr. FILNER, Mr. CLAY, Mr. HINCHEY, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, and Mr. SARBANES.

H.R. 1344: Mr. BARROW, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, and Mr. SKELTON.

H.R. 1346: Mr. ROTHMAN, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Ms. WATSON, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. PALLONE, and Mr. RAHALL.

H.R. 1355: Mr. MILLER of Florida.

H.R. 1363: Ms. BALDWIN, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, and Mr. SIRES.

H.R. 1368: Mr. CASTLE and Mr. PATRICK MURPHY of Pennsylvania.

H.R. 1377: Mr. WALZ of Minnesota, Mr. ABERCROMBIE, Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California, and Mr. MORAN of Virginia.

H.R. 1379: Mr. NADLER.

H.R. 1380: Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania.

H.R. 1385: Mr. WEXLER, Mrs. CAPPS, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. KENNEDY, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, Mr. DOYLE, Mr. HONDA, and Mr. WAXMAN.

H.R. 1386: Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota, Mrs. CAPPS, and Mr. LATOURETTE.

H.R. 1399: Mr. MURTHA, Mr. ALTMIRE, Mr. GORDON, Mr. GINGREY, Mr. BAKER, Mr. CARTER, Mr. RENZI, Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, Mr. CAMPbell of California, Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. CHANDLER, Mr. MCCAUL of Texas, Mr. CRENSHAW, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. BROWN of South Carolina, Mrs. MUSGRAVE, Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania, Mr. BARROW, Mr. BOSWELL, Mr. GOODE, Mr. HALL of Texas, Mr. LAMBORN, and Mr. SHIMKUS.

H.R. 1413: Mr. SCHIFF.

H.R. 1420: Mrs. MALONEY of New York, Mr. JACKSON of Illnois, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. RUSH, Mr. FATTAH, Ms. WATERS, Ms. Sutton, Mr. GUTIERREZ, Mr. HARE, Mr. HINOJOSA, and Mr. MARKEY.

H.R. 1424: Mr. DENT and Mr. PATRICK MURPHY of Pennsylvania.

H.R. 1428: Mr. Cohen and Mr. KLINE of Minnesota.

H.R. 1440: Ms. BORDALLO, Mr. KING of New York, and Mr. MCCOTTER.

H.R. 1453: Mr. HIGGINS.

H.R. 1457: Mr. BURTON of Indiana.

H.R. 1459: Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Ms. Clarke, Mr. NADLER, Mr. BOUCHER, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. HALL of New York, Mr. KILDEE, and Mr. LANGEVIN.

H.R. 1467: Mr. LATHAM.

H.R. 1474: Mr. RAHALL, Mr. BISHOP of New York, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. HOEKSTRA, and Mr. KIRK.

H.R. 1488: Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. PEARCE, and Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania.

H.R. 1494: Mr. RAMSTAD, Mrs. CAPPS, and Ms. ESHOO.

H.R. 1497: Mr. WYNN, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California, Ms. WATSON, Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota, and Mr. HONDA.

H.R. 1498: Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota, Mr. MCCOTTER, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. HINOJOSA, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, Mr. WYNN, Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California, and Ms. ESHOO.

H.R. 1518: Mr. GOODE, Mr. WALZ of Minnesota, and Mr. HINCHEY.

H.R. 1524: Mr. MCDERMOTT, Mr. PAUL, Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California, Mr. PRICE of Georgia, Ms. LEE, Mr. Welch of Vermont, Mr. NADLER, and Mr. FILNER.

H.R. 1527: Mr. HASTINGS of Washington.

H.R. 1532: Mrs. CAPPS, Mr. FILNER, and Mr. RAHALL.

H.R. 1540: Ms. SCHWARTZ.

H.R. 1541: Mr. PETERSON of Minnesota, and Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas.

H.R. 1551: Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Mr. PATRICK MURPHY of Pennsylvania, Mr. DOYLE, Mr. KAGEN, Ms. SCHWARTZ, Mr. PLATTS, Mr. FERGUSON, and Mr. WYNN.

H.R. 1560: Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California, and Mr. DELAHUNT.

H.R. 1567: Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota, Ms. LEE, Mrs. CAPPS, Ms. ESHOO, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. MCCOTTER, and Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia.

H.R. 1576: Mr. HIGGINS, Mr. WYNN, and Mr. MCNULTY.

H.R. 1582: Mr. UDALL of Colorado.

H.R. 1586: Mr. BOREN, Mr. JONES of North Carolina, Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, and Mrs. CUBIN.

H.R. 1588: Mrs. CAPPS, Mr. ABERCROMBIE, Mr. RAHALL, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, and Mr. WESTMORELAND.

H.R. 1589: Mr. KLINE of Minnesota.

H.R. 1600: Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Mr. BISHOP of New York, Mr. CAMP of Michigan, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Ms. ESHOO, and Mr. RAHALL.

H.R. 1609: Mr. TOWNS, Mr. FOSSELLA, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. FILNER, Mr. CROWLEY, and Mr. KING of New York.

H.R. 1611: Mr. RODRIGUEZ, Mr. MEEK of Florida, and Mr. BISHOP of New York.

H.R. 1616: Mr. WALZ of Minnesota, Mr. FILNER, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, and Mr. ALLEN.

H.R. 1640: Mr. TIAHRT, Mr. KING of New York, and Mr. SIMPSON.

H.R. 1645: Mr. FILNER, Mr. ABERCROMBIE, Mr. DAVIS of Alabama, Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts, Mr. MEEK of Florida, and Mr. PALLONE.

H.R. 1646: Mr. LANTOS.

H.R. 1647: Mr. LEWIS of Kentucky, Mr. SPACE, Mr. KING of New York, Mr. EMANUEL, Mr. SIMPSON, Mr. GONZALEZ, Mr. FARR, Mr. ROYCE, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Mr. MORAN of Virginia, Mr. WU, Mr. HINCHEY, Mr. ABERCROMBIE, Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Mr. RAHALL, Mr. LATHAM, and Mr. DAVIS of Alabama.

H.R. 1653: Mrs. DAVIS of California, Mr. WAXMAN, and Mr. CAPUANO.

H.R. 1655: Mr. CULBERSON, Ms. CARSON, Mrs. EMERSON, and Ms. BALDWIN.

H.R. 1667: Ms. BERKLEY.

H.R. 1673: Mr. HAYES, Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania, Mr. MOORE of Kansas, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Mr. BACHUS, Mr. ALTMIRE, and Mr. ARCURI.

H.R. 1678: Mr. KIRK.

H.R. 1683: Mr. LEVIN.

H.R. 1688: Mr. CONYERS, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. JACKSON of Illinois, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, and Mr. SARBANES.

H.R. 1691: Mr. SERRANO, Mr. FARR, and Mr. CLAY.

H.R. 1692: Mr. PAYNE.

H.R. 1700: Mr. PATRICK MURPHY of Pennsylvania.

H.R. 1705: Mr. GUTIERREZ, Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York, Mr. MCNERNEY, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Mr. PATRICK MURPHY of Pennsylvania, Mr. FATTAH, Ms. MATSUI, Mr. PAYNE, Ms. SUTTON, and Mr. LANTOS.

H.R. 1707: Ms. LEE, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. SHAYS, Mr. MCNERNEY, and Mr. RYAN of Ohio.

H.R. 1709: Mr. DEFAZIO, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. HOLT, Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania, and Mr. MAHONEY of Florida.

H.R. 1713: Mr. LANTOS, Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida, Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California, Mr. JEFFERSON, Mr. JACKSON of Illinois, Mr. MORAN of Virginia, Ms. WOOLSEY, Mr. COHEN, Mr. WAXMAN, Mr. HOLT, Ms. WATERS, Mr. ABERCROMBIE, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. FATTAH, Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota, Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California, Mr. CAPUANO, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. CARNAHAN, and Mr. ALLEN.

H.R. 1728: Ms. MATSUI, and Mr. ISRAEL.

H.R. 1729: Mr. GINGREY.

H.R. 1730: Mr. RAHALL, Mr. PETRI, Mr. GILCHREST, and Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky.

H.R. 1732: Mr. JONES of North Carolina.

H.R. 1740: Mr. ABERCROMBIE, Mr. COHEN, Mrs. EMERSON, Mr. JACKSON of Illinois, Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. WYNN, Mr. HOLT, and Mrs. MALONEY of New York.

H.R. 1747: Mr. DOGGETT, and Mrs. NAPOLITANO.

H.R. 1755: Mr. CLAY.

H.R. 1756: Mr. SHULER, Mr. ROSS, Mr. MILLER of Florida, Mrs. EMERSON, and Mr. GALLEGLY.

H.R. 1760: Mr. WALZ of Minnesota.

H.R. 1773: Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. HOLDEN, Mr. WILSON of Ohio, Mr. LANTOS, Mr. ABERCROMBIE, Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN, Mr. CARNAHAN, and Mr. FERGUSON.

H.R. 1783: Mr. SESTAK, Ms. SCHWARTZ, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. DELAHUNT, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Mr. BERMAN, Mr. ISRAEL, Mr. ALTMIRE, Ms. SUTTON, and Mr. RANGEL.

H.R. 1791: Mr. PETERSON of Minnesota.

H.R. 1801: Mr. REICHERT, Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota, Mr. WYNN, Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Mr. MEEKS of New York, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. PALLONE, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, Mr. MCDERMOTT, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. BERMAN, Mrs. MALONEY of New York, Mrs. CAPPS, Mr. CAPUANO, and Mr. BLUMENAUER.

H.R. 1809: Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. ROTHMAN, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, and Ms. NORTON.

H.R. 1811: Mrs. MILLER of Michigan and Mr. BROWN of South Carolina.

H.R. 1813: Mr. SESSIONS.

H.R. 1819: Mr. MORAN of Virginia, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania, and Ms. HIRONO.

H.R. 1820: Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas.

H.R. 1821: Ms. MATSUI, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. UDALL of New Mexico, Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York, Mr. PERLMUTTER, and Mr. BLUMENAUER.

H.R. 1823: Mr. SMITH of Texas.

H.R. 1829: Mr. WILSON of South Carolina and Mr. BUCHANAN.

H.R. 1845: Mr. PRICE of Georgia and Mr. MURTHA.

H.J. Res. 3: Mr. KENNEDY and Mr. ROTHMAN.

H.J. Res. 12: Mr. PETERSON of Minnesota.

H.J. Res. 14: Mrs. CAPPS and Mr. Hare.

H.J. Res. 40: Mr. BOYD of Florida.

H. Con. Res. 7: Mr. LANTOS, Mr. COURTNEY, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. BERMAN, Mr. COSTA, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Mr. REICHERT, Mr. ABERCROMBIE, Mr. ALLEN, and Mr. LAHOOD.

H. Con. Res. 21: Mr. STARK and Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS of Virginia.

H. Con. Res. 33: Mr. ANDREWS, Mr. YARMUTH, and Mr. BRALEY of Iowa.

H. Con. Res. 48: Mr. CARDOZA, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. PAUL, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, and Mr. CAPUANO.

H. Con. Res. 49: Mr. HARE.

H. Con. Res. 60: Mr. POE.

H. Con. Res. 81: Mr. WOLF and Ms. SUTTON.

H. Con. Res. 108: Mr. LAHOOD.

H. Res. 37: Mr. HARE.

H. Res. 49: Mr. WYNN, Mr. ISSA, and Mr. BOYD of Florida.

H. Res. 55: Ms. CLARKE.

H. Res. 100: Mr. REYES, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. HINOJOSA, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Mr. RAHALL, and Mr. SIRES.

H. Res. 101: Ms. LEE, Mr. HARE, Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida, Ms. KILPATRICK, Ms. MATSUI, Mr. ABERCROMBIE, and Ms. HOOLEY.

H. Res. 121: Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, Mr. WYNN, and Mr. WEINER.

H. Res. 146: Mr. JACKSON of Illinois.

H. Res. 158: Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas.

H. Res. 186: Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. LANTOS, Mr. YOUNG of Florida, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Ms. HARMAN, Mr. WAXMAN, Mr. BUCHANAN, Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida, Mr. ALLEN, Mr. ISRAEL, Mr. SERRANO, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Mr. ROTHMAN, Mr. NADLER, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, and Mr. KENNEDY.

H. Res. 194: Mr. NADLER, Ms. CLARKE, and Mr. WYNN.

H. Res. 208: Mr. ISSA.

H. Res. 209: Mr. NADLER, Mr. HIGGINS, and Ms. CLARKE.

H. Res. 216: Mr. PLATTS and Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky.

H. Res. 226: Mr. RANGEL.

H. Res. 227: Mr. SERRANO, Mr. HOLT, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin, Mr. ABERCROMBIE, and Mr. LEWIS of Georgia.

H. Res. 241, Mr. FILNER and Ms. WOOLSEY.

H. Res. 243: Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. WAMP, Mr. MCHUGH, Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN, Mrs. MYRICK, Mr. LEWIS of Kentucky, Mr. BURGESS, and Mr. STUPAK.

H. Res. 257: Mr. CONYERS, Mr. WOLF, Ms. NORTON, Mr. HINOJOSA, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. SHAYS, Mr. BURTON of Indiana, Mr. PAYNE, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts, Mr. MCNULTY, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. GOODE, Mr. TANNER, Ms. BORDALLO, and Ms. SUTTON.

H. Res. 258: Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. PATRICK MURPHY of Pennsylvania, Mr. HINCHEY, and Mr. MCCOTTER.

H. Res. 259: Mr. HARE, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, and Mr. CUMMINGS.

H. Res. 272: Mr. LANTOS, Mr. WYNN, Mr. SCOTT of Georgia, Ms. CLARKE, Mr. JEFFERSON, and Ms. CARSON.

H. Res. 273: Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ.

H. Res. 282: Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. LOBIONDO, Mr. ROTHMAN, Mr. PERLMUTTER, Mr. LANTOS, Mr. CARNAHAN, Mr. STARK, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Ms. WATSON, Mr. SALAZAR, Mr. MCDERMOTT, Mr. COHEN, Mr. BERMAN, and Mr. FILNER.

H. Res. 285: Mr. GERLACH, Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida, and Mr. MCCOTTER.

H. Res. 287: Mr. ENGEL, Mr. PUTNAM, Mr. ARCURI, Mr. WYNN, and Mr. BROWN of South Carolina.

H. Res. 292: Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania.

H. Res. 293: Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York, Mr. KUCINICH, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. SARBANES, Mr. ALTMIRE, Mr. YARMUTH, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, Ms. MATSUI, Mr. SHAYS, Ms. SUTTON, Mr. FATTAH, Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota, Mr. HONDA, Ms. CLARKE, Mr. HOLT, Mr. CLAY, Mr. EHLERS, Mr. HINOJOSA, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. HARE, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. MEEKS of New York, and Mr. FORTUÑO.

CONGRESSIONAL EARMARKS, LIMITED TAX BENEFITS, OR LIMITED TARIFF BENEFITS

Under clause 9 of rule XXI, lists or statements on congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits were submitted as follows:

OFFERED BY: MR. CHABOT

The amendments to be offered by Representative Chabot or a designee to H.R. 1361, the RECOVER Act, do not contain any congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in clause 9(d), 9(e), or 9(f) of rule XXI.

OFFERED BY: MR. HALL OF TEXAS

The amendment to be offered by Representative Hall of Texas or a designee to H.R. 363, the Sowing the Seeds through Science and Engineering Research Act does not contain any congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in clause 9(d), 9(e), or 9(f) of rule XXI.

AMENDMENTS

Under clause 8 of rule XVIII, proposed amendments were submitted as follows:

H.R. 1257

OFFERED BY: MR. BACHUS

AMENDMENT NO. 1: Page 4, beginning on line 8, strike ''Section 16'' and insert ''Section 14'', and on line 11, strike ''(h)'' and insert ''(i)''.

H.R. 1257

OFFERED BY: MR. CAMPBELL OF CALIFORNIA

AMENDMENT NO. 2: Page 4, line 13, strike ''Any proxy'' and insert ''Subject to paragraph (3), any proxy''.

Page 5, line 6, strike ''In any proxy'' and insert ''Subject to paragraph (3), in any proxy''.

Page 6, line 13, strike the close quotation marks and following period and after such line insert the following:

''(3) MAJORITY-ELECTED BOARD EXEMPTION.—The shareholder vote requirements of this subsection shall not apply with respect to any issuer that requires the members of its board of directors to be elected by a majority of the votes cast in a shareholder election of such board.''.

H.R. 1257

OFFERED BY: MR. FRANK OF MASSACHUSETTS

AMENDMENT NO. 3: Page 4, beginning on line 8, strike ''Section 16'' and insert ''Section 14'', and on line 11, strike ''(h)'' and insert ''(i)''.

H.R. 1257

OFFERED BY: MR. FRANK OF MASSACHUSETTS

AMENDMENT NO. 4: Page 4, line 13, strike ''IN GENERAL'' and insert ''ANNUAL VOTE''.

Page 4, beginning on line 14, strike ''or other meeting of the shareholders'' and insert ''meeting of the shareholders (or a special meeting in lieu of the annual meeting)''.

Page 4, line 16, strike ''shall permit'' and insert ''shall provide for''.

Page 4, line 22, insert ''the corporation or'' after ''binding on''.

Page 5, beginning on line 7, strike ''or other meeting of the shareholders'' and insert ''meeting of the shareholders (or a special meeting in lieu of the annual meeting)''.

Page 6, line 3, strike ''shall require'' and insert ''shall provide for''.

Page 6, line 6, insert ''the corporation or'' after ''binding on''.

H.R. 1257

OFFERED BY: MR. GARRETT

AMENDMENT NO. 5: Page 4, line 13, strike ''Any proxy'' and insert ''Subject to paragraph (3), any proxy''.

Page 5, line 6, strike ''In any proxy'' and insert ''Subject to paragraph (3), in any proxy''.

Page 6, line 13, strike the close quotation marks and following period and after such line insert the following:

''(3) CONDITIONS TRIGGERING VOTE.—The shareholder vote requirements of this subsection shall only apply if the executive compensation (as disclosed pursuant to the Commission's compensation disclosure rules) exceeds by 10 percent or more the average compensation for comparable positions—

''(A) in companies within the issuer's industry; and

''(B) among companies with comparable total market capitalization,

as determined in accordance with regulations issued by the Commission.''.

H.R. 1257

OFFERED BY: MS. JACKSON-LEE OF TEXAS

AMENDMENT NO. 6: Page 6, line 13, strike the close quotation marks and following period and after such line insert the following new paragraph:

''(3) WEBSITE DISCLOSURE OF VOTE.—Not later than 30 days after the votes provided for in paragraphs (1) and (2)(B) are counted, the issuer shall post the results of such vote in a prominent location on the issuer's Internet website (if the issuer maintains an Internet website).''.

H.R. 1257

OFFERED BY: MR. MCHENRY

AMENDMENT NO. 7: Page 3, line 18, strike the close quotation marks and following period and after such line insert the following new paragraph:

''(3) DISCLOSURE OF VOTE TO PENSION FUND BENEFICIARIES.—A shareholder who is casting the vote permitted under this subsection on behalf of the beneficiaries of a pension fund shall be required to disclose to such beneficiaries whether such vote was cast to approve or disapprove the compensation.''.

H.R. 1257

OFFERED BY: MR. PRICE OF GEORGIA

AMENDMENT NO. 8: Page 6, line 13, strike the close quotation marks and following period and after such line insert the following:

''(3) CONDITIONAL IMPLEMENTATION.—

''(A) CONDITIONAL EFFECTIVE DATE.—Subject to subparagraph (C), this subsection shall be effective with respect to any solicitation of a proxy, consent, or authorization for an annual or other shareholder meeting occurring on or after the date that is 90 days after the Commission transmits to Congress the report required under subparagraph (B).

''(B) STUDY ON RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF EXECUTIVES.—The Commission shall conduct a study to determine the effect of the separate vote requirements under this subsection on the ability of issuers to recruit and retain executives, and not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act, shall transmit to Congress a report containing the findings of such study.

''(C) DETERMINATION BY COMMISSION.—This subsection shall not take effect if the Commission determines, pursuant to the study required under subparagraph (B), that the requirements of this subsection would significantly hinder issuers' recruitment and retention of executives.''.

H.R. 1257

OFFERED BY: MR. PRICE OF GEORGIA

AMENDMENT NO. 9: Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SEC. 1. DISCLOSURE OF EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION.

Congress finds and declares that the shareholder disclosures relating to executive compensation required by the rules issued by the Securities and Exchange Commission on September 8, 2006 (71 Fed. Reg. 53158) provide an adequate and complete mechanism for shareholder approval of such compensation.

H.R. 1257

OFFERED BY: MR. PRICE OF GEORGIA

AMENDMENT NO. 10: Page 4, line 25, strike '', nor shall such vote'' and all that follows through page 5, line 3, and insert a period.

Page 6, line 10, strike '', nor shall such vote'' and all that follows through page 6, line 13, and insert a period, and after such line insert the following:

''(3) LIMITATION ON SHAREHOLDER PROPOSALS.—A shareholder permitted to vote under this subsection shall not be eligible under the Commission's shareholder proposal regulation (17 CFR 240.14a–8) to make proposals for inclusion in any proxy materials related to compensation.''.

H.R. 1257

OFFERED BY: MR. PUTNAM

AMENDMENT NO. 11: Page 4, line 13, strike ''Any proxy'' and insert ''Subject to paragraph (3), any proxy''.

Page 5, line 6, strike ''In any proxy'' and insert ''Subject to paragraph (3), in any proxy''.

Page 6, line 13, strike the close quotation marks and following period and after such line insert the following:

''(3) DEFERRED COMPENSATION EXEMPTION.—The shareholder vote requirements of this subsection shall not apply to an issuer if the compensation of executives as disclosed pursuant to the Commission's compensation disclosure rule indicates that the issuer provides the majority of the issuer's executive compensation in the form of non-qualified deferred compensation.''.

H.R. 1257

OFFERED BY: MR. ROSKAM

AMENDMENT NO. 12: Page 4, line 13, strike ''IN GENERAL'' and insert ''ANNUAL VOTE''.

Page 4, beginning on line 14, strike ''or other meeting of the shareholders'' and insert ''meeting of the shareholders (or a special meeting in lieu of the annual meeting)''.

Page 5, beginning on line 7, strike ''or other meeting of the shareholders'' and insert ''meeting of the shareholders (or a special meeting in lieu of the annual meeting)''.

H.R. 1257

OFFERED BY: MR. SESSIONS

AMENDMENT NO. 13: Page 6, line 13, strike the close quotation marks and following period and after such line insert the following new paragraph:

''(3) DISCLOSURE OF ACTIVITIES TO INFLUENCE VOTE.—Notwithstanding paragraphs (1) or (2)(B), a shareholder's vote shall not be counted under such paragraphs if the shareholder has spent, directly or indirectly, more than a de minimis amount of money (as determined by the Commission) on activities to influence a vote of other shareholders, unless such shareholder discloses to the Commission, in accordance with rules prescribed by the Commission—

''(A) the identity of all persons or entities engaged in such a campaign;

''(B) the activities engaged in to influence the vote; and

''(C) the amount of money expended on such a campaign.''.

United States of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 110th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 153 WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, APRIL 17, 2007 No. 61

Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JON TESTER, a Senator from the State of Montana.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal Lord God, as we continue to mourn the carnage which happened at Virginia Tech and the flags fly half-mast, give us the determination to bring good from evil and sanity from insanity. May this horrific shooting prompt us to humble ourselves and pray and seek Your face and turn from wickedness. Permit our pain and anguish to force us to examine what contributions we may be making in romanticizing a culture of violence. May the shooting in Blacksburg, VA, keep us alert to the battle we fight against principalities, powers, and evil in our world.

Use our Senators today as agents of reconciliation as they remember that in everything, You are working for the good of those who love You. Hear our prayer, forgive our sins, and heal our land. We pray in Your merciful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable JON TESTER led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, April 17, 2007.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable JON TESTER, a Senator from the State of Montana, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mr. TESTER thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, this morning the Senate will be in a period of morning business for 60 minutes, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each. The first half of morning business is controlled by the Republican leader or his designee or designees and the last portion controlled by the majority. Following morning business, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 372, the Intelligence authorization bill.

Yesterday, it was unfortunate that the Senate did not invoke cloture on the intelligence legislation. However, I did enter a motion to reconsider the failed cloture vote. We will have that vote again at some time.

Also today, at 12:30 p.m., the Senate will recess for the party conferences. We have no votes scheduled today because of the inability to move forward on the very important intelligence authorization as a result of the Republicans in unison voting against our ability to go forward. If there is no change in that, we made a couple of proposals yesterday which were all objected to, as to being able to move forward on germane amendments, relevant amendments.

We will have a cloture vote on another issue that it appears at this time the Republicans are going to block; that is, the ability for Medicare to negotiate for lower priced prescription drugs.

We are going to continue to move forward on our desire to allow the intelligence community, the 16 agencies that work for the Federal Government, working in espionage and other such important issues, to allow them to have legislation that brings us up to date. For the last 2 years, there has been no legislation in that regard because the Republicans did not move forward. We are going to continue to try to move forward even though the Vice President does not want this legislation.

We also are going to continue to speak for the American people in allowing Medicare—one of the most important programs ever developed by this country has been Medicare. I can remember my first elected job on the board of trustees of then Southern Nevada Memorial Hospital, the largest hospital district in the State of Nevada at the time. When I took that job, 45 percent of those people who were senior citizens who came to that hospital had no insurance, and children, spouses, friends, and neighbors had to agree to pay their hospital bill or they would not be taken care of.

The situation now is that virtually every senior citizen, as a result of Medicare having passed—that passed during my term of office on the board of trustees—virtually every senior citizen now has the ability to be taken care of, except Medicare cannot now negotiate for lower priced prescription drugs. The insurance industry can, the Veterans' Administration can, HMOs can, but not Medicare.

We are going to continue to try to move forward on that issue even though the Republicans obviously are being led down the wrong path by the pharmaceutical industry and the insurance industry and HMOs. We are going

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

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to continue to try to do the business of the American people even though sometimes it is difficult.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business for up to 60 minutes, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the first 30 minutes controlled by the Republican leader or his designee and the last 30 minutes controlled by the majority leader or his designee.

The Senator from Utah is recognized.

EXPRESSION OF SYMPATHY

Mr. BENNETT. Mr. President, before I begin my statement with respect to tax day, I wish to pause and express on behalf of the people of Utah our great sympathy for and anguish over the tragedy that has occurred in the State of Virginia.

I was once a resident of the State of Virginia, and I now am a physical resident of the State of Virginia while remaining a legal resident of Utah, and I feel close to the people of Virginia.

Virginia is known for its system of colleges spread throughout the State, in magnificent rural settings. Blacksburg, VA, is one of those settings, and Virginia Tech is one of those colleges. It comes as an enormous shock, and a sense of horror, to discover that a single student can be sufficiently disturbed in this quiet kind of setting to vent all of his demons in such a manner.

I want the people of Virginia and the students and parents of Virginia Tech to know they are not alone in their horror and their grief and to share that on behalf of the people of Utah whom I represent.

TAX DAY

Mr. BENNETT. Mr. President, today is tax day, the day when most of us file for an extension so we can have another 3 months or so to work through the problems connected with our taxes. I wish to review the history of our tax system and the groundwork for an attempt to try to solve some of its serious problems.

One of the reasons we file for an extension is because the Tax Code itself is impenetrable. There are few—or I would say if any—who understand it. I remember when I was a very junior Senator here on the floor talking about health care, when President Clinton's administration was pursuing that, and making the point on the floor that the law was absolutely beyond comprehension. I quoted James Madison, who said that the laws should be understandable, and that was part of his justification for the writing of the Constitution.

Senator Moynihan, the Senator from New York, corrected me; that is, he disagreed with me. He stood up and said: Senator, we have long since passed the point where the laws are understandable. Look at the Tax Code; there is not a soul on the Earth who understands that, so do not make the fact that the health care bill is incomprehensible a justification for defeating it.

I do not know how serious he was. Senator Moynihan was known for his sense of humor, but he was also known for his ability to go to the heart of the issue.

Let me review the history of where we got our tax systems—and yes, the last word is plural because we have basically two Federal tax systems in this country. We have the payroll tax, and we have the income tax. Both were adopted during the period of the Great Depression.

Stop and think about the conditions which existed at that time. We were in the worst economic contraction of our history. The American unemployment rate was running not only in double digits but as high as 25 percent. Of the 75 percent who still had jobs, many of them had jobs that were not adequate to their needs. It was a devastating psychological time. The historians who talk of it say that many of those who were unemployed would get up in the morning, put on their suit and tie, put on their hat, and leave the house as if they were going to work because they did not want the neighbors to know they were unemployed. The stigma of unemployment was psychologically almost as devastating as the financial stigma of being unable to meet one's bills and pay one's mortgage.

The second circumstance that was present at the time of the Great Depression was that we were in the center of the industrial age. All of us, as we went to school, remember being taught about the industrial revolution when we shifted from basically an agricultural economy to predominately an industrial economy, an economy of factories, an economy of mass—mass building, mass production, mass communications. Everything was industrialized.

The third situation that applied in those days was that our economy was basically protected by two oceans. We were insulated from the rest of the world in a very real, physical, geographical sense.

Stop and think about these three interacting with each other—serious economic contraction in the midst of the industrial age at a time when we were self-contained between two oceans. Ask yourself whether those three conditions exist today.

We are in the midst of the longest running expansion in our history, not contraction. We are in the midst of this information age, not the industrial age. The focus of America, just as it shifted from agriculture to industry, has now shifted to the information age, and the richest man in America is not the one who owns the most land, as was true in the agricultural age, or the one who owns the biggest factory, as was true in the industrial age, but the one who has mastered the capacity of the digital code, which is true in the information age.

Finally, we are clearly not confined to a land between two oceans. Money moves around the world, ideas move around the world, and concepts move around the world with the click of a mouse.

We do not have anything like the economic circumstances that prevailed when we adopted our present tax system. Yet we continue to perpetuate those tax systems as if they still apply to our situation.

The payroll tax penalizes the working poor. It is an effective tax rate of 15 percent on the waitress who works at minimum wage because 7½ percent she has to pay and 7½ percent her employer pays that otherwise she would get in her paycheck. That is a very high, regressive tax. When it started out in the midst of the Great Depression, it was 1 percent or 2 percent, and now it has grown to a 15-percent effective rate.

While the payroll tax penalizes the working poor, the income tax discourages the productive rich. The more you produce, the more the Government comes in and says: We will take that away from you.

I have said before in this Chamber, I was fortunate enough to be involved in building a business during what many newspapers called the decade of greed. Ronald Reagan was President, and the top tax rate was 28 percent. We had basically a flat tax system. It had two tiers, 15 percent and 28 percent, but it was moving us toward a simple system, a flat rate system. If I were running that same business today, the effective rate would be 43 percent, and the difference between 28 percent and 43 percent on the earnings of that company would probably make the difference between the company surviving or not. It started out not in a garage but in a basement. It grew to 4,000 employees. Think of the tax revenue coming from those employees, think of the tax revenue coming from that successful business. Then ask yourself: Would it have been a good thing to have prevented that business from coming on board in the name of high tax rates?

We need the tax revenue. We perhaps need more tax revenue than we are currently getting. I will grant that to my friends on the Democratic side. But I suggest to them a bargain. If we want to drive to a higher level of tax revenue, let's recognize we live in a very different world than we lived in in the 1930s, when we created our present tax system. Let's talk about eliminating

the payroll tax. Senator Moynihan was willing to do that. Let's talk about eliminating the present system of income tax and replacing it with a flat tax. Instead of saying we want to use the tax system to make economic decisions, using the tax system as the tiller to steer the economy, let's adopt the radical notion that the purpose of taxes is to raise money to run the Government, and then ask ourselves, how can we raise it in as simple a manner as possible, as efficient a manner as possible, as competitive a manner as possible, so that we recognize the reality in which we live—a tax system that is geared to an expanding economy rather than shrinking one, a tax system that is geared to the information age rather than the industrial age, and a tax system that is geared to a worldwide economy rather than one centered within our borders.

I am already having conversations with some of my Democratic friends on this issue. I think tax day is the day to talk about it. We disagree as to whether the President's tax cuts should be extended. I voted for them. I think they probably should be. But I am willing to scrap the whole thing, if my friends across the aisle will make a deal with us whereby we say: Let's start with a clean sheet of paper and produce a tax system that is geared to the realities of the economic circumstances we face. I hope in this Congress we can move in that direction.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Wyoming is recognized.

WORKING TOGETHER

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I rise to talk about a couple of topics. Certainly we have a lot of issues facing us. We have a lot of things to do. Quite frankly, we have been moving rather slowly over the last several months. We have had one bill signed by the President. We need to decide how we are going to move forward. The leader was talking about the Republicans holding up bills, and so on. We need to understand that we are close enough in this Senate on numbers and voting that we are going to have to have some agreements on things before we lay them out. Neither side is going to be able to say, Here is the way we are going, because it is close. We do have different views. When there is legislation pending, the minority side has amendments they wish to offer.

On the other hand, I admit that sometimes the minority side wants to hold things up, and we can't do that either. So I hope we will look for a little more. I don't expect us to come together with everything, but we need to come together with a system which allows us to talk about our differences and to reach some agreements.

I wish to comment on a couple of issues. The first one, of course, is the one that almost everyone has on their mind today, as the Senator from Utah indicated. This is tax day. Americans have reached deep into their pockets today to pay their Federal income tax. At the same time, we are straining to understand the Tax Code that governs how much we owe. It is very complicated. All of us understand that, particularly today, or as we ask for an extension, because it is so complicated and so difficult to actually arrive at a conclusion with respect to taxes.

I am not sure it has to be that way. The Senator from Utah has described some changes that ought to be made. We talk about that always at tax time, and then we seem to get away from it when tax time is over. We ought to stay in there and ask: How can we do this job? There have to be taxes paid. Obviously, there has to be some fairness among the taxpayers. But does it need to be this complicated? Does it need to be this technical? We find ourselves with a tax program that is designed by literally hundreds of programs that are more put in place to affect behavior and to affect how things are going to happen than they are for taxes. We will give tax relief for this, if you will do this. If you do this, we will give you tax relief over here. The next thing you know, we have such a complicated plan.

The average American has a great deal of trouble understanding and complying with the Tax Code. The vast majority of the taxpayers use tax preparers, even in the simplest of tax situations. We in Congress get frustrated with the lack of compliance with the Code; i.e., the tax gap that we hear so much about. It is apparently substantial in terms of the amount of money involved. But the average American is as frustrated by sincerely trying to comply with the system in most cases. I understand the tax gap. Maybe there are some people who are actually trying to avoid taxes. But often the tax gap is simply because of the complexity.

The good news, of course, is the economy is strong. That is good news. The economic policies of the last 6 years are working and have continued to contribute to the growth of the economy, to encourage investment, and to encourage job creation. Our economy has added jobs for 43 straight months; 7.8 million since August 2003. This is good, particularly when we look at the changes in the world economy. Again, the Senator from Utah was talking about that. As we continue to grow jobs, that is a very good thing.

The economy has added jobs to the extent of 7.8 million over this period of time. The national employment rate has fallen to 4.4 percent last month. Average earnings grew 4 percent last year. The elements of the economy are good. Interestingly enough, largely because of the Iraq situation, we don't hear much about the good economy or about the good things going on in the country. That is too bad. The strong economy has resulted in stronger tax revenues in 2006.

It is important, as we talk about taxes, that we maintain progrowth taxes in economic policy, the idea of extending those tax benefits which have helped to bring about this growth is important. We are at a point where some of them will expire within the next couple of years. They are the kinds of benefits that one needs to know about before tax time so investments can and will be made because of the benefits. The policies in place are working. I don't think we ought to mess with success. At the same time, we have already passed as part of the budget an almost $1 trillion tax increase. Additionally, the budget that was passed by the other side of the aisle increased spending and the size of Government. I am concerned about that. These policies will undo all the good that has been done over the last several years. It is kind of a game: What taxes are you going to have to beat to offset spending now and saying it doesn't need to be. But the fact is, it does. From 2008 to 2011, the budget will increase the deficit by $440 billion and increase the gross debt by $2.2 trillion, if we go on as is now suggested. The budget ignores the impending Medicare and Social Security crises. In fact, it would make it even worse by spending more than a trillion of the Social Security surplus.

When we talk about taxes, we also have to talk about the size, scope, and role of the Federal Government. It is time we look at some of the things we are doing and wonder why they need to be done by the Federal Government and whether, in fact, they should be done by State and local governments or, in fact, the private sector. We should not be using tax policy as a substitute for direct appropriations and encouraging behavior. That is what we have gotten into. We have talked a lot in recent years about tax reform. It is high time we put it into action, whether it is a flat tax, which is difficult to understand but is used in some places around the world—it seems to be workable—or whether it is a tax that is put on the items that people purchase which would be a little difficult to sell. An acquisition tax is one that is being talked about. But we ought to get away from the behavior tax and get back down to a simplified tax.

We need taxes. The Government has to be funded and should be funded in a fair way. But it needs to be done in a different way.

Let me move to Medicare and the noninterference issue that may be coming up very soon. That is the competition on the Part D program by having the Government do the sort of work that needs to be done in the private sector and having a change in the way this thing is operating. I think Part D, which is rather new and still being incorporated but is pretty deeply involved in participation at this point—90 percent of Medicare beneficiaries have drug coverage—is very good. Folks are saving a considerable

amount of money under the program. On average seniors are saving $1,200 yearly on drug costs. A survey reported 80 percent of seniors are happy with the Part D benefits that went into effect recently. Folks in Wyoming are certainly telling me they like the plans that are available there. There are fewer plans available in a smaller population State than there are in some others. Nevertheless, there are plans available. They are available at the local drugstore, and they have an option of several plans from which to choose which is very important for us to maintain in the Part D program.

The costs are 30 percent lower than the original estimates, and it has caused competition. It has caused the private sector to come about with reduced estimates. That is very good. Even the expert the Democratic majority put in place to head up the Congressional Budget Office says this legislation that is proposed to have the Government do the negotiations with drug companies would not save money, according to the CBO. In an April 10 letter to Chairman BAUCUS, the CBO writes:

> We anticipate that under the bill the Secretary would lack the leverage to negotiate prices under the broad range of covered Part D drugs that are more favorable than those obtained by Prescription Drug Plans under current law. Without the authority to establish a formulary or other tools to reduce drug prices, we believe that the Secretary would not obtain significant discounts from drug manufacturers across a broad range of drugs.

CBO also testified that negotiating Medicare drug prices could make costs go up for everyone else. We have to understand we need a drug program, a Medicare program for everyone. There are certain ways it would have to be done for the elderly, for the underfinanced, and so on. But the plan needs to be there for everyone.

The Government Accountability Office has said price fixing may result in limited access. You can imagine if there is negotiation on prices, some of the pharmaceutical companies are going to say: OK, we are not going to offer this drug; we won't offer that drug. Under this plan, you have alternatives and alternative programs from which you can choose to take on different ideas.

Why do we want to take away a plan that has been moving toward success and still has an opportunity for more success and change it before that opportunity has been worked through? Last week the Finance Committee, of which I am a member, held a markup to consider the pending legislation. We asked the proponents of that to come up with their plans. Frankly, they didn't have any specifics as to how this would be handled.

With just the idea we would have the Government negotiate, it sounds like, wow, we would come up with some real good stuff. The fact is—the bottom line is—I think most of us want to see the market work. When there is competition, when there are these kinds of things, it does cause the market to work.

So I think before we pass any bill, we should know and consider, find out, as clearly as we can, what impact it has on the folks. We do not want to talk too much, it seems, on the Senate floor about how that will work. I think we should talk about how it works.

I have great respect for my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, but they believe expanding the Government is the way to solve health problems. I do not agree. I do not believe Government price fixing is the answer to the question.

Current law has increased choices, has lowered prices through market competition, and that is the system we have in this country. Market competition is where we need to go. So we should let the market continue to work and say, as the saying goes, ''if it ain't broke, don't fix it.'' So I think that is how we are challenged.

I am hopeful we can move forward. I think we have a lot of things to do. We need to get on with immigration. I do not think there is anything more important to the country than to have an immigration law that works, that we have a closed border, that we have people coming to work legitimately and legally who return after their period of work or go through the process for becoming citizens. The system we have now is not working, and we need to change that.

I think energy continues to be a factor in the future, very clearly. There is no doubt there is going to be more demand. There is no doubt there is going to be a more difficult time in acquiring energy sources from around the world. We have to depend more on our own, including alternatives. I think alternatives are a very good solution over time as we find out ways to use them and use them in the volumes that are necessary to fill our needs.

In the meantime, I think we need to be very careful to assist in developing those things we know how to do now that will make us have supplies in the interim as we wait for these alternatives to develop—coal, for example. Coal is our largest fossil resource. We know ways to have plants develop electricity from coal, where we can extract carbon, reinject the carbon, help with the climate change, and at the same time have a supply of energy we need.

So these are some of the things I guess I am a little frustrated we cannot move toward. We spend too much time hassling over some of these problems that should not take that long. We should get on with dealing with health care, get on with dealing with energy, get on with dealing with immigration, get on with dealing with spending, get on with dealing with the size of the budget. These are the real issues out there that I think the American people—and I am sure Wyoming people—are concerned about.

So I urge we move as quickly as we can, working together, so we can find ways to move forward and solve some of the problems that are before us.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRAGEDY AT VIRGINIA TECH

Mr. DURBIN. First, Mr. President, let me say that every parent remembers when their kids left the nest. There is that moment when they finally reach that age where they are off to college. I can recall when Loretta and I took our three kids off to their colleges of choice. It was kind of an emotional moment, with mixed feelings: proud they had reached this point in their lives when they were off on their own, sad that now they are leaving their little family setting that had been so familiar and so happy for so many years. But you knew if you were lucky enough as a parent to have attended college that they were facing an extraordinary personal opportunity to go to college and meet so many other students and expand their horizons and learn what it means to live on your own resources.

So that is why the tragedy of Virginia Tech is so sad, that the happy setting of college, where parents have entrusted their students to the university campus, can turn into a scene of horror as we found yesterday in Blacksburg, VA. We are all stunned and heartsick over the staggering and incomprehensible loss of life yesterday. We offer our deepest condolences to the families who lost precious sons and daughters in that shooting rampage, and to the victims who survived it.

As police search for clues, I hope those of us in Congress will come together to also search honestly for answers about what can be done to prevent another tragedy. This has been billed as the worst massacre in American history on a school or college campus. I can still recall 8 years ago in the room behind me, the cloakroom, when we heard of the Columbine shooting when 15 students lost their lives. In Blacksburg, the estimate is somewhere between 32 or 33 who have lost their lives. It is unspeakable to think about the placid setting of that college campus turning into a bloody scene yesterday morning. Now we will go about the grim task of identifying those who were injured and burying the remains of the ones who were killed as the Nation grieves with Virginia Tech University.

REMEMBERING CONGRESSMAN JIM JONTZ

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I wish to say a few words about a friend of mine who passed away on Saturday. His name was Jim Jontz. For 6 years, from 1987 to 1993, Jim represented Indiana's fifth congressional district in the House of Representatives. That is where I first met him and worked with him.

In 1991, the Almanac of American Politics described him as:

> One of the most incredibly hardworking and gifted natural politicians who has routinely done the impossible.

Two years ago Jim was diagnosed with colon cancer that had already spread to his liver. We hoped at the time he would find a way to ''do the impossible'' again and defeat this illness. He fought that cancer for 2 valiant years, but he died on Saturday afternoon in his home in Portland, OR.

Jim Jontz defied ordinary stereotypes. He was a progressive Democrat elected three times by one of the most conservative areas in the country to represent them in Congress. People used to wonder all the time how that was possible. I have some ideas. For one thing, Jim had a flair for trademarks. He was famous for riding his sister's rusty blue Schwinn with mismatched tires in parades.

Jim also practiced a very personal style of politics—something he learned from his days as a grassroots organizer. He ran what he called ''shoe leather'' campaigns. His goal in every campaign was to knock on as many doors and speak to as many people as possible. He owned four pairs of shoes that he rotated in and out of at a local repair shop every week. That is how much shoe leather he put into his job. His campaign signs were always shaped like shoes.

Most importantly, Jim Jontz was a bridge builder. There is a school of politics that says the way you win campaigns is to divide people up into groups and pit them against one another. Jim was a master of a different and better kind of politics. He wanted to build bridges and understanding between groups that too often saw themselves as enemies: organized labor and environmentalists, and family farmers and environmentalists. He was always trying to find some common ground. He cared deeply about preserving the land and family farms and he believed the best way to preserve family farms was to help farmers be better stewards of the land. That seemed like a strange idea to some people 25 years ago. Today, it surely makes sense.

Because of his bridge-building abilities, Jim was tapped to mediate disputes between farmers and environmentalists during negotiations for the 1990 farm bill. One result was a wetlands protection program that won strong support from farmers, environmentalists, and sportsmen. That program has saved many family farms, preserved the natural beauty of our land, and protected our clean water. It is part of the great legacy Jim Jontz leaves.

In addition to his important work on the House Agriculture Committee, Jim served on the Education and Labor Committee, the House Select Committee on Aging, and on the Veterans' Affairs Committee. On Veterans' Affairs, he worked with another brave man—my closest friend when I came to Congress and for so many years—Lane Evans. They worked to help veterans living with one of the most common but least understood injuries of war: post-traumatic stress disorder. Those efforts are part of Jim's legacy that we are relying on today while so many of our soldiers come back from Iraq and Afghanistan trying to conquer the demons in their minds from that experience.

As everyone who knew Jim also knew, he was deeply committed to preserving the ancient forests in the Pacific Northwest. That commitment earned him the support of celebrities and common folk as well who shared his love for America's natural treasures. It also won him the enmity of powerful logging interests and their supporters in Congress.

During the debate of the 1990 farm bill, Jim offered an amendment that would have prevented logging of ancient forests and national parks. A powerful House member of the other party retaliated by drafting legislation that would have allowed the Federal Government to create a 1-million acre national forest smack dab in the middle of Jim's congressional district.

In the end, Jim's efforts to save old-growth forests probably ended his career in Congress. The timber industry targeted him for defeat when he ran for his fourth House term in 1992 and he lost, but he didn't stop. In 1994, he ran for the Senate, losing in his last campaign. In 1995, he moved to Portland, OR, where he continued to work to save ancient forests and preserve the Endangered Species Act.

In 1998, Jim was elected president of Americans for Democratic Action, a position he held for 4 years before becoming ADA president emeritus. His most recent project for the ADA was leading its ''Working Families Win'' campaign which focused on raising the minimum wage, providing working families with affordable health care, and other issues of basic economic justice.

Jim Jontz grew up in Indianapolis and graduated phi beta kappa from Indiana University in 1973 after less than 3 years with a degree in geology. He fell into politics by accident almost in 1974. He opposed a dam building project that he thought threatened his little community. He challenged the chief sponsor of the project, who happened to be the majority leader of the Indiana House, and Jim won. At age 22 he became a political giant killer. He also served in the Indiana Senate before being elected to Congress in 1996 at age 35.

Jim won that first race against the House majority leader by two votes. He believed he picked up those last two votes when he insisted on campaigning at 10 p.m. the night before the election at a laundromat that was still open. That was Jim Jontz—using every last minute to try to make a difference. It was the way he ran his campaigns, it is the way he lived his life, and he did make a difference.

I join so many others—not just from Indiana and from Congress, but from across the country—in offering condolences to Jim's family: his mother, stepfather, and his sister who lives in Chicago. He was a good man who left a great legacy. I am proud to have called him my friend. He will be missed.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Rhode Island is recognized.

IRAQ WAR

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, as I come to the floor this morning to share my concerns about this country's disastrous policies in Iraq, our Nation is mourning the unimaginable loss of 32 people in the tragic and senseless shootings at Virginia Tech. The thoughts and prayers of every American are with the victims of this horrific episode, the deadliest shooting this country has ever seen. We are only beginning to learn exactly what happened yesterday. We may never know why it happened, but what we know for certain is that in our shared grief we will find shared resolve to care for the wounded, to comfort the families and friends of those who died, to support this university and its community, and to search for answers and hope this tragedy may never be repeated.

I have been a member of the Senate now for just over 100 days. I am here, and many of my freshman colleagues are here, because the people of Rhode Island, like millions of other people across this country, looked at the war in Iraq and saw something that needed to change. They saw hundreds of billions of dollars spent, much of it wasted on reconstruction contracts that were sloppily managed or ill-advised. They saw one after another in a succession of retired generals protesting the failed strategy in Iraq and arguing for a different course. They saw reports that the Bush administration had misused and politicized our national intelligence services to press a case for war that did not exist. They read books, chronicling a heartbreaking series of mistakes and misjudgments. They saw tens of thousands of American soldiers return home grievously injured, and mourned more than 3,000 men and women who will never return home.

The country saw one of the greatest foreign policy disasters of American history and demanded a new direction. The American people voted for change. They were sincere, sober, and correct in their judgment, and this new Congress listened, but President Bush did

not. Instead of committing to redeploy our troops from Iraq, the President chose to escalate this conflict. Now, instead of working with this new Congress to forge a new strategy, a strategy worthy of the sacrifices of our men and women in uniform, the President and Vice President are on the attack—on the political attack—not against the Iraqi leaders who are slow-walking us through this conflict in their country, but against the American people who have rightly questioned their failing policy. The question is this: How much longer will this President refuse to listen?

Since joining the Senate just over 100 days ago, I have worked to put pressure on the Bush administration to redeploy our troops from Iraq. In mid-March, as a member of the Senate Intelligence Committee, I traveled to Iraq to get a firsthand look at the situation on the ground, to see the hard work of our dedicated troops, and to talk with our military commanders and with Iraqi political officials. In Baghdad, our delegation met with several of the officers leading America's military engagement in Iraq, including GEN David Petraeus, LTG Raymond Odierno, and LTG Martin Dempsey, as well as members of our U.S. Embassy country team. We also met with Mahmud al-Mashhadani, Speaker of the Iraqi Parliament, and National Security Minister Shirwan al-Waili. In my capacity as a member of the Intelligence Committee, I also met with members of our Nation's intelligence staff and their Iraqi counterparts.

In Fallujah, we spoke with GEN Walter E. Gaskin, Marine commander in Anbar Province, and other commanders of the Marine Expeditionary Force. I met three brave Rhode Islanders there: Kristie St. Jean from Woonsocket, Christopher Tilson from Providence, and Anthony Paulo from Westerly, all serving our Nation with dedication, courage, and honor.

On our return, we traveled through Germany to visit Landstuhl Regional Medical Center near Ramstein Air Base where our soldiers, sailors, marines, and airmen, badly injured in Iraq and Afghanistan, are med-evac'd to receive critical medical care before their return home. MAJ Andrew Risio, who hails from Ashaway, RI, is helping provide care to our wounded soldiers in that facility.

The young men and women I met with in Iraq and their families have made tremendous sacrifices, and their expert performance and can-do attitude reinforced my pride in the American spirit. The security posture we maintain around our military bases is strong, and our troops are working hard to secure the cities and countryside of Iraq. The work of our intelligence and Special Operations personnel, which often runs nonstop through the night, is remarkable and exhibits a level of professionalism in which every American can be very confident.

The achievements of our forces in Iraq are serious—and here is what impressed me the most from our trip: So is their commitment that the Iraqis must assume responsibility for the security and governance of their own country. In nearly every briefing, at every level of command, the message came loud and clear that our military is highly focused on accomplishing a handover of security responsibilities so as to bring our troops home. As a young soldier in mess hall told me, the Iraqis ''won't stand up until we start to stand back.''

I do believe the Iraqis need more motivation to stand up. For instance, there is key legislation the Iraqi Parliament must pass that our military commanders believe is necessary if this surge is to succeed. They told me we cannot succeed in this military surge unless it is accompanied by a political surge, an economic surge, and a diplomatic surge. Critical measures to facilitate provincial elections, regulation and revenue-sharing for the Iraqi oil industry, reversing de-Beatification in favor of reunification, and restricting sectarian militias are all legislative initiatives that have stalled.

Iraq must take action and move this legislation forward and step up its own security presence. That will require real commitment and urgency, Mr. President. And it would be putting it mildly to say I was not reassured by the signals I received from our meetings with Iraqi officials. There is a serious disconnect between the urgency of our generals about this legislation, and the absence of urgency or energy on the part of Iraqi officials. One soldier I met put it in simple, homespun terms. He said: ''If your parents are willing to pay for the movies and you don't have to spend your own money, or if you can get your big sister to do your homework for you, who wants that to stop?''

It does have to stop and this Congress is taking action to make that clear. I was proud to vote with a majority of the Senate to pass binding bipartisan legislation to require the safe redeployment of our brave troops beginning in 120 days, with the goal of having the vast majority of our troops redeployed from Iraq by the end of March. I am also a cosponsor of the recently introduced Feingold-Reid legislation to continue to put pressure on the Bush administration to safely redeploy our troops.

Only the kind of pressure a decision to redeploy creates will provide the motivation needed for Iraq to take the necessary steps to assume responsibility for its own governance and security. An announcement that our troops will be leaving will encourage the Iraqis to step up and take their security seriously, will discourage the insurgents, and will send a message to the world community that stability in Iraq will no longer be the responsibility of America alone.

Last week, I had the opportunity to take that message directly to the Oval Office. In a meeting with President Bush and several of our colleagues who had recently traveled to Iraq, I urged him to announce a redeployment and a change of course was the strongest force he had in his hands. I also gave the President letters sent to me from Rhode Island folks with family members serving in Iraq. Those messages said loudly and clearly that it is time to bring our troops home.

But rather than acting to change course, the President keeps playing politics. He has threatened to veto legislation this Congress passed to provide critically needed funding for our troops in the field. In our meeting last week, he said he was prepared for what he called a ''classic political showdown.''

The question of what to do in Iraq is not a political fight between President Bush and the Democrats in Congress. It is a struggle between the President and the will and the good sense of the American people. It is long past time that their voices were heard.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from South Carolina is recognized.

Mr. DEMINT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DEMINT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 10 minutes in morning business.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT REQUEST—S. RES. 123

Mr. DEMINT. Mr. President, in January this body took a significant step toward reforming the way we spend American taxpayer dollars. While debating the ethics reform bill, Senators voted 98 to 0 in favor of my amendment requiring transparency for 100 percent of Member-requested earmarks. This was an early sign that Congress was going to change the way we do business here in Washington.

But since then, I am afraid my optimism has been tempered by a healthy dose of political reality. The ethics bill containing new Senate rules has been stalled, and its future enactment is anything but certain. In the meantime, the Senate has continued business as usual, as earmarking continues unfettered from transparency rules. The appropriators are soliciting earmarks. The WRDA bill is full of undisclosed earmarks, and none of the committees are complying with the anticorruption transparency requirements.

Upon notice that I was going to offer this bill again on the floor, the Democratic leadership of the Appropriations Committee just issued a press release

saying they were going to comply with these rules. That is really good news. So if the appropriators want to comply, there is no reason at all that we shouldn't enact this rule as a Senate rule.

Yesterday's Roll Call reported that the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee is advancing two pieces of legislation packed with billions of dollars worth of earmarks, but the committee is not asking Senators to certify that they have no financial interests in the projects, at least for now. In other words, the Senate is continuing to conduct its business in the old way, which was rejected by the American voters.

We cannot continue to wait. The Senate rules must be changed now if we are going to implement what the chairman of the Appropriations Committee, the distinguished chairman, called an accountable, aboveboard, transparent process for funding decisions, and put an end to the abuses that have harmed the credibility of Congress.

I agree 100 percent. My proposal, S. Res. 123, creates a new Senate rule that requires public disclosure of the earmarks contained in bills passed by committee. This disclosure includes the name of the Member requesting the earmark, the name and address of the intended recipient of the earmark, the purpose of the earmark, and a certification that the requesting Member and his or her spouse have no financial interest in the requested earmark. These are simple transparency ideas that the American people need.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the following Senators be added as cosponsors to S. Res. 123: Senator ENSIGN, Senator MCCAIN, Senator ENZI, Senator MARTINEZ, and Senator MCCASKILL.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DEMINT. Mr. President, this resolution will immediately require all Members who request earmarks to certify in writing that they have no financial interests in the requested earmark.

Following the imprisonment of Congressman Duke Cunningham for selling earmarks for bribes, Americans need to know their elected officials are not using public office for private gain. This is simply information every Senator should be willing to provide, and I believe most are.

But it is beginning to look as if the new majority is not really interested in shining light on the earmarking process. Before we left for the Easter recess, I asked unanimous consent for the Senate to adopt S. Res. 123 so that we could enact this important rule immediately. The majority objected and said this proposal needed to go through the ''appropriate process.'' That is a sad excuse. This rule has already gone through the normal process. It was offered as an amendment on the floor, it was modified by the leadership of the Democratic Party, and it passed 98 to 0. This is a Senate rule, and the only thing left for us to do is actually enact it.

Let me just read a few quotes from the Democratic leadership when we worked out the language on this bill before. This includes a lot of Democratic language.

Majority leader HARRY REID said: In effect, we have combined the best ideas from both sides of the aisle, Democrat and Republican, to establish the strongest possible disclosure rules in this regard.

Majority whip DICK DURBIN said: I am pleased with this bipartisan solution. I believe it reflects the intent of all on both sides of the aisle to make sure there is more disclosure. We have full agreement. The language has been vetted.

The bill I offer today as a Senate rule is exactly the language we passed 98 to 0.

The majority leader offered up his own excuse when he said his office was not notified in advance. In order to make sure that excuse is not used again, I sent a letter last week to the Democratic and Republican leaders notifying them of my intent to seek unanimous consent today to enact a Senate earmark disclosure rule—again, the one we have already passed 98 to 0.

But I understand the other side has come up with a third excuse. This time, they are going to say that enacting earmark disclosure requirements will dilute the effect of the lobbying and ethics reform bill. This is probably the weakest of all of their excuses. How does enacting an ethics reform provision dilute its effect? The only thing diluting ethics reform is our unwillingness to abide by this new rule. This excuse rings hollow because the majority did not bother to include this rule in their original bill. When we brought it to the floor, they tried to kill it.

I have tried to work in a bipartisan manner on this issue. I have been patient. But it has been over 80 days. The earmark process is continuing as usual, and all the American people are getting is excuses. It is time to enact this rule.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Rules Committee be discharged from further consideration and the Senate now proceed to S. Res. 123; further, that the resolution be agreed to and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?

The Senator from Illinois is recognized.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Illinois reserves the right to object.

The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, in explaining my reservation, I first wish to commend the Senator from South Carolina on the courtesy he has extended to both sides of the aisle in notifying us of his intent to make this unanimous-consent request. I wish to make clear to him and to all Members that the Senate Democratic leadership remains fully committed to earmark disclosure, but we believe his suggestion, taking it piece by piece, is not the right way to accomplish our goal.

Earlier this year, we considered comprehensive ethics reform. It is a product of the first 100 days of the new leadership of Congress that we are most proud of. Included in that reform was a provision related to transparency in earmarking. I supported this reform. In fact, I joined Senator DEMINT in crafting a new definition of ''earmark'' and requiring that earmarks in legislation be posted on the Internet prior to their final consideration on the floor of the Senate. We both agreed on this language. It passed with an overwhelming majority of 98 to 0, and the underlying bill passed 96 to 2.

No one is suggesting these earmark rules will not be implemented. In fact, today the Senate Appropriations Committee, chaired by the President pro tempore of the Senate, who is now presiding, Senator BYRD, has announced a new policy of transparency in accountability, totally consistent with the language which we agreed on and adopted overwhelmingly on the floor of the Senate.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the committee's announcement on these sweeping reforms be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations Press Release, Apr. 17, 2007]

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE ANNOUNCES EARMARK REFORM STANDARDS

WASHINGTON, DC.—The U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations will adopt an unprecedented policy of transparency and accountability beginning with the Fiscal 2008 appropriations cycle, Committee Chairman Robert C. Byrd, D–W.Va., announced Tuesday.

''The changes that we are making in the appropriations process will help to restore confidence in the Congress,'' Chairman Byrd explained. ''We are ending 'business as usual' in Washington, D.C. We will restore integrity to the process. We will increase accountability and openness, while we also will work to substantially reduce the number of earmarks in legislation.''

Until S. 1, the Ethics and Earmark Reform legislation, is signed into law, the Senate Appropriations Committee will follow these standards:

All earmarks will be clearly identified in the committee bill and report. The identification will include the requesting Senator, the amount of the earmark, the recipient of the earmark, and the purpose of the earmark. If there is no specifically intended recipient for an earmark, the intended location of the activity will be listed.

An earmark shall be defined as it is in the Senate-passed Ethics and Earmark Reform legislation. An earmark is a legislative provision or report language included primarily at the request of a Senator, Member of the House, Delegate, or Resident Commissioner, that provides, authorizes, or recommends a specific amount of discretionary budget authority, credit authority, or other spending

authority for a contract, loan, loan guarantee, grant, loan authority, or other expenditure with or to an entity, or targeted to a specific State, locality, or Congressional district, other than through a statutory or administrative formula driven or competitive award process.

The committee bill and report will be published on the Internet, both through the committee site (http://appropriations.senate.gov) as well as on the Library of Congress' website (http://thomas.loc.gov).

Senators will be required to certify that neither they nor their spouses have a financial interest in any earmark. Senators will need to submit a letter to the Appropriations Committee certifying that they have no financial interest in a project. Those letters will be available for public inspection. What constitutes a Senator's ''financial interest'' shall be determined by the guidelines of the Senate Ethics Committee and Senate Rule XXXVII.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, under these new guidelines, all earmarks will be clearly identified in the committee bill and report, including the requesting Senator, the amount of the earmark, the recipient of the earmark, and the purpose of the earmark. An earmark shall be defined as in the Senate-passed ethics reform bill, which Mr. DEMINT and I cosponsored. The committee bill and report will be published on the Internet—as my amendment required—so that the world can see these earmarks in advance of final passage. Senators will be required to certify that neither they nor their spouses have any financial interests in any earmark. These guidelines will be in place until the ethics reform bill is signed into law.

I commend the Presiding Officer as chairman of the Appropriations Committee for reaching out to the other side of the aisle, to the ranking member, Senator COCHRAN from Mississippi, so that he has been informed of our intention to reform this earmark process.

Earmark disclosure, though, is only one part of the much broader package. We need to strengthen gift and travel rules for Members of the Senate, close the revolving door, strengthen lobbying disclosure, outlaw the K Street Project, this notorious project in which Mr. Abramoff and others were involved, and take other steps to clean up the way business is done in Washington.

Now, if the Senator from South Carolina has his way, we will take one piece today. Some will suggest taking another piece tomorrow. I think it will dilute our effort. We need, within the next few weeks, to work with the House to pass this measure. For those who ask: Well, why hasn't it taken place so far, the House ethics reform was done by House rule, did not involve a joint action by the House and the Senate.

So we are going to find a vehicle that will accomplish our Senate ethics reform, statutory and rules reform, and do it in the appropriate manner and do it in a comprehensive way. We have been assured by House leaders that they will move on this bill in the next few weeks. As soon as the House acts, the Senate will move for conference as quickly as possible. We should not take up bits and pieces of the larger bill.

The Senate has expressed a strong support for earmark disclosure, and the Senate Appropriations Committee, which I am proud to be a member of, has taken the lead on this side of the aisle in strong reforms. The goal of the Senator from South Carolina is already being implemented, and I hope he can take ''yes'' for an answer.

I would like to correct one thing he said for the record. When he started his remarks about earmarks, he said at one point that when it comes to earmarks, this Senate is ''business as usual.'' As the Presiding Officer and those who follow the Senate know, that is hardly the case. When we considered the continuing resolution which had all of the pending appropriations bills from the previously Republican-controlled Congress yet enacted, we took a bold move on our part—that is, the Democratic side—and eliminated 9,300 earmarks that were in bills authored when the Senator from South Carolina was in the majority. We eliminated every single one of them—all 9,300 earmarks. It contained no new earmarks. This continuing resolution eliminated funding for over $2.1 billion of earmarks for over 1,900 separate projects.

This is hardly business as usual. Business as usual would have been to take the bills from a Republican Congress, with thousands of earmarks, and enact them into law. We did not do that. So to suggest we are continuing along the path that was the case when there were previous leaders in Congress is just not supported by the facts.

Beyond that, I can give my assurance to the Senator from South Carolina, my colleague, that the earmark language which we adopted in the Senate is going to be the standard by which we live. The Appropriations Committee has made that very clear. I believe that is what we should do.

So at this point, Mr. President, acknowledging the commitment of the Senator from South Carolina to this issue and acknowledging that he should be standing here and saying he has accomplished quite a bit to this point, I would have to say that his additional suggestion today of plucking out one piece of ethics reform and moving on it would be inconsistent with our ultimate goal of having comprehensive ethics reform. In the meantime, we have followed this measure through the Senate Appropriations Committee and, as a consequence, I must object.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Oklahoma is recognized.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I appreciate the opportunity to speak on this issue. It is very interesting. The American people should hear what has just gone on here.

What we have heard is rhetoric without responsibility. There is no question that by moving, as Senator DEMINT has, we finally got the Appropriations Committee to endorse what was passed in the ethics legislation. However, after the ethics legislation was passed, I spoke on the floor. I was the last person to speak on the floor late that evening. I made the statement—and it is now proving to be true—that it was ethics reform in name only, no substance.

We now hear an argument that says: We should not pass the most significant portion of the ethics bill in a stand-alone process so that we can, in fact, do what the American people want, which is transparency in this Government.

It is interesting, if you know how this place operates, that if in fact you have an earmark reform on appropriations only, and no earmark reform on an authorization, you have no earmark reform because once something is authorized in an authorizing bill through an earmark, it no longer will apply to the appropriations bill. So we will have the same thing going on. The reason we are seeing an objection to earmark reform is because we truly, in the majority of cases, don't want earmark reform. What we are doing is, we are doing it—talk about piecemeal—only in one area. What we will do is, there won't be an earmark on an appropriations bill. What we will do is authorize them now. Since we won't apply the earmark rule to authorization bills, the American public will once again be hoodwinked. They won't know whose financial interest it is nor who it will benefit.

The problem with ethics in Washington isn't the lobbyists, isn't the campaign contributions, it is the Members of Congress. Until that changes, until the American people demand accountability—what we just heard was a flimsy excuse for not accepting this into the rules of the Senate. We voted on it. The American people deserve it. It is a sham.

I again ask unanimous consent that the Rules Committee be discharged from further consideration, and the Senate now proceed to S. 123; further that the resolution be agreed to and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection to the several requests?

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Illinois reserves the right to object.

Mr. DURBIN. It strikes me as odd that the Senator from Oklahoma will not acknowledge the obvious. The earmark reform language which he supported, and the Senator from South Carolina supports, passed the Senate 98 to 0. It was part of the first comprehensive ethics reform package this Senate has seen in many years; many years of Republican rule, I might add. We are

now saying that the Appropriations Committee has voluntarily said, even before the conference committee that we are going to live by these standards.

I will not quibble with the Senator from Oklahoma because he and I see this quite differently. But authorizing a project does not mean it has money. That is why we have authorizing committees and appropriating committees. I can authorize the Sun, the Moon, the stars, and the Milky Way, but I will not deliver any of those to anybody until I get to an appropriations bill.

Mr. COBURN. Will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. DURBIN. When I am finished, I will. All of the authorization in the world notwithstanding, unless you appropriate the money from the Treasury for the project, it is just a good idea that might happen.

Mr. COBURN. Will the Senator yield?

Mr. DURBIN. I said I will. Allow me to finish my sentence. What I am suggesting is, other committees may take this up as well on an interim basis. But the bills that are going to move on the floor of the Senate are the appropriations bills. Now that the budget resolution is passed, our major obligation is to achieve something we haven't done for years. We want to try to pass the appropriations bills on time. That means that the time of the Senators from Oklahoma and South Carolina and all of us will be consumed with appropriations bills, and the rules we will play by on earmarks for those bills which will be front and center, our major business, will be the same rule that you voted for, the vote that the Senator from Oklahoma cast on this floor for earmark reform. So I say to the Senator from Oklahoma, he can be prepared as these bills come to the floor to see the very approach he has suggested be followed voluntarily. In the meantime we have the assurance of the House that this matter is going to conference committee.

Suggesting that we have abandoned our commitment to reform or calling it a flimsy excuse overstates the Senator's position.

I object.

Mr. COBURN. Will the Senator yield for a question?

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Senators will please address other Senators through the Chair and refer to other Senators in the third person, not in the first person.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I object to the unanimous consent request.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Illinois objects.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

INTELLIGENCE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2007

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 372, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 372) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2007 for the intelligence and intelligence-related activities of the United States Government, the Intelligence Community Management Account, and the Central Intelligence Agency Retirement and Disability System, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Rockefeller/Bond amendment No. 843, in the nature of a substitute.

Collins amendment No. 847 (to amendment No. 843), to reaffirm the constitutional and statutory protections accorded sealed domestic mail.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CASEY). The Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, the Republican manager, Senator BOND, and I and our staffs have been working together to clear some amendments, and we have in fact cleared already 10 amendments. I now ask unanimous consent that it be in order for the Senate to consider en bloc the following amendments, that they be agreed to en bloc, and that the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table en bloc. These were agreed to by both sides and have been cleared by all parties. The numbers of the amendments are 845, 846, 856, 858, 859, 860, 861, 862, 863, and 872.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the several requests?

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, it is very important that we move forward with this bill. We have given time for our colleagues to debate and raise other questions. We would ask that we be able to proceed in a reasonable timeframe to take up amendments which have been introduced by the chairman and the vice chairman together and reflect bipartisan agreement. As vice chairman, I am firmly committed to passage of intelligence reauthorization. I would say further it remains my intention to reduce the partisanship and politicization of intelligence matters.

Events on the Senate floor yesterday, including direct personal attacks on me, indicate this remains a tall order. This bill makes getting a bill harder, and it is already hard enough. Given the kitchen sink provided in the administration's Statement of Administration Policy indicating a possible veto, the chairman and I are trying in good faith, as the chairman indicated, to work through 9, 10, or a dozen amendments to correct the major objections that the administration has.

The administration must know that as we try to weigh their key priorities, they must respect our priorities and our fundamental oversight responsibility which I and the Members of this body should take seriously, as any Senator will.

As for yesterday's events, Senator MCCONNELL manages the floor for the minority. He did not want to end the debate prematurely and the opportunity to offer amendments by the minority, especially with 18 Members absent from the Senate due to bad weather. I supported him because it is the responsibility of our two leaders to manage the floor debate and to protect the rights of minorities and absent Senators. While the attacks on me were inappropriate and offensive, I will continue to work for passage of this intelligence reform measure, which is one of the most important bills we can pass in this session. The measure is too important to be derailed by personal and political attacks.

My friends on the other side of the aisle want more oversight of intelligence. I agree. We got into problems prior to 9/11 because we didn't have good oversight. We have found that there are holes that need to be plugged in oversight. We need to move forward. But forcing an end to the debate with 18 Members absent was not the way to do so. I am hoping that we can show progress by adopting amendments and moving this bill forward to exercise our oversight to provide the intelligence community the direction they need. Our desire is to move forward in the regular order, work our way through amendments, work out a time agreement, dispose of amendments, and hopefully conclude with a bill that most, if not the overwhelming majority, of Members can support so we can get to conference and continue the process.

I will continue to work with the chairman under the difficult circumstances that he and I both face. I am not for delay or any effort, real or imagined, to kill this bill, but I have honest concerns, as others, that there should be an opportunity to address through the regular order in a reasonable timeframe. If there are unreasonable delays, then we will pursue other options which are necessary sometimes to move a bill.

Because of the difficult division present in recent years over these issues, we have been unable to get an authorization bill passed. I find that unacceptable, and I am committed to finding a bill, but it can't be just any bill. It must be the product of give and take and mutual respect and compromise between both parties and both bodies and one the administration can sign.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Will the vice chairman yield?

Mr. BOND. Yes.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, the Senator from Oklahoma has indicated to me that he will not object to the managers' amendment going forward, if he would be allowed to finish what he was talking about, which I assume would happen within the next 5 or 8 minutes. If that is the case, then we will have made progress.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I didn't mean to cut the Senator off. For the movement of this bill, we had hoped to

be able to clear some amendments so we could show progress, but the Senator from Oklahoma is seeking recognition. I am sure he has some important things to say. I hope we will finish in time to allow us to pass the cleared amendments prior to 12:30. I apologize to the Senator from Oklahoma and thank the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. COBURN. I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for the next 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

EARMARKS

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, it is very important we not leave the debate on earmarks. What we saw was an issue about the integrity of Congress which Senator DEMINT and myself have been championing. There are only 4 Members of the Senate who don't offer earmarks, 4 out of 100 who don't play the game of earmarks. It is important that the American people know that if we are going to have earmarks, it ought to be clearly identified. We ought to know who is benefiting, who is getting the money, who is sponsoring the money, and what the outcome will be. It is great that the Appropriations Committee has just stated that they are going to voluntarily accede to the rules we passed 98 to 0, except there is one small problem with that; the fact is, there is no enforcement of the rules available to Senators when they violate that very point, which means they may follow that, but if, in fact, they do not, we have no course of action with which to raise a point of order when they do not.

I wish to go back to something the esteemed Senator from Illinois said, which is, we have gotten what we want. No, we have not. We have not gotten it until the American people get the transparency they need about how the Congress operates. If you eliminate earmarks in appropriations but do not eliminate earmarks in authorizations, what is authorized as an earmark will come to the appropriation as not an earmark because it is then authorized, so we will play the same game but one step further back.

I am disappointed at the leadership, that they would block what the American people so fully want. And the idea we have to conference what should be a Senate rule, when the House has already passed a rule—they operate under the very same thing Senator DEMINT has asked for—all we have to do is agree we will, in fact, abide by those rules by accepting that as a rule of the Senate. Anything less than that is political Washington doublespeak which the American people are tired of.

There should not be one earmark, one special favor, one indication of anything done at any level—authorization or appropriations—the American people are not fully aware of as to who has the vetted interest and who will be the benefactor and what the motivations might be in association with that.

So the fact the majority objects to incorporating what we obviously, supposedly, all agreed to—or was it the fact that people voted for it because the people wanted us to and now we will not carry it out? What it does, by not adopting this rule, Senator DEMINT's rule, is we undermine again the integrity of this body.

The American people deserve transparency. The American people should have transparency. The only way we can truly be held accountable by the American people is if they can see everything that is going on.

To deny this rule, to deny the fact we are going to operate in the open, to deny the fact we are going to be held accountable is exactly what the American people are sick of.

I remind my colleagues we do not have a higher favorability rating than the President at this time, whom we are so quick to impugn, and the reason we do not is the very reason we saw in the objection placed on this rule, this resolution. To me, it is a sad day in the Senate because we are playing games again with the American people. I said, after we passed the ethics bill, it will be a long time until we see anything. It will be a long time. It has already been a long time. Why hasn't it been conferenced? There have been 80 days to conference an ethics bill. There has not been the first step. There has not been the naming of conferees. There has not been the first step to move forward toward that.

The American people should surmise—and correctly—the Congress still wants to work in the shadows, they still do not want to have transparency; therefore, they still do not want to be held accountable by the American people.

I thank you for the time and yield back, and I will offer no objection to the request of the Senator from West Virginia to accept amendments on the Intelligence authorization bill.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to set aside the pending amendment so I may call up amendments Nos. 848, 849, 850, 851, 852, and 853, en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Objection.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, as I indicated before, the distinguished Republican manager, Senator BOND, and I and our staffs have been working together to clear some amendments. We have cleared 10. I now ask unanimous consent that it be in order for the Senate to consider en bloc the following amendments, that they be agreed to en bloc, and the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table, en bloc. The amendment numbers are 845, 846, 856, 858, 859, 860, 861, 862, 863, and 872.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. CORNYN. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Would the Senator yield?

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I believe the Senator from West Virginia has the floor. I don't.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia is recognized.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. The Senator from West Virginia would be interested as to why it is the distinguished Senator from Texas objects.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, let me suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia has the floor.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 849 TO AMENDMENT NO. 843

(Purpose: To amend chapter 113B of title 18, United States Code, to prohibit the recruitment of persons to participate in terrorism, to provide remedies for immigration litigation, and to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to modify the requirements related to judicial review of visa revocation and to modify the requirements related to detention and removal of aliens ordered removed)

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to set aside the pending amendment and call up Amendment No. 849.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Texas [Mr. CORNYN] proposes an amendment numbered 849 to amendment No. 843.

(The amendment is printed in the RECORD of Monday, April 16, 2007, under ''Text of Amendments.'')

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia is recognized.

AMENDMENTS NOS. 846, AS MODIFIED; 856, 858, 859, 860, AS MODIFIED; 861, AS MODIFIED; 862, 863, AND 872, AS MODIFIED, EN BLOC, TO AMENDMENT NO. 843

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, I resume my request which I will make in full, and that is that the Republican

manager, Senator BOND, and this Senator from West Virginia and our staffs have been working together to clear some amendments. We have cleared 10 amendments—9 amendments. I ask unanimous consent that it be in order for the Senate to consider en bloc the following amendments, that they be agreed to en bloc, and the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table en bloc. Those amendment numbers are 846, 856, 858, 859, 860, 861, 862, 863, and 872.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendments were agreed to, as follows:

AMENDMENT NO. 846, AS MODIFIED

On page 37, between lines 19 and 20, insert the following:

''(7) develop 15-year projections and assessments of the needs of the intelligence community to ensure a robust federal scientific and engineering workforce and the means to recruit such a workforce through integrated scholarships across the intelligence community, including research grants and cooperative work-study programs;

AMENDMENT NO. 856

(Purpose: To strike the requirement for a study on the disclosure of additional intelligence information)

Beginning on page 11, strike line 18 and all that follows through page 12, line 20.

AMENDMENT NO. 858

(Purpose: To improve the notification of Congress regarding intelligence activities of the United States Government)

Strike section 304 and insert the following:

SEC. 304. IMPROVEMENT OF NOTIFICATION OF CONGRESS REGARDING INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT.

(a) CLARIFICATION OF DEFINITION OF CONGRESSIONAL INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEES TO INCLUDE ALL MEMBERS OF COMMITTEES.—Section 3(7) of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 401a(7)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (A), by inserting '', and includes each member of the Select Committee'' before the semicolon; and

(2) in subparagraph (B), by inserting '', and includes each member of the Permanent Select Committee'' before the period.

(b) NOTICE ON INFORMATION NOT DISCLOSED.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 502 of such Act (50 U.S.C. 413a) is amended—

(A) by redesignating subsections (b) and (c) as subsections (c) and (d), respectively; and

(B) by inserting after subsection (a) the following new subsection (b):

''(b) NOTICE ON INFORMATION NOT DISCLOSED.—(1) If the Director of National Intelligence or the head of a department, agency, or other entity of the United States Government does not provide information required by subsection (a) in full or to all the members of the congressional intelligence committees, and requests that such information not be so provided, the Director shall, in a timely fashion, notify such committees of the determination not to provide such information in full or to all members of such committees. Such notice shall be submitted in writing in a classified form, include a statement of the reasons for such determination and a description that provides the main features of the intelligence activities covered by such determination, and contain no restriction on access to this notice by all members of the committee.

''(2) Nothing in this subsection shall be construed as authorizing less than full and current disclosure to all the members of the Select Committee on Intelligence of the Senate and the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence of the House of Representatives of any information necessary to keep all the members of such committees fully and currently informed on all intelligence activities covered by this section.''.

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Subsection (d) of such section, as redesignated by paragraph (1)(A) of this subsection, is amended by striking ''subsection (b)'' and inserting ''subsections (b) and (c)''.

(c) REPORTS AND NOTICE ON COVERT ACTIONS.—

(1) FORM AND CONTENT OF CERTAIN REPORTS.—Subsection (b) of section 503 of such Act (50 U.S.C. 413b) is amended—

(A) by redesignating paragraphs (1) and (2) as subparagraphs (A) and (B), respectively;

(B) by inserting ''(1)'' after ''(b)''; and

(C) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(2) Any report relating to a covert action that is submitted to the congressional intelligence committees for the purposes of paragraph (1) shall be in writing, and shall contain the following:

''(A) A concise statement of any facts pertinent to such report.

''(B) An explanation of the significance of the covert action covered by such report.''.

(2) NOTICE ON INFORMATION NOT DISCLOSED.—Subsection (c) of such section is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(5) If the Director of National Intelligence or the head of a department, agency, or other entity of the United States Government does not provide information required by subsection (b) in full or to all the members of the congressional intelligence committees, and requests that such information not be so provided, the Director shall, in a timely fashion, notify such committees of the determination not to provide such information in full or to all members of such committees. Such notice shall be submitted in writing in a classified form, include a statement of the reasons for such determination and a description that provides the main features of the covert action covered by such determination, and contain no restriction on access to this notice by all members of the committee.''.

(3) MODIFICATION OF NATURE OF CHANGE OF COVERT ACTION TRIGGERING NOTICE REQUIREMENTS.—Subsection (d) of such section is amended by striking ''significant'' the first place it appears.

AMENDMENT NO. 859

(Purpose: To strike the pilot program on disclosure of records under the Privacy Act relating to certain intelligence activities)

Strike section 310.

AMENDMENT NO. 860, AS MODIFIED

Beginning on page 29, strike line 24 and all that follows through page 31, line 15, and insert the following:

(1) REPORT REQUIRED.—Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director of National Intelligence shall provide to the members of the Select Committee on Intelligence of the Senate and the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence of the House of Representatives a report on any clandestine prison or detention facility currently or formerly operated by the United States Government for individuals captured in the global war on terrorism.

(2) ELEMENTS.—The report required by paragraph (1) shall include the following:

(A) The date each prison or facility became operational, and if applicable, the date on which each prison or facility ceased its operations.

(B) The total number of prisoners or detainees held at each prison or facility during its operation.

(C) The current number of prisoners or detainees held at each operational prison or facility.

(D) The total and average annual costs of each prison or facility during its operation.

(E) A description of the interrogation procedures used or formerly used on detainees at each prison or facility, including whether a determination has been made that such procedures are or were in compliance with the United States obligations under the Geneva Conventions and the Convention Against Torture.

AMENDMENT NO. 861, AS MODIFIED

Beginning on page 96, strike line 24 and all that follows through page 97, line 6, and insert the following:

''(2)(A) As directed by the Director of National Intelligence, the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency shall also develop a system to facilitate the analysis, dissemination, and incorporation of likenesses, videos, or presentations produced by ground-based platforms, including handheld or clandestine photography taken by or on behalf of human intelligence collection organizations or available as open source information into the National System for Geospatial-Intelligence.

AMENDMENT NO. 862

(Purpose: To change the name of the National Space Intelligence Center to the National Space Intelligence Office)

Strike section 410 and insert the following:

SEC. 410. NATIONAL SPACE INTELLIGENCE OFFICE.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Title I of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 401 et seq.) is amended by adding after section 119B the following new section:

''NATIONAL SPACE INTELLIGENCE OFFICE

''SEC. 119C. (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established within the Office of the Director of National Intelligence a National Space Intelligence Office.

''(b) DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL SPACE INTELLIGENCE OFFICE.—The National Intelligence Officer for Science and Technology, or a successor position designated by the Director of National Intelligence, shall act as the Director of the National Space Intelligence Office.

''(c) MISSIONS.—The National Space Intelligence Office shall have the following missions:

''(1) To coordinate and provide policy direction for the management of space-related intelligence assets.

''(2) To prioritize collection activities consistent with the National Intelligence Collection Priorities framework, or a successor framework or other document designated by the Director of National Intelligence.

''(3) To provide policy direction for programs designed to ensure a sufficient cadre of government and nongovernment personnel in fields relating to space intelligence, including programs to support education, recruitment, hiring, training, and retention of qualified personnel.

''(4) To evaluate independent analytic assessments of threats to classified United States space intelligence systems throughout all phases of the development, acquisition, and operation of such systems.

''(d) ACCESS TO INFORMATION.—The Director of National Intelligence shall ensure that the National Space Intelligence Office has access to all national intelligence information (as appropriate), and such other information (as appropriate and practical), necessary for the Office to carry out the missions of the Office under subsection (c).

''(e) SEPARATE BUDGET ACCOUNT.—The Director of National Intelligence shall include in the National Intelligence Program budget a separate line item for the National Space Intelligence Office.''.

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents for that Act is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 119B the following new item:

''Sec. 119C. National Space Intelligence Office.''.

(b) REPORT ON ORGANIZATION OF OFFICE.—

(1) REPORT REQUIRED.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director of the National Space Intelligence Office shall submit to the Select Committee on Intelligence of the Senate and the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence of the House of Representatives a report on the organizational structure of the National Space Intelligence Office established by section 119C of the National Security Act of 1947 (as added by subsection (a)).

(2) ELEMENTS.—The report required by paragraph (1) shall include the following:

(A) The proposed organizational structure of the National Space Intelligence Office.

(B) An identification of key participants in the Office.

(C) A strategic plan for the Office during the five-year period beginning on the date of the report.

AMENDMENT NO. 86

(Purpose: To modify the requirements related to the Director and Deputy Director of the Central Intelligence Agency)

Strike section 421 and insert the following:

SEC. 421. DIRECTOR AND DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT OF POSITION OF DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY.—Subsection (a) of section 104A of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 403–4a) is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsections (b), (c), (d), (e), (f), and (g) as subsections (d), (e), (f), (g), (h), and (i) respectively; and

(2) by inserting after subsection (a) the following new subsections (b) and (c):

''(b) DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY.—(1) There is a Deputy Director of the Central Intelligence Agency who shall be appointed by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate.

''(2) The Deputy Director of the Central Intelligence Agency shall assist the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency in carrying out the duties and responsibilities of the Director.

''(3) The Deputy Director of the Central Intelligence Agency shall act for, and exercise the powers of, the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency during the absence or disability of the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency or during a vacancy in the position of Director of the Central Intelligence Agency.

''(c) MILITARY STATUS OF DIRECTOR OF THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY AND DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY.—(1) Not more than one of the individuals serving in the positions specified in subsection (a) and (b) may be a commissioned officer of the Armed Forces in active status.

''(2) A commissioned officer of the Armed Forces who is serving as the Director or Deputy Director of the Central Intelligence Agency or is engaged in administrative performance of the duties of Director or Deputy Director of the Central Intelligence Agency shall not, while continuing in such service, or in the administrative performance of such duties—

''(A) be subject to supervision or control by the Secretary of Defense or by any officer or employee of the Department of Defense; or

''(B) exercise, by reason of the officer's status as a commissioned officer, any supervision or control with respect to any of the military or civilian personnel of the Department of Defense except as otherwise authorized by law.

''(3) Except as provided in subparagraph (A) or (B) of paragraph (2), the service, or the administrative performance of duties, described in that paragraph by an officer described in that paragraph shall not affect the status, position, rank, or grade of such officer in the Armed Forces, or any emolument, perquisite, right, privilege, or benefit incident to or arising out of such status, position, rank, or grade.

''(4) A commissioned officer described in paragraph (2), while serving, or continuing in the administrative performance of duties, as described in that paragraph and while remaining on active duty, shall continue to receive military pay and allowances. Funds from which such pay and allowances are paid shall be reimbursed from funds available to the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency.''.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Paragraph (2) of subsection (e) of such section, as redesignated by subsection (a)(1) of this section, is further amended by striking ''subsection (d)'' and inserting ''subsection (f)''.

(c) EXECUTIVE SCHEDULE LEVEL III.—Section 5314 of title 5, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new item:

''Deputy Director of the Central Intelligence Agency.''.

(d) ROLE OF DNI IN APPOINTMENT.—Section 106(b)(2) of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 403–6(b)(2)) is amended by adding at the end the fallowing new subparagraph:

''(J) The Deputy Director of the Central Intelligence Agency.''.

(e) EFFECTIVE DATE AND APPLICABILITY.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect on the date of the enactment of this Act and shall apply upon the earlier of—

(1) the date of the nomination by the President of an individual to serve as Deputy Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, except that the individual administratively performing the duties of the Deputy Director of the Central Intelligence Agency as of the date of the enactment of this Act may continue to perform such duties after such date of nomination and until the individual appointed to the position of Deputy Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, assumes the duties of such position; or

(2) the date of the cessation of the performance of the duties of Deputy Director of the Central Intelligence Agency by the individual administratively performing such duties as of the date of the enactment of this Act.

AMENDMENT NO. 872, AS MODIFIED

On page 28, line 19, strike ''legal opinions'' and insert ''legal justifications''.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, I also ask unanimous consent that it be in order for any of the cleared amendments to be modified to comport to the substitute.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I thank the Chairman. We are moving forward now on the bill. As indicated, we have some drafting problems we are working out, but we also have high hopes of being able to adopt a number of the amendments that have been filed on both sides. Some of them may require modification.

Mr. President, as we get ready to go to our policy lunches, I once again ask that Members with amendments come forward and let us know what the amendments are. We ask that they be germane, because nongermane amendments, even if they are passed, will not survive conference. We want to keep the proceedings moving forward, so we ask that amendments be germane. We ask Members to work with us so we can accept them or offer a compromise to make them acceptable. We want to do that. Otherwise, when votes are needed, and I am sure they will be, we ask that a reasonable time period be agreed on by both sides, the proponent of the amendment and the opponent, so we may get some orderly procedure so our colleagues will know how we are moving forward and we can show progress.

I thank the Chair and I yield the floor.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:40 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m., and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. CARPER).

INTELLIGENCE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2007—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The pending business is the Cornyn amendment. Who seeks recognition?

The Senator from Tennessee is recognized.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for 5 minutes.

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, I wonder if my colleague will first allow me to lay down an amendment but not speak to it.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Yes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona is recognized.

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, is there a pending amendment?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Yes, it is the Cornyn amendment.

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to lay aside the pending amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 866 TO AMENDMENT NO. 849

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, I simply ask unanimous consent to call up as a second-degree amendment to the pending amendment my amendment No. 866.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Arizona [Mr. KYL] proposes an amendment numbered 866 to amendment No. 849.

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To protect classified information)

At the end, add the following:

SEC. _____. UNLAWFUL DISCLOSURE OF CLASSIFIED REPORTS BY ENTRUSTED PERSONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—It shall be unlawful for any person who is an employee or member of the Senate or House of Representatives, or who is entrusted with or has lawful possession of, access to, or control over any classified information contained in a report submitted to Congress under this Act, the USA PATRIOT Improvement and Reauthorization Act of 2005 (Public Law 109–177; 120 Stat. 192), the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 (Public Law 108–458; 118 Stat. 3638), or an amendment made by any such Act to—

(1) knowingly and willfully communicate, furnish, transmit, or otherwise makes available such information to an unauthorized person;

(2) publish such information; or

(3) use such information in any manner prejudicial to the safety or interest of the United States or for the benefit of any foreign government to the detriment of the United States.

(b) PENALTY.—Any person who violates subsection (a) shall be fined under title 18, United States Code, imprisoned not more than 10 years, or both.

(c) INFORMATION TO CONGRESS.—Nothing in this section shall prohibit the furnishing, upon lawful demand, of information to any regularly constituted committee of the Senate or House of Representatives, or joint committee thereof.

(d) DEFINITIONS.—As used in this section—

(1) the term ''classified information'' means information which, at the time of a violation of this section, is determined to be Confidential, Secret, or Top Secret pursuant to Executive Order 12958, or any successor thereto; and

(2) the term ''unauthorized person'' means any person who does not have authority or permission to have access to the classified information under the provisions of a statute, Executive Order, regulation, or directive of the head of any department or agency who is empowered to classify information.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee is now recognized.

USCIS NATURALIZATION TEST REDESIGN

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I thank my colleagues for giving me 5 minutes.

As my late friend Alex Haley, the author of ''Roots,'' said, ''Find the good and praise it.'' We talk an awful lot about illegal immigration here in the Senate. The majority and minority leaders have both said that before Memorial Day, we will bring up immigration reform in a comprehensive manner. I hope very much that we do that. That is our responsibility. It is too big a problem for one party to solve, and we should work on it in a bipartisan way.

Today, I want to talk about legal immigration as opposed to illegal immigration. About 650,000 individuals become U.S. citizens every year. Each of us has attended ceremonies where this happens. This is at the very heart of our Nation. This is why we call the United States of America the Nation of immigrants. What is so important about them is that no one becomes an American based upon his or her race or where their grandparents came from. In fact, that is constitutionally impermissible. One becomes an American by a remarkable oath of allegiance to this country as opposed to some other country, and then demonstrating good character, being here for 5 years, and showing that you know our common language, English, and an understanding of the U.S. history.

The importance of that was brought home to me last week when I was visiting in Nashville. About 30 percent of all of the students in Tennessee who have limited English proficiency happen to be in the Nashville School District, and Pedro Garcia, the superintendent of schools, was telling me that many of those students who are not now American citizens want to make sure they learn enough U.S. history in middle school and high school so they can pass the citizenship test and become Americans when they graduate.

Today, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, USCIS, is formally releasing the Citizen's Almanac. I call it to the attention of our colleagues. It is a collection of American symbols of freedom and liberty to be given to every newly sworn citizen, and that would be 650,000 this year. It is built upon action that was taken earlier this year by the USCIS to create a new and better citizenship test.

At the conclusion of my remarks, I ask unanimous consent that a fact sheet about the naturalization test redesign be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(See exhibit 1.)

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, the purpose of that test is to simply give new meaning to what it means to be an American. That oath of allegiance which these 650,000 new citizens will take is basically the same oath that George Washington and his officers took at Valley Forge in 1778. It has a great deal of meaning. Other countries in the world have not had the experience we have had helping people from around the world become Americans. The English, the French, the Japanese, and the Germans are struggling with that right now, as people move in who are not Japanese, German, English, or French. It is hard for them to become part of that national identity. We have not had that problem. We welcome everyone based upon their understanding of the symbols and documents represented in the Citizen's Almanac. So if we don't teach about these things in our schools or immigrants don't learn it in the naturalization process, then we are not a united country.

As I have said many times on this floor, diversity is a great strength of the United States of America, but it is not our greatest strength. Our greatest strength is that we have been able to take all of this diversity and mold it into one country, not because of race or ethnicity but because of a belief in a few principles and our common language. We are able to say we are proud of where we came from, but we are prouder to be Americans.

I salute the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services for this document, and the National Endowment for the Humanities for its hard work on it. The Citizen's Almanac includes the patriotic anthems and symbols of the United States, Presidential and historical speeches from Presidents Lincoln, Washington, Roosevelt, Kennedy and Reagan, and Martin Luther King, Jr., and landmark decisions of the Supreme Court. It ought to be in every Senate office. It will be in every home of every new citizen. It will be a good document to be in every school in America.

I yield the floor.

EXHIBIT 1

[From the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, Jan. 22, 2007]

USCIS NATURALIZATION TEST REDESIGN

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) is revising the naturalization test to create a test and testing process that is standardized, fair and meaningful. A standardized and fair naturalization test will include uniform testing protocols and procedures nationwide to ensure that there is no variation between offices. A meaningful test will encourage civic learning and patriotism among prospective citizens. A revised test, with an emphasis on the fundamental concepts of American democracy and the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, will help to encourage citizenship applicants to learn and identify with the basic values that we all share as Americans.

BACKGROUND

During the past 10 years, the standardization and meaningfulness of the naturalization test have come under scrutiny. Various studies found that the exam lacked standardized content, instruments, protocols or scoring system. Inconsistencies were reported in the way the exams were administered nationwide, and there was no assessment of whether applicants had a meaningful understanding of U.S. history and government.

To address these concerns, Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) launched a test redesign project in 2000 that has included technical assistance from several test development contractors, the National Academy of Sciences, a panel of history and U.S. government scholars, and a panel of English as a Second Language (ESL) experts. In addition, USCIS has sought input from a variety of stakeholders, including immigrant advocacy groups, citizenship instructors, ESL teachers, and USCIS District Adjudications Officers.

Changes to the naturalization test

The reading and writing portions of the pilot naturalization exam is similar to the current test except that the new exam contains more civics-based vocabulary. Applicants will still have up to three chances to read and write a sentence correctly in English. In the writing section of the test, the testing officer will dictate a sentence and ask the applicant to write everything the officer reads. During the reading portion

of the test, the test officer will ask the applicant to read each word out loud in that sentence.

The proposed format for the new civics exam will still require applicants to correctly answer six out of 10 questions chosen from a master list of 100 civics questions and answers. The difference is that the new sentences will now focus on civics and history topics, rather than the general range of topics on the current test. USCIS has placed these questions and answers, along with a study guide on the Internet and elsewhere in the public domain to help applicants prepare.

Q. What are the new civics questions and English vocabulary list items?

A. USCIS posted has made the English vocabulary lists available at: www.uscis.gov/natzpilot.

Q. How were the questions developed?

A. English Items. A panel of English as a Second Language (ESL) and other test development experts chosen by the association of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) developed the English items. The TESOL panel established an English language level for the test consistent with Department of Education reporting levels for adult basic education.

Civics Items. The TESOL panel also assisted in drafting and reviewing civics questions using a content framework identified by the Office of Citizenship from a review of government authorized civics and citizenship texts, the U.S. Department of Education's National Standards for Civics and Government, the current naturalization test, and the study guide developed by a panel of experts assembled by USCIS in 2004.

Q. How are the new questions an improvement over the old questions?

A. By weighing the questions on the new civics and U.S. history test we will ensure that all test forms are at the same cognitive and language level. By creating test forms at the same level of difficulty, we are ensuring that an applicant who goes for an interview in one city of the country has the same chance of passing the test as in any other city. The English vocabulary on the new test is also fairer because it is targeted at a language level consistent with the Department of Education reporting standards for the level required by Section 312 of the Immigration and Nationality Act. District Adjudication Officers are being trained to administer and score the naturalization tests in the same way nationwide to ensure uniform administration of the test.

Applicants will receive a study guide on the new civics and U.S. history questions so they can deepen their knowledge and understanding of our Nation as they prepare for the exam. The new items will focus less on redundant and trivial questions based on rote memorization and will focus on concepts, such as the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. Some items on the current test fit those needs and required little content change, so several items from the current test will appear on the revised test. The range of acceptable answers to each question will also increase so that applicants can learn more about a topic and select from a wider range of acceptable answers. And finally, the reading and writing test will provide a tool for civic learning because the vocabulary list is civics-based.

Q. How will the interview process change for applicants?

A. The interview process will not change.

PILOT PROGRAM

As part of the test redesign, USCIS will conduct a pilot program in ten cities beginning in February 2007 to ensure the agency has all the information necessary before the new test is fully implemented nationwide in 2008. During this pilot, USCIS will carefully analyze the new test questions to make certain that the questions are fair and work as they were intended. USCIS will also collect information about testing procedures, to include feedback from DAOs, to help refine the testing procedures and facilitate the smooth transition to the new naturalization exam.

Q. What will USCIS pilot?

A. USCIS plans to pilot 142 U.S. history and government questions and approximately 36 reading and 36 writing items. The topic areas include principals of American democracy, system of government, rule of law, rights and responsibilities, American History, and geography. About half of the questions include rephrased versions of questions on the current test. All citizenship applicants in the 10 pilot areas who are scheduled for their naturalization test during the pilot will receive advance copies of the civics questions and the two lists of vocabulary for self-study. USCIS has also posted these study materials on the web at: http://www.uscis.gov/natzpilot. The actual test will become available to the public.

Q. How were the questions selected?

A. The TESOL panel assisted USCIS in drafting and reviewing civics questions using best practices and conventional sample techniques, such as regression analysis, currently used in private industry.

Q. Where are the test sites?

A. The pilot program will run in 10 cities that were randomly selected based on citizenship application volume. The ten pilot sites are: Albany, NY, Boston, MA; Charleston, S.C.; Denver; EL Paso, Texas; Kansas City, Mo.; Miami; San Antonio, Texas; Tucson, Ariz.; and Yakima, Wash.

Q. How were the 10 pilot cities selected?

A. To capture the diversity of USCIS offices and applicants, USCIS randomly selected a representative sample of 10 districts by geographic region and the volume of applications that were processed in each office to conduct the pilot. This method will help insure that the final results can be made with equal accuracy and statistical weight.

Q. What is the purpose of the pilot?

A. A pilot is a crucial component of any test design process. A pilot ensures that the draft test items, scoring rubrics, and administration processes are appropriate, not too difficult, and elicit the responses we expect.

Q. How will USCIS conduct the pilot?

A. USCIS must administer about 6,000 tests to achieve a representative and significant study.

Pilots will begin in February 2007 and will last between two to four months.

USCIS trained the test administrators on the new exam process.

USCIS will mail a notification to all applicants scheduled for an interview at the pilot sites during the pilot period informing them that they have the opportunity to participate in the national pilot program.

Applicants will also receive a letter explaining the pilot and study questions.

Applicants who take the pilot but do not pass one or more parts will have the opportunity to take the current test or part of the current test immediately during the interview, thus giving them an additional opportunity to pass the naturalization test.

Many of the questions on the pilot test and the current test cover the same subjects, so additional preparation is expected to be minimal.

Once pilot results have been analyzed, piloted items will be revised accordingly.

Q. Must applicants participate in the pilot?

A. No. Applicants will have the choice to decline participation in the pilot test. For those who decline, they will be given the current test.

USCIS will continue to meet with local immigrant service providers, advocates, and ESL teachers in pilot sites to gain their support so that they can encourage immigrants to participate in their government and make this a successful pilot.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California is recognized.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Senator FEINGOLD and I be permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SENATE CAMPAIGN DISCLOSURE PARITY ACT

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise in my capacity as chairman of the Rules Committee to speak about a bill that the Committee heard and passed out unanimously a short time ago. That bill is entitled the ''Senate Campaign Disclosure Parity Act.'' It is sponsored by Senators FEINGOLD, COCHRAN, and 32 other Senators. It would require that Senate campaign finance reports be filed electronically rather than in paper format. That is all the bill does.

Currently, House candidates, Presidential candidates, political action committees, and party committees are all required to file electronically, and they do. But Senators, Senate candidates, authorized campaign committees, and the Democratic and Republican Senate campaign committees are exempt. As a result, we have a very cumbersome system in which paper copies of disclosure reports are filed with the Senate Office of Public Records, which then scans them, makes an electronic copy of them, and sends that copy to the FEC on a dedicated communications line. The FEC then prints the report and sends it to a vendor in Fredericksburg, VA, where the information is keyed in by hand and transferred back to the FEC database. All of this costs about $250,000, and it is a waste of money, a waste of staff, and a waste of time.

At our hearing on February 14 on this bill—and this bill is just on this point—it was clear that there was no public opposition to this proposal, only public support. The bill has been hotlined. It has cleared on the Democratic side. It has not cleared on the Republican side.

Now, again, this bill says we will just allow us to electronically file our quarterly reports. I just electronically filed my quarterly reports. I then gave a paper copy to the Secretary of the Senate. This is exactly the type of good-government law the Senate can adopt as a stand-alone measure.

I hope we move this legislation today, without burdening it with other items. It is really long past time to bring the Senate into the modern era. So I hope my colleagues on both sides of the aisle will join me in ensuring timely access and disclosure of Senate finance campaign activities and bring that information before the public.

I will now yield to the author of the legislation, the distinguished Senator from Wisconsin.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin is recognized.

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from California. I am very pleased to be here with her today. I sincerely thank the Senator from California for moving the Senate Campaign Disclosure Parity Act through the Rules Committee so that we are now in a position to finally pass this legislation. As the Senator from California indicated, at last count, we now have 35 cosponsors for S. 223, 20 Democrats and 15 Republicans, and no known opposition.

The bill fixes the anomaly in the election laws that makes it nearly impossible for the public to get timely access to Senate campaign finance reports, even though most other reports are available on the Internet within 24 hours of their filing with the Federal Election Commission, FEC. This bill will finally bring Senate campaigns into the 21st century by amending the section of the election laws dealing with electronic filing to require reports filed with the Secretary of the Senate to be filed electronically and forwarded to the FEC within 24 hours.

This step is long overdue. There is no excuse for keeping our own campaign finance information inaccessible to the public when the information filed by House and Presidential candidates, PACs, parties, and even 527 organizations is readily available almost immediately. The Washington Post has called the outmoded Senate campaign reporting system ''obviously unjustified,'' and Roll Call has called it ''indefensible.'' I couldn't agree more.

The current system means that the FEC's detailed coding, which allows the press and the public to do more sophisticated searches and analysis, is completed over a week later for Senate reports than for House reports. It means that the final disclosure reports covering the first 2 weeks of October are often not available for detailed scrutiny until after the election. That is scandalous and there is no good reason for it.

Let me just say that I know that the election laws have a big impact on campaigns and all Senators have a strong personal stake in vetting changes to those laws. I am very familiar with controversial and contested campaign finance legislation. This isn't that kind of bill. This bill is as close to a no-brainer as you can get in this area.

In addition to bipartisan support here in the Senate, major media outlets have endorsed it, as have bloggers on the left and the right. No one that I know of opposes it. And yet, it has now been nearly 3 and a half years since I first introduced it. That is nearly half as long as it took us to pass McCain-Feingold. I know McCain-Feingold. You might say McCain-Feingold is a friend of mine. This bill is no McCain-Feingold.

As I understand it, this bill has cleared the Democratic side. Given the strong support for it from across the political spectrum, and cosponsorship from many Republican Senators, and I especially thank Senator COCHRAN for being the main author along with me. I sincerely hope there won't be an objection on the Republican side. It would be wrong to hold this bill up as some kind of bargaining chip. It is time for the Senate to pass this bill, and I hope that can be done today.

Once again, I thank the Senator from California, and I yield the floor.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, if I may, I will ask a question of the Senator from Wisconsin. First, I thank him for his leadership on this issue.

If I can ask the Senator, is there any item in this bill other than electronic filing?

Mr. FEINGOLD. No, there is not.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Doesn't this bill simply enable Members of the Senate, just as every other political office does, to file directly electronically their finance reports?

Mr. FEINGOLD. That is all it does.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. I thank the Senator.

Mr. President, this is such a simple, direct bill with respect to transparency. It is an idea whose time has long come. It happens everywhere else except for the Senate, Senate committees, and the Senate campaign committees. The time is long overdue to pass this bill. It is such a simple, good-government issue. It is very hard for me to understand who could oppose this and what their reason for opposing it could be. I hope that if there is opposition in this Senate, the Member would be willing to come down to the floor and express why they would oppose this bill.

We have the solid support of the entire Rules Committee. This bill was easy to pass out of committee. It was easy to hotline on the Democratic side, and it should be easy to pass by unanimous consent.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 96, S. 223, a bill to require Senate candidates to file designations, statements, and reports in electronic forms; that the committee-reported amendment be considered and agreed to; that the bill, as amended, be read three times, passed; and that the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, on behalf of a Republican Senator, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. I yield the floor.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ACTION ON AMENDMENTS NOS. 856 AND 859 VITIATED

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the previous action on amendments Nos. 856 and 859 be vitiated.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BROWN). The Senator from West Virginia is recognized.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at 5:45 p.m. today, the motion to proceed to the motion to reconsider be agreed to, the motion to reconsider be agreed to, and without further interning action, the Senate proceed to vote on the motion to invoke cloture on S. 372, the Intelligence authorization bill; further, that Members have until 4:45 p.m. to file any second-degree amendments.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, I should say this has been cleared on both sides.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa is recognized.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask to speak as in morning business for half an hour, although I probably will not speak that long.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MEDICARE

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, earlier this year I gave a series of statements on this floor on the Medicare prescription drug benefit. Back then, I said I was informing my colleagues because in the near future Congress would consider some fundamental changes in how the benefit works.

Well, for the entire Senate, the future is now. Last week the Senate Finance Committee marked up legislation on the so-called prohibition on Government negotiations under the Medicare prescription drug benefit. When I gave these four statements during February, I said it was important for the public and also for Medicare

beneficiaries to understand the proposed changes, and that it was equally important to explore the effects these changes would have.

Those reasons still hold true this very day. They are even more important now as the Senate gears up for action on that ill-advised legislation. I will inform my colleagues on this topic today, tomorrow, and the rest of the week, if I need to, because I want to make sure everyone understands the consequences of this legislation that is going to change the Medicare Program and hurt the Medicare Program, a program that is working; that if it ain't broke, don't fix it. I am willing to talk about this issue until I am blue in the face.

First, everyone should recognize that political opponents of the drug benefit that we call Part D of Medicare have tried for 4 years to tear this benefit apart since day one. Day one dates back to December 2003, when the President signed the bill. These naysayers feel Government can always manage better. They want a Government-run benefit program of drugs in Medicare, and they want the Federal Government dictating drug prices, as if the Federal Government can dictate drug prices.

Thankfully, the naysayers lost when that legislation was being considered. But that has not stopped them from constantly whining and carping about the drug benefit that is now law. The naysayers said there would be no prescription drug plans. Then when there were plenty of prescription drug plans coming into the system, approved by the Secretary of HHS to administer to the seniors of America, they said there were too many plans.

The naysayers said it was too confusing, that the seniors would not be able to choose plans, even arguing that there would be a small number of seniors signing up.

But the seniors have enrolled. In fact, 92 percent of the seniors in America are covered by a prescription drug plan. And what about their satisfaction? Interviews show a great deal of satisfaction on the part of seniors with the plans.

Then the naysayers suggested plans could change their prices and the drugs they cover at the drop of a hat, which has not happened. So the naysayers were wrong again. They did all they could to taint beneficiaries' views of the benefits before it even got off the ground. But the naysayers' biggest criticism of the drug benefit is that, according to them, the Government does not negotiate with drugmakers for lower prices.

Now I will show you how silly that is and how wrong that is and, more importantly, how misleading that is. I say according to ''them,'' meaning according to the naysayers, because they have gone to great lengths to make it sound as though nobody is negotiating with drug companies. If you believe the naysayers out there, you would think that drug companies name their price and Medicare is forced to pay it. That is so wrong that it truly boggles the mind. It seems to me, as I see these arguments, there is no embarrassment on the part of the naysayers' part.

Now, it is correct, of course, that the Secretary of Health and Human Services himself does not negotiate with drug companies, but it is absolutely not correct to say there are no negotiations. That is complete and utter nonsense. It is embarrassingly wrong. Under the Medicare drug benefit, multiple drug plans compete against each other for the membership of seniors and disabled people covered by Medicare. These plans compete to get the lowest prices from manufacturers, for you as a member, because they want to keep you as a member.

In fact, these plans want to be the best negotiators and to offer beneficiaries the best possible drug plan with low premiums, low cost sharing, and even with additional benefits. They compete to be the plan that beneficiaries want to join.

Now, is this something new? No, it is nothing new. This is the same approach used for health care benefits for every Member of Congress, and 3 million Federal employees, under what we call the Federal Employee Health Benefit Program. If beneficiaries do not like the job their plan is doing, you can fire your plan. You can leave it, join another plan. You can choose a better plan. Yet, you see, it is actually very simple how this works; very simple. Harnessing the power of competition among plans gives the Medicare Program beneficiaries and the taxpayers access to better negotiation than anything the Government could do on its own.

In fact, there are five negotiators out there that are negotiating in a bigger way than even the Federal Government can. Can you imagine that, there are five negotiators that are bigger than the Federal Government that were negotiating this? Competition, then, is the mainstay of our free market economy. Businesses compete every day in almost every sector of our economy to produce the products consumers most want at a price that consumers pay, which is probably what consumers can afford.

But the naysayers of the drug benefit somehow do not like that. They are uncomfortable with the free market. They want the Government to run everything. They want the Government itself doing the negotiation. They find it hard to believe anyone could do a better job negotiating than big Government.

Of course, along the lines, they are ignoring the simple fact that competition is working. They are ignoring that competition has led to lower premiums, $22 this year instead of $23 last year, instead of $37 when we wrote the legislation.

They are ignoring that competition is bringing choices to beneficiaries, those who said we would never have choice, that you could not use plans because plans would not work. You know what. Those very Members of Congress are wrong, because in my State there are 43 plans. Will there always be 43 plans? No, I imagine there are some that are small, will weed themselves out, will be bought. These people are ignoring that the Government is not actually very good at figuring out what it should pay for drugs. They are ignoring the fact to carry on with the political scam that they committed against beneficiaries and against the public.

I have a chart I used a month ago that I want to show again. On it is a quote from the Washington Post, recognizing as well, when it wrote the following in an editorial, that this is a political scam and that governments don't do a very good job of negotiating:

> Governments are notoriously bad at setting prices, and the U.S. Government is notoriously bad at setting prices in the medical realm.

We knew this because of the Government's experience paying for drugs covered by Medicare Part B. There are not very many drugs covered by Medicare Part B, but there have been a few and over a long period of time. What did we learn from that experience of Part B Medicare? These happen to be the drugs that are given during a physician's office visit or other drugs such as oral cancer drugs. Medicare payments for these drugs were based on what is called the average wholesale price, AWP. It is similar to a sticker price for a car. No one actually pays that price on the sticker of a car. The joke was that average wholesale price or AWP actually stood for ''ain't what's paid.'' Over the past decade, reports issued by the inspector general, by the Department of Justice, and by the Government Accountability Office found that by relying on average wholesale price, Medicare was vastly overpaying for these drugs. Recommendations were made to change payments so they reflected actual market cost. The Clinton administration tried to make some of these changes but after pushback from providers, it backed off.

Congress took another run at this issue in 2003 in the Medicare Modernization Act and was successful. Congress reformed how Medicare pays these drugs under Part B, not Part D. Medicare now bases its payment for many of these drugs on a market-based price, a real price, not the average wholesale price, not the ''ain't what's paid'' price because it wasn't paid. This change, believe it or not, is saving the taxpayers and beneficiaries, but it took years to get that fixed. In all that time, Medicare and taxpayers paid too many dollars for drugs, wasted money, billions and billions of dollars wasted. So using the Part B tradition, we don't want to make the same mistake. We don't want to repeat that experience under the new Part D of drugs for Medicare.

We also knew Medicare overpays for a lot of other services and equipment.

The bookshelves are full of other reports from the General Accounting Office, from the inspector general, from the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission, from the Congressional Budget Office, and others, about how Medicare is paying too much in too many areas. For example, Medicare overpaid for durable medical equipment for years until the Republican-led Congress made changes in the 2005 Deficit Reduction Act. In addition, each year the Office of Inspector General issues what is called the Red Book, which presents cost savings recommendations. The books are usually 50 or more pages long, and the recommendations span all aspects of Medicare—hospitals, physicians, home health care plans, and others. This is more evidence of the many areas where Medicare doesn't get the best deal.

Congress has even created the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission, called MedPAC, to provide advice to Congress on payments for services. Every year, Congress hears recommendations from MedPAC to address Medicare overpayments, but many times it takes years for the Secretary of Health and Human Services or for the entire Congress to act to save the taxpayers money. In making recommendations, MedPAC looks at profit margins, for example. One type of provider had been found to have margins of 17 percent off of Medicare payments. The Congress has been able to act on many MedPAC recommendations, but it can be very hard to accomplish these changes. I remember when I was chairman of the Senate Finance Committee over the last 4 years. I received letters from Members saying something like: Please don't cut payments for this provider group or that provider group.

In fact, on the Senate floor just before recess, I fought to prevent this very Senate from freezing a Center for Medicare Services' rule that would have prevented wasteful spending in the program we call Medicaid. Is the rule a good thing or a bad thing? We didn't bother to hold the first hearing on the subject. The only thing that mattered was that a group of providers complained. Like the Clinton administration found, letters and complaints such as that can make it difficult, in the very short order, to do anything about a problem, despite the compelling evidence of overpayments, despite the high profit margins, despite the fact that a proposed change could save taxpayers billions of dollars.

Those of us who wrote the Part D Medicare drug plan passed 4 years ago—and that was mostly Senator BAUCUS for the Democrats and me for the Republicans—were concerned that this same kind of dynamic might happen with this Part D program. Political pressures on Medicare drug benefits would tie the hands of the Secretary of Health and Human Services. If that happens, the programs would be unmanageable and costs would skyrocket. Instead, Congress put competing private plans in charge of negotiating. These plans and their negotiators have years of experience in this arena. This is what they do for a living. Health and Human Services has had very little experience and a very dismal track record.

On this chart, these plans and their negotiators and managers have powerful bargaining clout in the market. They manage the drug coverage for tens of millions of people. There are plans that cover upwards of 50 million people—75 million, in one case—far more than the 41 million Medicare beneficiaries. Clearly, Medicare beneficiaries account for a large number of all prescriptions filled each year, so some might argue that 41 million beneficiaries have more clout than 75 million nonbeneficiaries, but numbers alone do not necessarily translate into lower costs.

As evidence of that, we had all sorts of experts come before the Finance Committee in January on this very topic. In response to questions I asked, particularly of Professor Scott Morton of Yale University, he said it doesn't matter whether you negotiate on behalf of 1 million or 43 million people; what matters is what leverage you have and how you use that leverage.

I think I ought to emphasize that. It is how you use the leverage. So it is what is done to leverage those numbers, then, that leads to lower costs. That leverage comes from the plan being able to say to a drug company something such as: I can get a better deal on drug A from a different manufacturer that has the same clinical effect as your drug B. If you can't match it or do better, then I am going to leave the table.

Some plans will get a better deal on drug A and put it in their formulary. Some plans will get a better deal on drug B. But many experts agree—and experience suggests—that it would be difficult for the Government itself, our Government, to walk away from the table. There would be enormous pressure to cover everything. If it did, the negotiating power lies not with the Government but with the manufacturers.

Here is what Professor Scott Morton said would happen if someone negotiating drug prices couldn't have a formulary:

> Each manufacturer would know that, fundamentally, Medicare must purchase all products. The Medicare "negotiator" would have no bargaining leverage, and therefore, simply allowing bargaining on its own would not lead to substantially lower prices.

At the same hearing, we had another witness. That witness was Mr. Edward Haislmaier, of the Heritage Institute. I would like to quote him from his written testimony:

> [that] volume purchasing encourages manufacturer discounting, it is not, in and of itself, sufficient to extract large discounts. Manufacturers will only offer substantial discounts if the buyer combines the "carrot" of volume with the "stick" of being able to substitute one supplier's goods with those of another.

In drug negotiations, that stick is called a formulary. Plans participating in drug benefits can use that stick. Expert after expert agrees it would be difficult, if not impossible, for the Government, however, to use that stick under Medicare. In fact, in a November 2 Wall Street Journal opinion piece, Dr. Allen Enthoven, an economist at Stanford University, wrote:

> When the government negotiates, its hands are tied because there are few drugs it can exclude without facing political backlash from doctors and the Medicare population, a very influential group of voters.

Let's be honest with each other. What do you think would happen in the Senate if the Center for Medicare Services, CMS, tried to cut a large drug company headquartered in New Jersey or North Carolina, for example, completely out of Part D because they wouldn't meet the Government's price demands? Would Senators from those States say something such as: Oh, well, that is just too bad? Would any of you say that if it was in your State that a manufacturer was being cut out? Again, let's be honest with each other.

What are we left with then? At the January Senate Finance Committee hearing, Professor Scott Morton said that without a formulary—the "stick," as I refer to it—the Secretary would have about as much negotiating power as you would get by calling a drug maker and saying something such as: I would like you to offer a lower price. Their answer might be: Why should I? You have to buy my drug, so why would I offer you a lower price? About all you have left after that is: Please, won't you give me a lower price? That is not going to get you very far.

If my friends on the other side of the aisle think this bill is going to achieve real savings for consumers or the Federal Government, they must have some ideas in mind. I can't believe my friends would come to the Senate floor with a bill that is truly as "do nothing" as CBO describes it.

Here is what the Congressional Budget Office said about S. 3. It would have "a negligible effect on federal spending." Another quote:

> Without the authority to establish a formulary, we believe that the Secretary would not be able to encourage the use of particular drugs by Part D beneficiaries, and as a result would lack the leverage to obtain significant discounts in his negotiations with drug manufacturers.

So let me repeat that other quote: It would have "a negligible effect on federal spending."

The bill we are considering and voting on tomorrow cannot possibly be as innocuous or inconsequential as what the Congressional Budget Office said. Certainly, there must be creative ideas out there to find savings we have not considered.

Since the Finance Committee's markup of S. 3 the other night, I have been considering how a Secretary

might use his imagination to find savings. One of the first places we looked at was H.R. 4, the bill that passed the Senate.

H.R. 4 struck the language in the statute that prevents the Secretary from instituting a price structure for reimbursement of covered drugs. Did the House strike the ban because they want an imaginative Secretary to use price controls as part of negotiations? Because all we have heard is they do not want price controls.

Last Thursday night, we offered an amendment to S. 3 to prevent the Secretary from using a preferred drug list, or PDLs as they are called. A preferred drug list is just a formulary under a different name. It is essentially a Government-controlled list of drugs that you can or cannot have.

While I do not think there is a difference between formularies and preferred drug lists, we have seen the courts rule that a State can use one in Medicaid even though Medicaid bans the use of formularies.

So Thursday night, we had an amendment to prevent the Secretary from using preferred drug lists. After all, we do not want the Secretary coming up with a list of drugs you can or cannot take, do we?

To my surprise, the Democrats on the committee rejected my amendment. So what is going on? Perhaps they think that having the Government establish a preferred drug list is one of the imaginative ideas a Secretary will be able to use to save money.

I think this bill is a Trojan Horse. It is dressed up as a do-nothing message bill. But before the week is out, we are going to look inside that horse and see all the bad that could be waiting to hurt beneficiaries. We will see what is bad in this bill that will hurt access and choices beneficiaries currently have in this Medicare drug benefit program.

Maintaining access and choice—access and choice—is critical because beneficiaries have different drug needs. The way the benefit is structured now is that plans can have different formularies. Some might get a good price on one drug; another might get a better price on another drug. They can have different formularies, and beneficiaries can have choices that meet their needs.

When Congress finished work on the new drug benefit in 2003, we knew it was an experiment. Nothing like this had ever been tried. Here is what we learned: Private competition works. It has been successful at keeping costs down. The 25 most used drugs by seniors cost 35 percent less. Plan bids have come in lower than expected. This year, they were down 10 percent from last year's bids.

Premiums are lower than they were estimated to be. Before 2006, Medicare's chief actuary estimated the average monthly premium would be $37, but it was actually $23 in 2006. That is 38 percent lower than expected. Because of the strong competition between plans, the average premiums for beneficiaries is expected to be about $22 in 2007, not the $39 that had been estimated.

Why? Private competition works.

The net cost to the Federal Government is also lower than expected. In January, the official Medicare actuary announced that the net 10-year cost of Part D has dropped by $189 billion over the original budget window used when the Medicare Modernization Act was enacted. That is 2004 to 2013. That is a 30-percent drop in the actual cost compared to the projection.

Why? Because private competition works.

The savings are unheard of for a Government program of any kind. Where else have you ever heard of a cost underrun in a Federal program?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, could I please have 4 more minutes? I ask unanimous consent for that additional time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. GRASSLEY. I wish to emphasize: We have a cost underrun in a Federal program. When have you ever heard of that?

You could not get those lower prices and lower costs unless the prescription drug plans are being strong negotiators with the drug makers. States are also saving money in lower contributions, better known as ''clawback'' payments. State clawback payments are now projected to be $37 billion less over a 10-year period. That is 27 percent lower. Just in 2006, States saved $700 million.

Why? Because private competition is working.

The plans are negotiating lower prices for drugs. I have said so many times, for the top 25 drugs used by seniors, the Medicare prescription drug plans have been able to negotiate prices that on average are 35 percent lower than the average cash price at retail pharmacies—35 percent lower.

Why? Because private competition is working.

Here are some examples: Lipitor is 15 percent lower, Atenolol is 63 percent lower, while Fosamax is 30 percent lower. I could go on down the list.

Now, when the drug benefit was signed into law, we believed it would work and hold down costs. That is certainly happening today even more than we expected because private competition works.

We also said that if it did not work—if the negotiating model used for the drug benefit did not hold down costs—then Congress would need to reexamine things. If costs grew too fast, then the whole idea would have to be revisited.

Maybe we would have to restrict access to drugs. Maybe we would have to rely more on mail order pharmacies instead of liberal access to local retail pharmacies. Maybe more drastic cost-cutting measures would be needed.

But that is not the position we are in today. Why? Because private competition works.

I hate to sound like a broken record, but I think the naysayers out there need a little repetition therapy. Everyone has heard the old saying that ''if it ain't broke, don't fix it.'' It certainly applies here, and the evidence shows it.

I would like to be the first one to say that the Medicare drug benefit is not perfect. There are improvements that can be made. Congress should look at ways to make it easier for low-income beneficiaries to get the additional assistance they need by reexamining the low-income subsidy asset test.

We need to look at payments to pharmacies and make some reforms in that area. We need to look at ways we can simplify the enrollment process. And there are other areas where we can make improvements.

But one area that is working very well is the negotiating power of Medicare drug plans. They have shown their ability to hold down costs. It is working.

The pleas from the naysayers to put the Government in charge of negotiating are about politics, not policy. These voices have not given up in their misguided quest to score political points with the drug benefit. It saddens me the Democratically controlled Congress has devoted so much time to this issue rather than looking at some of the improvements we can make in Part D that I mentioned.

Why they have put politics ahead of constructive changes is beyond me.

In January, I had hoped we could put politics aside and focus on some of the real improvements we could be making with the drug benefit. But, sadly, that is not the case, and that is why I am here today.

Under the drug benefit today, with the plans negotiating with drug makers and competing with each other, we have lower drug prices for beneficiaries, lower program costs for the Government—saving the taxpayers money—and prescription drug choices for beneficiaries.

Private competition works.

Mr. President, I urge my colleagues to oppose S. 3. It is a big government takeover of the private market that is working for the Medicare benefit.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts is recognized.

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent I be permitted to proceed as in morning business for such time as I may consume.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. KERRY. I thank the Chair.

Mr. President, let me just comment. I did not come to the floor to speak about the bill specifically. I wish to speak about the alternative minimum tax in a moment. But I cannot help, since I am a member of the committee—listening to the ranking member talk about Medicare and what the

impact of allowing Medicare the possibility of being able to negotiate might or might not be—but speak to that for a moment, if I can.

I think most Americans understand, as a matter of common sense, that when an entity that represents their tax dollars has the ability to go out into the marketplace and negotiate for a price, the probability they are going to have saved tax dollars is pretty real, if there is a good and decent negotiation.

The resistance of the Senator from Iowa and others is interesting because it is a resistance that represents the power of big companies in the country—the drug companies—to sort of say: Hey, we kind of like the system the way it is—which we understand because the profits are enormous. But our job is to represent the taxpayers' dollars. Our job is also to use the marketplace thoughtfully.

I do not know what it is that suggests, on the one hand, it is legitimate for the Veterans' Administration to go out as a Government entity and negotiate a lower price for the drugs it purchases to distribute to veterans—which we do—but it is not OK for Medicare—which is another Government program that costs the taxpayers a lot of money—to be able to go out and negotiate a lower price for seniors. It is illogical.

What they do is come in and try to scare people and say: Well, we have given this special privilege to the Veterans' Administration, but if all of a sudden we allow somebody else to negotiate it, then the veterans are not going to get as good a deal.

Well, nobody knows that until you go out into the marketplace. The Veterans' Administration and Medicare together still do not represent the entire market. You are going to have an incredible number of private citizens still purchasing through private health care plans or their HMOs or other plans—private as they are—also.

The marketplace is still going to have its capacity to work. This is not such a large block that it represents a complete and total eradication of a marketplace, No. 1. No. 2, there are other countries where you have this kind of negotiated fee for the service being provided which has worked very effectively.

I think the bottom line is that people have to remember that this legislation we are talking about does not order the Secretary to do this. It is pretty obvious under this administration it is not going to happen because they do not believe in it. All we are doing is lifting the prohibition against the Secretary doing it. So if all the negative things the Senator talks about are true, a smart Secretary is not going to do them because they are negative.

But why would you put in place a prohibition? Why do you specifically say: No, the Secretary can't go out and negotiate the price. You are stuck with the status quo. You are stuck with the current system. The reason is very simple: because it is a lot of money out of the pockets of taxpayers into the pockets of the big companies. That is it, and they are here protecting that.

This is a question of whether we are simply going to lift the prohibition, let the Secretary make the judgment. Can you go out into the market? Can you do this without hurting veterans? Can you do it without upsetting the marketplace? Can you do it and still have the kind of resources you want put into the research of new drugs and other things? I am confident a Secretary is going to make a smart decision.

It is interesting to see the people who usually spend the most time arguing in this country ''don't let the government interfere'' are the ones who are standing up to let the Government—excuse me, not let the Government, force the Government, in effect, to interfere with the marketplace. Actually, what they really are doing is putting in place a prohibition against the Secretary actually letting the marketplace work or testing whether the marketplace could work more effectively. In effect, we leave it in a state where the companies are dictating effectively what the price is going to be and the citizen, as a result, winds up paying an unfair burden.

We are not doing the best job possible as Government trustees of taxpayer money in taking care of that money and in representing the interests of our taxpayers. That is what is at stake here. Are you prepared to trust the discretion of the Secretary to analyze this, to look at what is best for the country, best for the delivery system, and make that judgment? All we are doing is lifting an unfair special interest prohibition to allow a full analysis of what the better alternative might be.

ALTERNATIVE MINIMUM TAX

Mr. President, as Americans prepared their taxes this year, millions of families in Massachusetts and across the country found a very unpleasant surprise. Beyond their regular income taxes, families found another hidden income tax, which is the alternative minimum tax. It costs those families many thousands of dollars. Most taxpayers are accustomed to computing their income tax liability in the usual way: adding up their income, making whatever deductions they are entitled to, subtracting exemptions for their dependents, and then checking their tax bracket to find out how much they owe. But this year, many of those same taxpayers discovered another tax that ate up any exemptions and deductions they might have claimed. It is a hidden income tax, and it affects the wrong people. It affects people we never intended to affect, and each year that we don't address it, it grows worse.

This alternative minimum tax is a tax that made sense once upon a time. When it was first enacted in 1969, it had a rationale, but since then, it has become bloated and illogical. The tax was first put in place when Treasury Secretary Joseph Barr, during his 1 month as the shortest tenured Treasury Secretary in history, told Congress about 155 wealthy Americans who had paid no income tax in 1966. Congress was overwhelmed with mail expressing outrage that these 155 rich Americans weren't pulling their weight. In response, Congress passed the first version of the AMT. So the AMT was put in place to address Americans' concerns with 155 of the richest Americans at a time when 155 represented a large block of those who were among the wealthiest Americans. Urging tax reform, Secretary Barr coined the phrase ''taxpayers' revolt'' and that is exactly what we are likely to see unless we get this right now.

In 1970, 20,000 taxpayers were affected by the alternative minimum tax. This year, about 4 million Americans will pay it, and next year that number could rise to 23 million Americans. What was originally a small fix at the edge of our Tax Code has now ballooned into a massive inconvenience and unfairness at the center of our Tax Code. Instead of serving its original purpose, the tax cuts we saw passed into law a few years ago, illogical and deceptive as they were, are winding up targeting the very people we are supposed to be helping. The very people we hear most of the rhetoric about—those who need help in America and the middle class being unfairly taxed—are the very people who are being unfairly taxed by this hidden tax people don't want to talk about. The fact is the middle class has seen an enormous shift in the burden away from the wealthiest Americans onto the middle class, the very people the AMT was designed to protect.

The AMT is now poised to make a dramatic shift from the wealthy to the middle class. In 2006, taxpayers earning more than half a million dollars will pay 47 percent of the tax. By 2010, that number will drop to 16 percent. We are going to go from 47 percent of the people who earn more than half a million dollars who are supposed to be the targets of the alternative minimum tax—that will drop to 16 percent—and the people who are going to pick up the difference are going to be Americans in the middle class who are struggling with increasing tuition costs, increasing energy costs, increasing health care costs, and wages that are either frozen or going down. Meanwhile, investment income will not be impacted by the alternative minimum tax, and the top alternative minimum tax rate is lower than the top marginal tax rate, which is what people pay on their income.

So a tax designed to cover or apply to the wealthiest Americans has become a solidly middle-class tax.

This tax also punishes certain States in our country more than other States, and particularly a State such as mine—Massachusetts—but other States in the Northeast and large industrial States.

In 2007, 24 percent of Massachusetts taxpayers, up from about 5 percent last year, will be hit by the alternative minimum tax, so that Massachusetts will be No. 4 in the rankings of all the States in the country. I don't think we ought to be putting an undue burden on the middle class, and we certainly shouldn't be putting one unfairly on certain States while other States are exempt.

Worse still, the tax penalizes families with children because it eliminates any dependent exemptions. So here we are talking about family values, but the family values are stripped away for those middle-class families because they lose their exemptions for their dependents.

In 2007, the alternative minimum tax will impact a family with four children and an income of $57,000. Married couples will be more than 12 times as likely as singles to face the alternative minimum tax in 2010. So those of us who argued strongly about the marriage penalty need to note that the marriage penalty is, in fact, growing larger as a consequence of the alternative minimum tax. We wrote the exemptions that we had specifically to help families to get away from that problem, and my question is, do we now want to burden them with this additional tax.

President Bush has acknowledged, at least rhetorically, this is a failed policy. There is room for bipartisanship here. Congress and the President need to work together to address what has become a major structural problem in our Tax Code. I commend my colleague from Massachusetts, Congressman NEAL, who is working in the House on this issue and showing important leadership in order to try to address it, and I look forward to seeing his proposal.

In fixing this tax, there are two major pitfalls we have to avoid. The first is: Don't simply repeal the tax without paying for it. We can't afford to do that, and it is clearly not fiscally responsible. Finally, it doesn't solve the problem. Second, we need to find a permanent solution. The alternative minimum tax itself was originally a small fix for a different tax issue. It is the accumulation over time of stopgap measures that has brought us to the current problem. So I don't believe it serves us well at all to push this issue down the road, as has been the practice of the Congress in these last years.

We also need to make the tax policy of our country simpler and more straightforward and fill it with a little more common sense and a little less special interests. Our tax problem as a nation was, in fact, made significantly worse by the Bush tax cuts, and the alternative minimum tax has been used quietly, more and more, to ask middle-class families to pay the burden of the wealthiest Americans' tax cut.

We can all agree the main reason this tax has grown out of proportion is that it wasn't indexed to inflation. The same money we talk about today went an awful lot farther in 1970. The movies back then cost $1.65. The fact is we haven't adjusted the tax brackets to rise with inflation.

Another major problem has been the alternative minimum tax interaction with the Bush tax cuts. This administration and the Republican Congress purposefully allowed the tax system to become unbalanced. This was done in order to hide the true cost of the tax cuts. Normally, sound tax policy involves changing the alternative minimum tax to reflect changes in regular tax cuts. For example, in 1993, we raised rates for both taxes simultaneously. But under this President, in 2001 and in 2003 and in 2004, we cut the regular income tax rate without making corresponding significant changes in the AMT. Instead of paying upfront through the regular income tax, this administration used the AMT to finance tax cuts for the very people the AMT was designed to tax. The AMT quietly takes back a portion of the Bush tax cuts by 2010, about 29 percent, transferring the tax burden from the top tax brackets to largely middle-class tax families.

If we had a vote on the floor of the Senate which specifically said: Are you going to tax middle-class families in order to pay for a wealthy tax cut and shift the burden by about 29 percent, almost everybody here would vote no. So it is the hidden tax cut that has the impact. Before the Bush tax cuts, 17 million taxpayers would have been affected by the alternative minimum tax in 2010, but with the Bush tax cuts, that number almost doubles to 31 million. If we let the Bush tax cuts expire in 2011, at least the number of AMT taxpayers would drop dramatically. I am confident that will be an important debate down the road here. In 2007, a family with 2 children and an income of $80,000 will see 59 percent of their tax cut taken back by the alternative minimum tax. Tom Waits, the 1970s singer and songwriter, once said the large print giveth and the small print taketh away. Well, the small print, my friends, is the alternative minimum tax, and it is taking away America's families' tax savings.

We need to be honest about the cost of our tax cuts. Back in 2001, I tried to offer an amendment that exempted all taxpayers with incomes under $100,000 from the AMT. At that time I warned that the AMT is encroaching on middle-class taxpayers and that the tax cuts would only make things worse. The fix for the AMT problem at that time was estimated to cost $110 billion over 10 years, money that instead is now being paid by middle-class families. The amendment at that time was revenue neutral. It offset the cost by delaying some of the Bush tax cuts. It cut the 39.6 rate down to 37 percent, instead of 35, but unfortunately, the amendment failed.

I don't believe we can continue to put this problem off. Unless we reform our tax system for the sake of middle-class families—and we simply can't afford not to reform it—we are going to pay one way or the other, with the debt that is passed on to our children or with taxes passed on from the wealthiest to an ever-growing part of the middle class. We need a bipartisan, fiscally responsible, permanent approach, not one that masks the costs of irresponsible cuts or becomes a burden for the middle class, and not one that gives more and more families an unpleasant surprise on tax day.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. WHITEHOUSE). The distinguished Senator from West Virginia is recognized.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I wish to propound a parliamentary inquiry.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator will inquire.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, what is the parliamentary situation?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is considering S. 372.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I have a parliamentary inquiry further.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator will state it.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, what is the parliamentary situation—I may not have the floor. May I ask the Chair, please tell me what the parliamentary situation is.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia has been recognized by the Chair and now has the floor.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, if that were not the case, what would be the case?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is no current time agreement. The Senate is considering S. 372 under no time agreement.

Mr. BYRD. Very well. Mr. President, I am not going to speak just now. I want to respect the wishes of another Senator who is on the floor at the moment. In a few minutes, I will want to speak a bit. As of now, I am going to take my seat. I will ask the Senator, does he wish to speak at this time?

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I thank the distinguished Senator from West Virginia for his courtesy. If it would not be too great an imposition, I will speak for a few minutes on the Intelligence bill. That would be very much appreciated.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I thank the distinguished Senator. I am going to sit down and listen. May I ask the Senator this question: How long will he likely speak?

Mr. WYDEN. Again, I thank the Senator from West Virginia for his courtesy. I will speak less than 10 minutes. I so appreciate the thoughtfulness of the Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I thank the distinguished Senator. After he yields the floor, I will seek recognition. I understand the rules of the Senate. I am just stating at this point what I intend to do.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon is recognized.

Mr. WYDEN. Before he leaves, Senator BYRD has always been so kind to this Senator. I appreciate it.

I wish to take a few moments to talk about the critically important Intelligence authorization bill that is before the Senate now. I am disappointed that this legislation has not yet passed because it seems to me that Chairman ROCKEFELLER and Vice Chairman BOND have done an awful lot of very good work in terms of negotiating on this legislation and doing it in a bipartisan fashion. A number of us have felt that it was critically important that intelligence, in the days ahead, at a time of great threat to our country, be an area that is pursued in a bipartisan way. My view is that Chairman ROCKEFELLER and Vice Chairman BOND have really kept that kind of bipartisan lodestar in mind as we have conducted our work throughout this session. That is one of the reasons I have so wanted this legislation to move forward.

I wish to take a minute to highlight just one of the provisions that seems to be objectionable to the executive branch and try to show how, in my view, that should not be the case and how the Senate ought to come together around it and move forward on this bipartisan piece of legislation.

There is a provision in the bill the Senate is now considering—a provision that I offered—which would make public the total size of our national intelligence budget. This provision would not make public how much the country spends on any particular collection method; it would simply state the U.S. Government spends X amount of money on national intelligence programs.

This has long received bipartisan support. The bipartisan 9/11 Commission was for it. The former Director of the CIA, Stansfield Turner, is for it. I would like to note that our current Secretary of Defense, Secretary Gates, when he was before the U.S. Senate Intelligence Committee—and I will quote here—said:

> From my personal perspective, I don't have any problem with releasing the top line of the intelligence community budget.

I am of the view that Secretary Gates was right when he said that a number of years ago, and he is right at this time as well. In my view, to suggest that disclosing the total size of our national intelligence budget would cause any harm whatsoever to national security is ridiculous. It is absolutely absurd to think that Osama bin Laden is off in a cave somewhere contemplating what the overall national intelligence budget is. It is absurd to suggest that Kim Jong Il is somehow sitting in his office wondering and worrying, for example, whether the Wyden amendment to the intelligence authorization is going to pass. It is absurd to believe that any terrorist or dictator or any other enemy of the United States will gain any sort of advantage whatever from the public disclosure of the top line of the national intelligence budget.

But there are people who will gain an advantage; that is, the American people. Making the total size of our intelligence public is going to increase public accountability and will allow for a more informed debate about national security. If the national intelligence budget's overall number is made public, there will be a more informed discussion about whether money should be spent on aircraft carriers or submarines or on intelligence gathering. This debate will only ensure that taxpayer dollars are used more wisely and that America will be safer.

Senator BYRD has been very gracious to give me this time this afternoon. There are other provisions that I feel strongly about in this legislation. The increased penalties, for example, for outing a covert agent is something I feel strongly about. After the Dubai Ports debate, it is clear that there should be additional resources devoted to looking at the intelligence ramifications of those particular issues.

But my bottom line is, at a time when Americans are questioning our intelligence agencies' ability to keep them safe, the Congress has a responsibility to provide support. At a time when the intelligence community is undergoing major reorganization, the Congress has a responsibility to provide guidance. At a time when our allies and our citizens are raising serious questions about detention issues, Congress has a responsibility to conduct oversight. At a time when Americans continue to open their morning papers and read about aggressive new forms of Government surveillance and, in particular, the now-disclosed abuse of the national security letters, Congress has a responsibility to demand accountability.

Chairman ROCKEFELLER and Vice Chairman BOND have done a lot of good work on this legislation. The distinguished occupant of the chair has been involved in those debates, and we are pleased that he is part of the committee. I hope the Senate will move expeditiously to move forward on this legislation. It is an important bill, at a critical time for the security of the American people.

Again, I express my appreciation to the distinguished Senator from West Virginia for giving me the opportunity to speak this afternoon.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia is recognized.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I wish to thank the distinguished Senator from Oregon, Mr. WYDEN, for his courtesy, and I also want to say that he is one of the immortal 23 Senators who said, in kind words and respectful words and in senatorial terms, we won't go—meaning, we were going to be Senators. We know what the Constitution says about Members of the Senate and the House, we were going to be Senators, we were going to be respectful, but we were going to vote our way. We were respectful of the President, but we knew we were Senators and that there were three branches of Government, and we know and knew then that this is the legislative branch—the first branch of Government that is mentioned under the Constitution, and it is sometimes called ''the people's branch.'' That is for good reason.

Now, what is the floor situation?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. S. 372 is the pending question, and the Senator from West Virginia has the floor with no present time restriction.

Mr. BYRD. Further parliamentary question: Is time controlled at this moment?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. It is not.

Mr. BYRD. I thank the Chair. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I may speak as in morning business—in other words, out of order—for not to exceed 20 minutes. I don't expect to take that much time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BYRD. I thank the Chair.

VETO THREATS

Mr. President, the 110th Congress will consider legislation this session that raises passions and excites partisan fervor. It is likely that much of what the Congress considers this year and next will be subject to Presidential veto threats because the President's political party no longer controls the Congress.

I was quite surprised recently to hear some Senators take the position that this body is wasting its time in drafting and passing legislation which the President threatens to veto.

Let me respectfully remind all who listen that the Congress legislates for the people and has a constitutional obligation—in other words, duty—to act independently from—I say this again, I say it respectfully—from the White House. There are three branches, as everybody knows, of Government. This is a separate but equal branch. I want Senators to listen. This is a separate branch, but it is equal.

I will repeat myself. As Senators already know, there are three separate but equal branches of Government. The Constitution's Framers never considered a President to be the final arbiter of the public good. Whether the question relates to military, foreign, or domestic affairs, a Presidential veto threat is not the last word in what should become the law of our land. Those decisions are left to the representatives of the people, along with the power over the purse—along with the power over the purse—and other constitutionally enumerated congressional powers.

We hear almost daily a Presidential scolding of the Congress concerning the supplemental appropriations bill, which is shortly headed for a House-Senate conference. Continued Presidential veto threats on the funding for the Iraq war represent a stubborn unwillingness to concede that the American people have over time and with considerable debate come to see that the Iraq war was a mistake.

In the case of Iraq, it is likely that the people of the United States would have come to these opinions much earlier had they not had information withheld from them or, in some instances, presented to them falsely. Of course, I knew this.

Of course, also, it remains the constitutional prerogative of the President to exercise the veto. I respect that. But it also remains the prerogative of the Congress—the other body across the way and this body—it also remains the prerogative of the Congress to challenge that veto and to assert and defend the will of the people.

A President's power to veto is not and should not be absolute. Let me repeat that. A President's power to veto is not and should not be absolute. If the President vetoes a measure under our Constitution, the Congress can override that veto with a two-thirds vote of both Houses. All Senators know that. I am not telling Senators anything they don't know.

A Presidential veto does not necessarily end the legislative process. When the President vetoes legislation under article I, section 7 of the Constitution, the President's objections are submitted to the House of Congress—Congress being of two bodies—submitted to the House of Congress in which the measure originated so that the measure and the President's objections can be reconsidered. All Senators know that. Any schoolboy who has studied the Constitution knows that. But I am stating for the record, again, for all who run to read.

A new vote can be scheduled on the same piece of legislation and a veto can be overturned if the people's representatives—if the people's elected representatives—in Congress demand it.

There is nothing earthshaking about overturning a Presidential veto. Since 1969, the Congress has overridden almost 20 percent of the Presidential vetoes. President Franklin Roosevelt had nine vetoes overridden by Democratic Congresses. I repeat: President Franklin Roosevelt had nine vetoes overridden by Democratic Congresses. President Ronald Reagan had six vetoes overridden by a Democratic House and a Republican Senate.

The veto override provision in the Constitution is a protection for the people whom the Congress represents. Members of Congress are elected by the people to make laws based on sound public policy, not to capitulate or surrender to any—Republican or Democrat—to any Presidential threats. The Senate must never—hear me now, the Senate must never—become a rubberstamp for any President, Republican or Democrat or Independent or otherwise.

Certainly, the Congress should carefully consider the announced reasons for a Presidential veto, but the Congress has a duty, if the President's reasons are not credible or do not reflect the will of the people, to overturn Presidential vetoes, if the Congress wishes to do so.

The veto on the override is a healthy public opportunity for Members of Congress—both Houses—to consider the reasons offered by the President for his veto. Just as the President is held accountable for his veto, we Senators are held accountable for our votes on bills that are sent to the President and, if applicable, a subsequent veto override vote.

Members of the Senate and the people understand that when the President submits a bill to Congress and then asks that it be passed without any amendments or conditions—the President has a right to do that, but we all know that the President is treating the Congress like a subordinate branch capable of only saying yes or no and never expected to alter a Presidential proposal in any way.

The President knows what the Constitution says, and he knows that the Congress has a right to listen, to study, and then to act as it seeks to act. So this is an argument that contradicts the most basic constitutional principles on which our Republic is founded.

The Congress was envisioned as a check on an overzealous or unwise President, and that is no reflection on either party—that the President can be a Democrat, a Republican, or otherwise—and we do our duty to the Constitution when we vigorously utilize our enumerated powers.

So let us hear no more about measures that the President has threatened to veto being not worthy of the Senate's consideration. Let the President issue his veto threats as he wishes, but also let the Congress dutifully represent the will of the people.

On the matter of Iraq—and I say this most respectfully—I have been chagrined of late to hear the falsehoods and scare tactics emanating from the Oval Office. President Bush has repeatedly intimated that there is a connection between the attacks of 9/11 and the Iraq war when no such link exists. President Bush has suggested—he is my President and yours, Senators—that the supplemental appropriations bill as now written would cause death and destruction in America, which is patently false. I speak now as the chairman—of course, everybody knows it—I speak as the chairman of the Appropriations Committee.

Mr. President, I make a parliamentary inquiry: Are we under limited time, I ask the Chair?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 1 minute 30 seconds remaining of the 20 minutes he requested.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I am not going to belabor Senators. I have seven more pages to read. I know what is in here, and so I ask unanimous consent that I may use whatever time I consume, and I assure Senators I will not consume more than 10 minutes, if that much.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Hearing no objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BYRD. President Bush has said the bill does not fund the troops, which is false. The Senate bill provides $2 billion more than the President requested for the troops and provides $1.8 billion more for veterans health care. I regret this continual barrage of misinformation coming from the White House just as I regret the intransigence—the intransigence—of a President who will not cool off—and I say this respectfully—of a President who will not cool off and stop fearmongering long enough to negotiate a resolution to the differences in the bill's language. He—the President—has been invited to do so in good faith and yet still the almost daily castigation from the White House continues.

I wonder about the effect on the morale of our brave fighting men and women when the President—any President—repeats inaccuracies like the Congress has failed to fully fund the troops. It seems to me that it is not a prudent thing to say. Congress and the American people support our troops, and the supplemental bill that we shall shortly take to conference robustly funds their needs in the field and cares for their needs after they return home.

For the President to assert otherwise is a disservice—and I say this with the utmost respect. I will say it again. For the President to assert otherwise is a disservice. Honorable men and women may disagree, but Members of Congress and officials of the executive branch have a duty to try to find common ground, especially when the issue is a violent and controversial war, with our troops in harm's way every day. I shall hope for a more reasonable and more realistic tone from our President—and I say it with the utmost respect, but this is an equal branch with the executive branch and the judicial branch—in the coming days. May I say further that more light and less heat on this matter would truly be in the best interests of our troops and of our sorely divided country.

Now, Mr. President, I have been here a long time. I know how to speak, when to speak, and when not to speak, but I am a U.S. Senator, and I am asserting this Senate's constitutional duty. My Republican friends and my Democratic friends know this, and I know they have a right to do the same, but that is my speech for today, God willing.

Mr. President, I thank the Chair, I thank all Senators, and I yield the floor.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, first, I thank my distinguished colleague from West Virginia for his insight, as always, and wisdom on so many issues. He epitomizes what it means to be a Senator, and we are honored and appreciative of his leadership.

PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

Mr. President, I do want to speak today as it relates to prescription drugs and the very important vote we will be having tomorrow, but I also first want to speak to what is happening as it relates to Blacksburg, VA,

and Virginia Tech University, just to indicate that we know there was a memorial service today; that all of us, even as we carry on the normal business of the Senate, are very mindful and aware of what has occurred in the massacre at Virginia Tech University. My thoughts and prayers go out to everyone who has been affected throughout the university, most particularly the families.

Certainly, I think I can speak for the people of my great State of Michigan when I say that we are deeply, deeply sorrowful, and our prayers go out to each and every one of the people who have been affected.

Mr. President, we have a very important vote tomorrow, which is whether to proceed to legislation that would begin the process of allowing the Secretary of Health and Human Services to be able to negotiate the very best price for our seniors under Medicare. I want to take this opportunity to commend our majority leader for getting us to this point, Senator REID, and the Finance Committee for getting us to this point, for bringing the issue of Medicare drug pricing to the Senate floor. I hope tomorrow we are going to see a strong bipartisan vote to proceed with the bill.

Frankly, it is very unfortunate we are having to vote on whether to proceed to this bill, but since that vote is occurring, I hope we will have a resounding yes tomorrow for something that is so clear to the American people. The direction we will hopefully take tomorrow is the direction that the voters asked us to take. Their message last November was crystal clear: that they want to make sure we are making health care decisions in the best interests of people—the best interests of seniors, of children, of families—and not the special interests that make money off the system. Tomorrow is going to be a vote on that.

Tomorrow will be the first step in the process. We are removing the provision that prohibits Medicare from using its negotiating clout. What we are going to be voting on tomorrow is whether we will proceed. And why are we doing that? Well, first of all, this Medicare bill that was put in place a few years ago actually prohibited the Secretary from negotiating to get the best price for seniors, amazingly. People to this day ask: How in the world did that happen? Well, it happened because, unfortunately, there were too many provisions in that bill that were put in on behalf of the special interests rather than our seniors.

The step we take tomorrow is good for our seniors, it is good for families, and it is good for taxpayers. It is good for taxpayers to get the best deal so that our dollars can go as far as possible under Medicare. So tomorrow is an important day.

I have been fighting for this provision ever since the Medicare prescription drug program was passed in late 2003. I wish I could have supported that bill. I did not, in part because of the prohibition that was put into place. That bill was written and designed with a huge gap in coverage—it has often been called the doughnut hole—that, frankly, wouldn't be there if we were able to get the very best pricing and stretch those Medicare dollars as far as they should go.

In fact, I joined a group of Senators to introduce legislation on December 12, 2003, to repeal the prohibition on negotiation, which is what we are talking about now, because we knew then what we know today. If the Secretary of Health and Human Services negotiates Medicare prescription drug prices, seniors will pay the lowest possible price. That should be what we are all focused on as it relates to Medicare prescription drugs. More than 3 years later, we are taking the first step toward getting this done. It is about time. I think that is what the American people are saying to us.

The best way to get the lowest possible prices on prescription drugs is to use the negotiating clout of 43 million seniors and people with disability who are under Medicare. That negotiating clout needs to be used. We are considering this bill right now because the American people want it. According to a poll conducted by the AARP, 87 percent of all Americans said they want Medicare to negotiate prescription drug prices—87 percent. That is a pretty big number. Eighty-seven percent of the seniors, according to AARP, when asked, have said: Yes, of course, we want the Federal Government to negotiate to get the very best price.

Why do consumers want Medicare to negotiate for lower drug prices? Because they know what everybody knows: large purchasers are getting deep discounts for prescription drugs, and they want the same from Medicare.

This bill does not do the same thing as the VA, but the VA is a good example of what can be done when there is negotiation, when the Federal Government brings its clout as it does for our veterans. It gives us some idea of the kinds of discounts that can be achieved.

For example, we know that on average, the VA health system gets prescription drugs for approximately 58 percent less than their retail prices—58 percent—and on some medicines, it is up to a 1,000-percent difference. Now, I would say, if the VA can do this and get 58 percent, we can get a better deal if we negotiate, knowing again that this bill does not reflect what the VA does, but it gives you a sense of what can be done when we have that kind of clout.

Let's be clear about what we are doing right now with this bill. We are opening the door to lower drug prices so Medicare beneficiaries can afford the medicines they need and we can save taxpayers money. We all know how many times we have heard the stories—I hear them all the time—of folks trying to juggle between keeping the lights on, buying food, and getting their medicine. Our top goal should be, as a Medicare Program, to make sure people can get the medicine they need at the very best price. This bill moves us in that direction.

Let's be clear also about what we are not doing. This legislation does not create a national drug formulary, nor does it establish price controls. Seniors will have access to all of the drugs they do today, and possibly more. The prescription drug industry will continue to thrive, and R&D will not be affected. The change we will see is a change we have been asking for for the last 3 years, that seniors and families have been asking for for the last 3 years.

It is also important to note because we will hear from our friends on the other side of the aisle that somehow, if Medicare is going to have the opportunity to negotiate or if the Secretary can negotiate at appropriate times for lower prices, we are going to see the prices of the VA go up. Well, I asked the Congressional Budget Office to submit to me in writing if that were, in fact, true under this bill. They, in fact, said: No, under this bill, that is not the case. We are not going to see veterans or any other group see their prescription drug prices go up under this legislation. So that is one good thing we need to make clear and debunk as we begin this debate.

Now, what we do know is we have a very interesting thing going on. We have two kinds of debate going on right now in opposition from those who are major beneficiaries of the current system, the special interest groups that have the benefit right now of seeing huge profit increases as a result of this prescription drug bill. On the one hand, we are seeing ads that say: This legislation will do nothing. Do not pass it; it will not do anything. Then, on the other hand, the very same people are saying: But it will cause seniors to not be able to get the choice of medicines they want, it will cause veterans to see their medicine costs go up, it will cost R&D and we won't be able to do research and development into new prescription drugs anymore. I find it so interesting that the same people are arguing both sides: It will not do anything, and it will have all of these devastating effects.

At the same time, we are seeing huge amounts of money, millions and millions of dollars—for months, I have seen ads on TV and radio, newspaper ads telling us these people do not want negotiation or that it will not do anything, all paid for by the same people who benefit by the current system. I might just say that just today, a full-page, single-color ad running in the Washington Post on page A5 today, costs about $135,000—this is today, this is yesterday. We have ad after ad after ad being run and paid for by people who tell us this bill will not do anything. It will not do anything, but yet they have spent millions of dollars on TV, millions of dollars on the radio, in ads we

have seen, ads for our benefit, ads telling us people do not want negotiation.

I might add that in this ad which is running right now, where they say people really do not want Medicare to negotiate, what they say in the fine print is that, in fact, 89 percent oppose Government negotiation if it could limit access to new prescription medicine—if it could limit access to new prescription medicine. This bill does not limit access to new prescription medicine—or old prescription medicine, for that matter. That is not what we are talking about.

In fact, what I find interesting, and the subtle part of this is, if we negotiate for a better deal, they won't be able to do research anymore. We know that right now the drug industry spends 2½ times more on marketing and advertising than they do on research.

I would suggest we can negotiate to get a little better price. And I wonder how much $135,000 would buy in medicine for somebody today instead of one ad? Let's cut down a little bit on the marketing and advertising, and we won't have to worry about whether Medicare can negotiate for the very best price.

So I hope that tomorrow we are going to have a vote to proceed to this very important public policy issue, this very important bill. I hope we are going to, in fact, do what 87 percent of voters are saying they want us to do—negotiate the very best price for prescription drugs.

I would ask my colleagues to vote to allow us to proceed to the bill. We can continue to work together on exactly what the language should look like, but the idea that you would stop it before we can even have the debate would be extremely disturbing. People in this country do not understand why it is that decisions are made too often for those who happen to have the lobbyists here or the ads on TV or in the newspaper and not enough for the folks who are working hard every day or are retired on a fixed income trying to make ends meet.

Tomorrow is a chance for us to show that those folks are not making the decisions, that we are going to move forward on a bill which is positive for seniors, which is going to give us an opportunity to open the door to negotiating good prices and make a real difference for people, a real difference for people whom the system is supposed to help, the Medicare prescription drug benefit for our seniors, for people on Medicare. They deserve the best price. Tomorrow, we will have a chance to vote to go to that debate and work together to get a bill that will do that. I hope we are going to vote to do that.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama is recognized.

TAX DAY

Mr. SHELBY. Once again, today, tax time is upon us. It is April 17. We know April 15 is the magic day, but it has been extended because of when it fell. Today is the day everybody in America knows that the Federal Government income taxes are due. If you are like me, you spent way too much time completing your taxes this year.

Our Tax Code and its accompanying regulations total tens of thousands of pages which are complicated, confusing, and costly to comply with. In fact, since we last had major reform in 1986 there have been more than 14,000 changes to the Tax Code. Average taxpayers should not have to pour over tax regulations for hours on end or pay a tax professional to complete their tax documents.

In the IRS' own estimation, the average time burden for all taxpayers filing a 1040 is 30 hours. Unfortunately, what this means is that for most people is that in addition to paying the Government every year, they need to pay someone or buy software to tell them exactly how much to pay their Government.

Americans need a simple, commonsense solution. This is why I have introduced S. 1040, the Tax Simplification Act.

The Tax Simplification Act establishes a flat income tax of 17 percent on all income and places real spending limits on the Federal Government. First, my proposal would replace our current incomprehensible Tax Code with a flat rate of 17 percent on all individuals' income beyond an exemption for the individual and any dependents. To prevent the double-taxation of income, earnings from savings would not be included as taxable income, resulting in a tax cut for virtually all taxpayers and providing a strong incentive for people to save. Increasing the savings rate in this country should be a priority of this Congress and this bill will do that.

As complicated as the individual tax system has proven, it pales in comparison to the hoops U.S. businesses are required to jump through. In preparation for 2005 taxes, businesses and nonprofits spent an estimated 6.4 billion hours complying with the Federal Income Tax Code, with an estimated compliance cost of over $265 billion. Without action, that number is expected to grow to over $482 billion by 2015.

What this means is that for every $5 the Government collects right now, businesses are forced to spend another $1 to comply with the countless rules and regulations that we, the Government, have created. These additional costs are then passed on to the consumers, investors, and employees. We need to overcome this notion that our corporate income tax simply applies to some faceless boardroom. Corporations do not pay taxes. People pay taxes. Corporations do not comply with our tax laws. People do.

Under my legislation, companies would pay the flat tax of 17 percent rate on their income, simplifying the complicated calculations businesses currently go through to determine their taxable income. S. 1040 simply defines income as the positive difference between revenue and expenses. As the legislation is implemented, the rate of taxation would be 19 percent in the first 2 years and then lowered to the desired rate of 17 percent in the third year.

Finally, this legislation would require a three-fifths majority in Congress for any tax increase. This ensures that only in times of the most need would the Government be able to take any more money out of the hands of hard-working Americans. By enacting this legislation we would institute a strong backstop against those that would seek to continue the out-of-control growth of the Federal Government. And we would open a new chapter of responsibility and accountability in our revenue collection.

Yes, the flat tax would revolutionize the way our Government operates. Today, if a flat tax were in place, taxpayers would file a return the size of a postcard. Rather than spending hours deciphering convoluted IRS forms or resorting to professional tax assistance, the flat tax would allow taxpayers to complete their taxes quickly and easily.

The time for significant reform of our Tax Code is now. The flat tax would revolutionize the way our Government operates. The complexities and inequities of the current tax system would end. They would be replaced by a system that treats every taxpayer equally and represents a massive reduction in the tax burden carried by hard-working Americans.

Only by treating every taxpayer equally can our Tax Code ever achieve true fairness. Only when the shackles of our burdensome Tax Codes are removed will we truly see what our great economy is capable of doing.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan is recognized.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, Mr. ISAKSON has a very brief statement, perhaps 2 minutes. I wonder if he can be recognized for 2 minutes and then Senator NELSON for 2 minutes and then I be recognized for 5 minutes. I ask unanimous consent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Georgia is recognized.

HONORING RYAN CLARK

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I ask to address the Senate as if in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I rise today to express my sympathy and I know the sympathy of all of the Members of the Senate and the people of the United States of America on the tragic losses yesterday at Virginia Tech.

I learned this morning that one of those first tragic losses was a young gentleman by the name of Ryan Clark,

and I, from the floor of the Senate, send to Martinez, GA, my sympathy, that of Senator CHAMBLISS, and that of all Members of the Senate on the tragic loss of Ryan.

None of us can understand what happened yesterday, but all of us must understand the profound tragedy and the loss of youth in its prime.

Ryan Clark, 22 years old, a double major in English and biology, was about to walk across the stage and graduate and then pursue a masters and a Ph.D. in psychology. Ryan is survived not only by his mother Letitie but by his brother Bryan. Bryan told us that his brother was known best by his nickname on the campus, ''Stack.'' Stack, if you go to the Web site of the Virginia Tech band, can be seen volunteering his time in a food drive for the needy. In fact, just last December, in the Georgia Dome at the Peach Bowl of 2006, one of the last times that Ryan went back to Georgia, he performed with the Virginia Tech band at halftime of that bowl game.

This young man was a residential adviser, a member of the band, an outstanding student, a proud son, and a proud brother. I am very proud as a Georgian to have known of his accomplishments, and I send his mother Letitie my prayers and my hopes that she will accept our sympathy and endure the tragedy of the loss of her son Ryan.

To the families of all of those professors, employees, and students who were hurt yesterday in Blacksburg, VA, I extend my sympathy and my deepest prayers that we will find reconciliations out of tragedy.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida is recognized.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, our hearts go out to the citizens of Virginia, to the university community, and to the families and the loved ones of those in this tragedy. It goes without saying that we will get to the bottom of this and then find out what is going wrong in this country that our sense of morality has gone askew so that a senseless set of murders such as this would occur.

I am here to speak on behalf of this intelligence legislation on which we are about to have a vote, cutting off debate so we can proceed to finalize the bill. It is necessary that we do that. I had the privilege of serving on the Intelligence Committee along with my colleague, the Senator from Michigan, on his committee, the Armed Services Committee, as well as the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. There is so much going on that is at stake for this country that we cannot in any way delay this Intelligence bill; it needs to be considered; it needs to be amended, if that is the will of this body; it needs to be passed, and we need to then get reconciled with the House and get it to the President for his signature. There are too many things that are super important to this country for us to do anything other than protect the interests of this country through our intelligence activities.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan is recognized.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, the release of the 9/11 Commission Report in July of 2004 fueled a debate about how our intelligence community should be restructured to better respond to the post-9/11 threat.

In response to problems identified by the 9/11 Commission, Congress passed and the President signed into law the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004. Most notably, that bill created the Director of National Intelligence, empowering the DNI with budget power and control over personnel in the intelligence community.

The bill also created the National Counterterrorism Center, or NCTC, with the authority to conduct strategic counterterrorism planning and to assign roles and responsibilities for counterterrorism activities. Passage of intelligence reform was a watershed moment in the drive to better organize our Government to deal with the threat of terrorism.

On December 8, 2004, the same day the Senate passed the Intelligence reform bill, it passed the Intelligence Authorization Act for fiscal year 2005. It is troubling that that day, December 8, 2004, was the last day this body passed an Intelligence authorization bill, and it underscores the importance of the Senate passing the bill before us. Since passage of the Intelligence reform bill in 2004, we learned a good deal about what additional changes to law might be needed to improve our intelligence community functions. In addition, as we have learned about such activities as the NSA's warrantless wiretapping program, we have come to better appreciate the need for strong congressional oversight of the intelligence community.

As a matter of fact, the 9/11 Commission said the following in its very lengthy and thoughtful report, ''Strengthen Congressional Oversight of Intelligence and Homeland Security.'' That is the heading of the section, and this is the one pungent sentence from that report which I hope will cause a lot of people to rethink their opposition to cloture on this bill:

> Of all of our recommendations, strengthening congressional oversight may be among the most difficult and important.

Those words should have an impact on the vote that is coming up in about 40 minutes.

More than 30 years ago, the Senate passed S. Res. 400, establishing the Select Committee on Intelligence, and charging that committee with providing ''vigilant legislative oversight over the intelligence activities of the United States to assure that such activities are in conformity with the Constitution and laws of the United States.''

The legislation before us today takes significant steps toward reinvigorating our oversight responsibility. For example, effective oversight depends on Members of Congress having timely access to intelligence information. Unfortunately, too often that is not the case, as requests from Congress for intelligence information are stonewalled and slow walked. Section 108 of the bill before us requires the intelligence community to provide, upon request from the chairman or vice chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee or chairman or ranking member of the House Intelligence Committee, timely access to existing intelligence assessments, reports, estimates, legal opinions, or other intelligence information.

The bill before us also advances Congress's oversight of particular matters. For example, section 313 requires the Director of National Intelligence to submit a classified report on any clandestine detention facilities operated by the U.S. Government. This public law requirement reflects the Intelligence Committee's determination to undertake serious oversight of any intelligence community detention and interrogation practices. The bill before us also establishes within the Office of the Director of National Intelligence an inspector general of the intelligence community. That is a major reform. It is highly important, and it is long overdue. The creation of an inspector general of the intelligence community will strengthen accountability by permitting independent examinations of problems, abuses, or deficiencies.

We should not let another year go by without an Intelligence authorization bill. We cannot defeat the threats this Nation faces without the strongest and most effective intelligence community which, in turn, requires strong oversight.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SALAZAR). Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRADE

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, later this week there will be a group of us in the Senate holding a meeting on trade issues and talking about what our response will be to the request by President Bush to extend what they call trade promotion authority. Trade promotion authority is a slogan that was used to replace fast track because fast track apparently became some sort of a pejorative term, at least in the minds of some. So they came up with the term ''trade promotion authority.'' It is like labeling things healthy forests or clear skies, trade promotion authority. What it means is fast track. The Congress, by Constitution, has the

right to be engaged in foreign commerce. That is where it is described, in the Constitution. It is not described as part of executive branch responsibilities. It is described as part of the responsibilities of Congress to be involved in the issue of trade and foreign commerce.

What has happened over some years is the Congress has given the President authority to negotiate trade agreements in secret behind closed doors, bring the trade agreements to this Congress, and we agree we will put on a straitjacket and not be allowed to offer any amendments, and it will be considered as a trade agreement that we have negotiated with some other country under expedited procedures. The Congress itself has decided to put itself in a straitjacket with something called fast track or trade promotion authority. I did not support that. I didn't support it for President Clinton. I don't support it for President Bush. President Bush has had fast track trade promotion authority now for some while. It is about to expire on June 30. He is asking that it be extended. As for me, I will not support extending it. I hope to be involved with a group of Senators who similarly will describe the danger to this country's economic future that would be entailed by supporting the extension of fast track or trade promotion authority.

Let me describe what the danger is. Some wish to ignore all the evidence that exists with respect to trade. The fact is, in the past year our trade deficit in 1 year was $830 billion. What does that number mean? It probably doesn't mean much to most people. It means every single day we purchase from foreign countries $2 billion more than we are able to sell to foreign countries. Every single day we put $2 billion worth of IOUs in the hands of another country. A substantial portion of those IOUs is now possessed by China, Japan, and others. About $1 billion is owed from the citizens of this country to China and Japan.

In addition to the imbalance of $2 billion a day importing more than we export or consume—saying it another way, about 6 percent more than we produce—we are seeing American jobs being shipped overseas. We have actually some cheerleaders for that proposition. We have some people in this country who say isn't that great. Isn't that a wonderful situation where we can actually move American jobs abroad. None of those people will ever lose their jobs. They will write books and make laws, but they will never lose their jobs. It is the folks who shower after work who lose their jobs; the people who go to the plant, the people on the assembly line; the people who find their job is going elsewhere because there is someone else in the world, a billion to a billion and a half people willing to work for 20 or 30 cents an hour. They will work with no health care benefits and no retirement benefits and in some cases for 20 cents an hour. If they decide they are being cheated out of wages and try to organize workers, they will be sent to prison.

That is the new economy? That is the new circumstance of the global economy? That is free trade? That is good for our country? I don't think so.

I have spoken at length about this issue. I am for trade and plenty of it. Sign me up. I support trade. I like trade. I insist that it be fair to this country. I am flat out tired, through fast track, of having trade agreements being negotiated in secret overseas someplace behind closed doors by U.S. negotiators who forget who they are working for. They bring them to this Chamber under expedited authority called fast track and there is the prohibition of any amendment being offered to change what is obviously wrong with the agreement. Then it runs through here like a hot knife through butter. We have had NAFTA and CAFTA and U.S.-Canada. We have had all these trade agreements, at the end of which we have the largest trade deficit in the history of humankind. It is not even close. Every time we pass a new trade agreement, we have a larger deficit.

The people who come up with these concoctions called free trade say: Isn't this wonderful? No, it is not. Would they say it was wonderful if they were losing their jobs? They wouldn't. But they are not the ones losing their jobs.

Alan Blinder, a mainstream economist, former vice chairman of the Federal Reserve, said this about the outsourcing of American jobs: There are 40 million American jobs subject to outsourcing. Not all of them will leave this country, but even those that remain will have downward pressure on their income because there is someone else somewhere else in the world willing to work for pennies.

So is that the new global economy? Is that the flat world? Mr. Friedman wrote the book ''The World is Flat.'' I know better than that; so does he. The world is not flat. In the chapter where he looks at Bangalore, India and says, isn't this wonderful, all these jobs in India, no, it is not wonderful.

Is this the kind of new economy we signed up for? Have we forgotten the lessons, have we forgotten what it took to get to this kind of standard of living?

James Fyler was shot 54 times. It was said once he died of lead poisoning. I guess when you are shot 54 times—he was actually killed in Ludlow, CO, nearly 90 years ago. He was killed because he thought people who went into the coal mines to mine for coal had a right to a fair wage and a right to work in a safe workplace.

Move forward a century from James Fyler, from people who gave their lives to lift the standards in this country, to expand the middle class, to provide for good jobs, demand a fair wage, demand decent benefits, and then ask yourself if, after a century, when we expanded the middle class in this country—with good jobs that pay well—have we now decided there is a new strategy, a bankrupt strategy, which is so-called free trade, which is unfair to the American worker, because it is a race to the bottom, saying to companies: If you can find somebody who will work for 20 cents an hour, have them make the Huffy bicycles, have them make the Radio Flyer little red wagons, have them make the Fig Newtons, have them make the Hanes underwear, and have them make the Levi's. They are all gone because they went in search of cheap labor. All those American jobs are gone. Now, I ask you, is that a road to a better future for American workers?

We, actually, in this Chamber, mind you—not me but a majority—have supported one of the most pernicious provisions I have ever seen, a provision that says: Do you know what, if you want to close your manufacturing plant and fire your workers and move the jobs to China, we intend to give you a big fat tax break for doing it. That is unbelievable. I have tried four times to change that in the Senate and have come up short in the vote four straight times. But I guarantee you this: One day, there will be enough clear thinking in this Congress to decide we ought to stop subsidizing the export of American jobs.

So I started by saying we have an $830 billion trade deficit. That relates to the export of jobs and the purchase every day of $2 billion more than we are able to ship abroad. We are going to have to repay that someday. You can make a case on the budget deficit that is money which we owe to ourselves. You cannot make that case with the trade deficit. That will be repaid someday with a lower standard of living in this country.

That is why we ought to, as a country, begin worrying about and thinking about this new strategy. I am for a fair trade strategy. I am for trade, and plenty of it, but it must be fair to this country. I am sick and tired of seeing trade agreements that pull the rug out from under our workers and pull the rug out from under our standards. I want to lift people up, not press people down. I do not believe in a future in which 40 million to 50 million additional workers are subject to outsourcing. But if they are not outsourced, they, nonetheless, can come home and say: Honey, I didn't lose my job today, but they are going to pay me less.

One final point. I spoke here about a week ago about Circuit City. I do not know much about that company. I do know this: They announced they were going to fire 3,400 people. Because they were bad workers? Not a bit. No. They said: We are going to fire them because we want to rehire other workers to whom we can pay less money. They were making, I think, slightly above $11 an hour. They wanted to fire 3,400 workers so they could hire cheaper workers, less expensive workers.

I do not know. If you go into a store and ask somebody where the camera counter is, are you going to find a worker who knows? Maybe you have a worker you could pay less money to, but do these companies forget that their company is their workers, the company is represented by their workforce, that is their brand?

We are headed in the wrong direction. There is no social program in this country as important as a good job that pays well. Yet the whole notion here of the companies that want to produce in China and ship here and run their income through the Cayman Islands to avoid paying taxes to this country—the whole notion is, this is a new day, it is a new economy. Don't you understand it? Free trade. That is not fair trade, where I come from.

My colleague, Senator BROWN, has worked on this issue for a long while in the U.S. House, and now in the U.S. Senate. I really appreciate seeing new voices come to the Senate demanding we move toward fair trade relationships. We can compete, but the competition has to be fair. That has not been the case with any of these trade agreements.

Mr. President, I am happy to yield the floor so my colleague, Senator BROWN, can be recognized.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for only 5 minutes or so.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I wish to echo much of what Senator DORGAN has said and thank him for his leadership on trade issues. I came to the House of Representatives in 1993, elected in 1992. Our trade deficit was fairly large in those days, we thought: $38 billion. Today, as the Senator said, depending on whether you count services in addition to manufactured products, it exceeds $800 billion.

Interestingly, if you add the aggregate trade deficit from 1992 through 2006—that means the amount of imports we have brought into our country versus the amount of exports we have going out of our country—we have had a $4 trillion trade deficit in the aggregate. That is $4 trillion of wealth having gone out of our country.

To understand what $4 trillion is, because nobody can really understand that, if you spent $1,000 every second of every minute of every hour of every day—if you spent $1,000 of every second of every minute of every hour of every day—to spend $4 trillion, it would take you 135 years. That is the kind of wealth we have seen go out of our country. But to understand that in more human terms, let me just share a story, if I could, for a moment.

About 7 or 8 years ago, after the North American Free Trade Agreement, unfortunately, passed the House and Senate—Senator DORGAN voted against it in the Senate; I voted against it in the House, a dozen or so years ago—I flew to McAllen, TX, at my own expense and rented a car and went across the border with a couple of friends and visited Reynosa, Mexico, to see what NAFTA had brought to the border areas and to the country of Mexico—at least that part of Mexico.

I went to the home of two General Electric workers—General Electric, Mexico. Both made about 90 cents an hour. Both worked pretty much 60 hours a week, 10 hours a day, 6 days a week. They lived in a home maybe 20 feet by 15 feet, with no running water, no electricity. They had dirt floors. When it rained hard, the floors turned to mud.

When you went outside their home—these are people who worked 60 hours a week each for an American company, a Mexican subsidiary of an American company, 3 miles from the United States of America in Reynosa, Mexico—if you went outside their home, there was a ditch behind their house, maybe 4 feet wide, with 2 by 4s across the ditch. Children would be playing in this ditch with human waste, industrial waste—who knows what was going through it. The American Medical Association said the Mexican-U.S. border is the most toxic place in the Western Hemisphere. And these children were playing in whatever this human and industrial effluent waste was in this neighborhood.

As you walked through this neighborhood, you could tell where the workers worked by the construction materials from which their homes were built—packing materials and cardboard boxes from the companies for which they worked or from the suppliers to the companies for which they worked. They used that as roofs and walls to build their shacks.

Again, these are people who hold full-time jobs for General Electric, Mexico, 3 miles from the United States of America.

Then, nearby, within a mile, I visited an auto plant—an auto plant that looked just like an auto plant in Lordstown, OH, Avon Lake, OH, with modern technology, even more modern than what we have often in auto plants in Ohio, unfortunately. They had clean floors and hard-working workers who were very productive.

There was one difference between the Mexican auto plant and the auto plant you would see in Cleveland. The difference was there was no parking lot in the Mexican auto plant because, simply put, the workers have not shared in the wealth they produce for their company.

You could go halfway around the world. You could go to a Motorola plant in Malaysia, and the workers are not paid enough to buy the phones they make. You could come back halfway around the world to Costa Rica to a Disney plant, and the workers do not make enough money to buy the toys they make for their children. You could go back halfway around the world to China, and the workers at the Nike plant are not paid enough to buy the shoes they make. The difference in their economy and ours, and these trading partners where we have huge trade deficits, is the workers are not sharing in the wealth they create.

But that is starting to happen in the United States. In the last 30 years, the wealthiest 20 percent in our country, the wealthiest 5 percent, the wealthiest 1 percent are seeing their wealth go up while wages are stagnant for the rest of the country. That is why the middle class is shrinking, because people who are working hard and playing by the rules simply are not sharing in the wealth they create.

They are more productive than they have ever been. We are setting productivity records in this country. Yet wages are stagnant or worse. Companies are outsourcing, companies are going overseas. Senator DORGAN said those same companies are getting tax breaks and all kinds of advantages, as this body and, across the Capitol, the House of Representatives continue to pass these job-killing trade agreements that outsource our jobs, that betray our middle class, that mean layoffs of police and fire and teachers and people who make our communities healthier, as families are hurt by these layoffs or as families are hurt by stagnant wages.

That is why we need a very different trade policy—whether it is with Japan, whether it is with Mexico—a trade policy that lifts up the middle class and helps to strengthen the middle class, a trade policy that will help workers in the developing world instead of this trade policy that outsources our jobs, betrays our communities, and hurts our families.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, will the Senator from Ohio yield for a question?

Mr. BROWN. Yes.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, the Senator from Ohio has described automobiles as one part of his discussion. I wonder if the Senator from Ohio knows, for example, with respect to South Korea, we imported about 700,000 automobiles from South Korea in the last year. We were able to export about 4,000 American cars to South Korea.

Now, why the imbalance? Mr. President, 99 percent of the cars driven on the streets of South Korea are made in South Korea. That is the way they want it. Once in a great while, we have a little burst. The Dodge Dakota pickup—all of a sudden, it looked like they were going to sell some Dodge Dakota pickups in South Korea. Just like that, the Government shut that down. Oh, they do it very subtlely, but they know what they are doing—just like that.

China is a good example. We did a trade agreement with China. China is now creating an automobile export market. They want to be a big automobile exporter and intend to export to this country. Here is what we said to China, a country with which we have a giant trade deficit: When you ship your Chinese cars to the United States, we

will impose a 2.5-percent tariff on your cars. And we agree that for any U.S. automobiles we would sell in China, you may impose a 25-percent tariff. So to a country with which we have a giant trade deficit—we now have a $230 billion trade deficit with China—we have said: It is OK for you to impose a tariff that is 10 times higher than we would impose on your cars.

That is unbelievably ignorant, in my judgment, ignorant of our own economic interests.

If I may make one additional point. In Ohio, they used to make Huffy bicycles. I have spoken about that at some length on this floor. They paid people $11 an hour to make Huffy bicycles. Huffy bicycles are 20 percent of the American bicycle market. You can buy them at Wal-Mart, Kmart, Sears. The people at the plant in Ohio loved their jobs. They made the Huffy bicycles for over a century. They all got fired. They all lost their jobs. You can still buy a Huffy bicycle. They are all made in China.

But on the last day of work, after they were fired, these Huffy bicycle workers, as they drove out of the parking lot of the plant, all left a pair of empty shoes where their car used to sit in the parking lot. It was their way of saying to this company: You can ship our jobs overseas, but, by God, you are not going to fill our shoes. It was a poignant way for workers to say: This job mattered to me. We worked here for a century making bicycles as American workers. And now it is gone.

It is unbelievable, when you hear these stories and see what the consequences are of American companies that have decided: Do you know what, the new economy says, let's produce where we can pay people 30 cents an hour. Incidentally, that is how much workers get who are now producing Huffy bicycles. They are paid 30 cents an hour. They work 7 days a week, 12 to 14 hours a day. That is what the Ohio workers were told. You cannot compete against that, so you lose.

In my judgment, our country, this Senate—Senator BROWN and I and others—has to begin standing up for the economic interests of our country and our workers. If we do not, we will surely see a shrinking of the middle class and a dramatic impact on the economy and future growth of this country. That is why this is such an important issue.

Again, let me just say how impressed I am with not only Senator BROWN but especially Senator BROWN and some others who have joined us in the Senate, who will be very strong voices on behalf of a sane, thoughtful, sensible protrade policy that is pro-fair trade and stands up for this country's economic interests.

I thank the Senator from Ohio for yielding to me.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I reemphasize what Senator DORGAN says so often; that is, we want trade—plenty of it—we just want it with different rules. We want fair trade. Plenty of countries around the world practice trade, as South Korea does, for their own national interests. We practice trade according to some economics textbooks some days, and other days we practice trade according to what is in the interests of these large corporations that outsource. But these companies—again I use the word ''betray''—they betray our families, they betray our communities when they do what Huffy Bicycles did because those jobs were good-paying union jobs in Shelby County OH, in western Ohio. As Senator DORGAN said, they have been there for hundreds of years.

In the far corner of northwest Ohio there is a company called the Ohio Art Company. The Ohio Art Company makes something that almost everyone who grew up in this country knows about: they make the Etch A Sketch. Some years ago, Wal-Mart went to the Ohio Art Company and said: We want to sell Etch A Sketch in our stores for under $10, and the Ohio Art Company couldn't make them for that price, so they pretty much moved most or all of their production to China.

It is that kind of betrayal by these corporations, with the concurrence of our Government, because our Government writes the rules for these trade agreements—our Government has consistently practiced trade and allowed our largest companies to practice trade not according—unlike other countries that don't practice it according to our national interests, and it is time that we do.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I would like to ask the Senator to yield for one more point. The Governor of Pennsylvania, Governor Rendell, tried very hard to keep a company in Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania House Furniture. They make fine furniture with Pennsylvania wood, a very special kind of Pennsylvania wood. They make top-of-the-line furniture and did for a long time—I think for over a century as well. They were purchased by La-Z-Boy, and La-Z-Boy decided that Pennsylvania House Furniture would be outsourced to China. At that point, Governor Rendell and folks in Pennsylvania got involved to try to save Pennsylvania House Furniture, but they couldn't do it. The jobs all went to China. Incidentally, they now ship the wood from Pennsylvania to China, put the furniture together, and then ship it back to be sold as Pennsylvania House Furniture.

There is somebody in this country who has a piece of furniture that they don't understand the value of. The last day at work at this plant where they had made furniture, these craftsmen, who made top-end, top-of-the-line furniture, these craftsmen, the last day of work, on the last piece of furniture that came off the assembly line in Pennsylvania, turned it over and they all signed it. Someone has a piece of furniture with the signatures of all the craftsmen at that plant who, on their last day at work, decided they wanted to sign as a note of pride in the work they had just completed.

Then the jobs were gone, all gone to China, because the Pennsylvania workers could not compete with those who would work for 25 cents, 30 cents, 35 cents an hour. But they shouldn't have to. That is the point of our discussion about fair trade.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, in the next decade our Nation needs to—our Government needs to come up with a manufacturing policy. If our trade laws and our tax laws continue to encourage outsourcing, continue to contribute to this erosion of the middle class, we will be a country with less and less manufacturing, fewer and fewer manufacturing jobs, less and less of an ability to protect our national interests. It is a question of national security, to be able to have a strong manufacturing component to our economy, and it is a question of economic security for families in places such as Dayton, in places such as Steubenville and Painesville and Cleveland, OH, places where people have built middle-class lifestyles, bought their homes, sent their children to college, worked for a decent retirement because they have worked hard and played by the rules and manufactured goods that people in our country use.

I think it is important as we move forward with Senator DORGAN and people like Senator WHITEHOUSE from Rhode Island, who is also very interested in this, that we move forward on developing this manufacturing policy on trade, on tax law, and on helping particularly our small manufacturers compete in this global economy.

I thank the President, and I yield the floor.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, we have seen a considerable number of the members of the Intelligence Committee come up to this floor this afternoon, and that is because we have before us S. 372, legislation authorizing funding for our intelligence and national security services. But rather than work with Congress to ensure agencies such as the CIA, FBI, NSA, and many others receive the funding they need to meet their missions and keep Americans safe, the Bush administration and some in the Republican minority are stonewalling this legislation.

As the newest member of the Select Committee on Intelligence, I am deeply troubled to see this legislation stalled at the expense of the security of our Nation. My father was a Foreign Service officer, and through his eyes I have seen the power of American diplomatic and intelligence efforts to do both great good in the world and great harm.

In their misuse and in the politicization of America's intelligence apparatus, President Bush and his administration have done great harm to America's standing in the world and our security at home. Now we face the

bleak prospect that for the third year in a row the Senate may not pass an intelligence authorization bill. This should give every concerned American pause.

This measure will fund our intelligence community agencies, fight terrorism, strengthen our capabilities to collect, analyze, and act on intelligence, and, most importantly, expand transparency and oversight of our intelligence community. It is a reflection of diligent, thorough, and tenacious work by our committee chairman, JAY ROCKEFELLER, the distinguished Senator from West Virginia whom I see with me on the floor this afternoon, along with his Republican counterpart, Vice Chairman BOND. I was hopeful that at least we could end the partisan logjam that has crippled the Senate Intelligence Committee for the last several years. I have been pleased with the thoughtful and serious tone of the committee's work on both sides of the aisle. Yet now something has suddenly changed, and the Republican minority has maneuvered to block this legislation from becoming law. Now it appears the White House has intervened, has called in chits, and twisted arms to stop a bill on which Chairman ROCKEFELLER and Vice Chairman BOND have worked so long and hard.

We understand this administration does not want congressional oversight. They don't want oversight on their inept response to Hurricane Katrina. They don't want oversight on the unprecedented purge of U.S. attorneys. They don't want oversight on the debacle going on in Iraq. They don't want oversight on intelligence either. But no administration in recent memory has more badly needed congressional oversight, and in no area has that need been more plainly demonstrated than in the intelligence function of our Government.

This is the administration that failed to ensure adequate oversight of national security letters under the PATRIOT Act. This is the administration that conducted its own secret wiretap program to monitor conversations, including the conversations of U.S. citizens. This is the administration that established its own secret prison network offshore to hold terrorism suspects off the record of this country's legitimate judicial institutions. This is the administration that cherry-picked its intelligence to justify the claim of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction. That abuse of intelligence alone cost our country thousands of lives, billions of dollars, and damage to our relations with allies around the world that will linger for many years.

One can see why this administration would resist congressional oversight, but Congress is obligated to oversee our country's national security and intelligence-gathering services. That is our duty under the Constitution. This duty is particularly important with the covert intelligence agencies because their work is not subject to public inquiry. These are not organizations that work in the bright light of day but in the deep dark of the secrecy they require to be effective. So meaningful and appropriate congressional oversight is our only safeguard.

This administration welcomes oversight less than almost any I can think of, but no administration in recent memory has needed it more. Perhaps the Nixon administration, but like the Nixon administration, this administration's resistance to congressional oversight is a measure of how badly that oversight is needed. Unfortunately, for too many years this Congress has conducted oversight by the principle, ''out of sight, out of mind'' or maybe ''see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil.'' You don't have to look far to see how badly this strategy has failed.

But there is a new team in town and a new leadership of this Congress that takes these responsibilities seriously. It is an abdication of our responsibility under the Constitution, and it is irresponsible with respect to the security of our Nation to let this legislation languish.

I urge my colleagues in the minority to reconsider their actions, to return to this floor in good faith, to continue the good work that Chairman ROCKEFELLER and Vice Chairman BOND have so nobly accomplished, and to give our intelligence agencies the funding they need to keep us safe.

I yield the floor.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, first of all, I want to truly congratulate the Senator from Rhode Island for his statement which was delivered forcefully, intelligently, accurately, and with great conviction which comes from his extremely broad experience in life.

For this Senator's part, my view is this: Unless the Senate invokes cloture and moves to finish action on the fiscal year 2007 authorization bill, we have failed for the third time, or as Senator LEVIN put it, since 2004 when we last passed it, to pass important national security legislation. Everything that the American people are worried about, everything that comes out of events like yesterday in Blacksburg, VA—and by the way, I spent a good deal of time on the phone talking to students I know down there—everything points to a massive, tectonic change in the way we are carrying on.

I speak very proudly of a PBS series which is looking at this whole subject. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, 12 consecutive hours of looking at what Islam is, what it isn't; what jihad is, what it isn't; and how we came to this point. It is done from all points of view, usually without any journalists, just soldiers talking. It is brilliant, and I recommend it to my colleagues.

We tried last week to move the Intelligence authorization bill, and we were prevented from doing so due to objection from some of our Republican colleagues. When cloture on the motion to proceed was passed last Thursday, the vote was 94 to 3. That is not just to drop off a number, that is a significant expression of public will in the Senate. The Senate was again prevented from moving to the bill for the purpose of debate and amendment by a continued Republican objection, forced 30 hours to run on the motion to proceed. As a result, we have wasted 2 days.

As my distinguished and good friend Senator BOND said, we wasted 2 days when we could have considered and disposed of many amendments, which we were prepared to do.

Vice Chairman BOND and I have been working together, the two of us, to clear and pass amendments even this day, and have done so, a goodly number of very important ones, because we are determined that this should work. However, many of those 42 amendments filed are extraneous, and they are nonrelevant. We have to pay attention to those things that are outside the jurisdiction of the Senate Intelligence Committee and the purpose of the authorization bill so they don't fall, but we won't be able to get to those.

So I would just conclude this way. Oversight of the activities of the U.S. intelligence community is a necessary and essential duty of this body. It is a duty which Vice Chairman BOND and I take extremely seriously. He is very aggressive about it and cares a great deal about it. I do, too. I think it defines the integrity of the process with which we protect our Nation and the people who protect our Nation, covertly, overtly, as the Senator from Rhode Island talked about.

So it is our constitutional duty. I don't like to be in dereliction of my constitutional duty at any particular time. I can't think of any time that is more important to me not to do so than right now.

In addition, I fear that it sends a disturbing message to the clandestine collectors and the intelligence analysts of the intelligence community who actually watch us and pay a lot more attention to us, particularly here in Washington, and read our tea leaves and take their signals about where they stand on our priority list. I want them to stand at the very top. I think the vice chairman wants them to stand at the very top. If we do not consider them a legislative priority, then I am saddened by that.

I call upon my colleagues to set aside politics and vote for cloture and final passage of this intelligence authorization bill that has languished in legislative limbo for more years than I am happily willing to admit.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri is recognized.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I regret we have come to an impasse. The chairman and I and the members of the committee have worked very hard to get a bill that is getting much better. I am very sorry that we were not allowed to

vote on amendments this afternoon and to continue with our efforts to move this bill forward. The leaders are responsible on both sides for running this body, and we are in a position now where it appears to the minority that amendments will not—could be precluded under that circumstance. I am afraid there will not be the support for cloture. I regret that we have worked so long and hard and apparently will not be able to continue with this bill. I hope to do so at a later time.

I thank my colleagues and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to proceed to the motion to reconsider is agreed to.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order and pursuant to rule XXII, the clerk will report the motion to invoke cloture.

The bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close debate on Calendar No. 20, S. 372, the Intelligence Authorization bill of 2007.

Harry Reid, Chuck Schumer, Russell D. Feingold, Jay Rockefeller, Evan Bayh, Patty Murray, Dick Durbin, Jeff Bingaman, Robert Menendez, B.A. Mikulski, Dianne Feinstein, Bill Nelson, E. Benjamin Nelson, S. Whitehouse, Byron L. Dorgan, Blanche L. Lincoln, Ron Wyden.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on S. 372, a bill to authorize appropriations through fiscal year 2007 for the intelligence and intelligence-related activities of the United States Government, the Intelligence Community Management Account, and the Central Intelligence Agency Retirement and Disability System, and for other purposes, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Delaware (Mr. BIDEN), the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON), and the Senator from Illinois (Mr. OBAMA) are necessarily absent.

Mr. LOTT. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Kansas (Mr. BROWNBACK) and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 50, nays 45, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 131 Leg.]

YEAS—50

Akaka	Bingaman	Byrd
Baucus	Boxer	Cantwell
Bayh	Brown	Cardin
Carper	Klobuchar	Pryor
Casey	Kohl	Reed
Clinton	Landrieu	Reid
Conrad	Lautenberg	Rockefeller
Dodd	Leahy	Salazar
Dorgan	Levin	Sanders
Durbin	Lieberman	Schumer
Feingold	Lincoln	Snowe
Feinstein	McCaskill	Stabenow
Hagel	Menendez	Tester
Harkin	Mikulski	Webb
Inouye	Murray	Whitehouse
Kennedy	Nelson (FL)	Wyden
Kerry	Nelson (NE)	

NAYS—45

Alexander	DeMint	Martinez
Allard	Dole	McConnell
Bennett	Domenici	Murkowski
Bond	Ensign	Roberts
Bunning	Enzi	Sessions
Burr	Graham	Shelby
Chambliss	Grassley	Smith
Coburn	Gregg	Specter
Cochran	Hatch	Stevens
Coleman	Hutchison	Sununu
Collins	Inhofe	Thomas
Corker	Isakson	Thune
Cornyn	Kyl	Vitter
Craig	Lott	Voinovich
Crapo	Lugar	Warner

NOT VOTING—5

Biden	Johnson	Obama
Brownback	McCain	

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 50, the nays are 45. Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn not having voted in the affirmative, the motion is rejected.

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I am deeply disappointed and concerned about the continuing Republican filibuster of the fiscal year 2007 Intelligence authorization bill. This bill is critical for our national security. It supports the intelligence community while ensuring that Congress can conduct necessary oversight of our intelligence activities. Failure to pass this legislation would undermine the men and women of our intelligence community who look to Congress not only for funding but for policy guidance and legal clarity. It also sends a terrible signal to the American people, that despite repeated abuses by this administration from warrantless wiretapping to National Security Letters, Senate Republicans have chosen to shield the administration from congressional scrutiny and oversight. Unchecked executive authority is contrary to our constitutional system. And the American people understand well what the 9/11 Commission stressed—that strong congressional oversight is an essential part of defending and protecting America.

There are a number of provisions of the bill that I view as particularly important. Besides authorizing the intelligence programs that help keep us safe, the bill improves congressional oversight of the intelligence community and advances the critical work of intelligence reform. The National Security Act requires that the congressional intelligence committees be kept fully and currently informed of all intelligence activities. The administration failed to comply with this law with regard to its illegal warrantless wiretapping program. I am pleased, therefore, that this bill limits the ability of the executive branch to deny information to the full membership of the Intelligence Committee. I am also pleased that the classified annex to the bill includes my amendment calling on the administration to work with the committee to ensure adequate oversight of the program, which has not yet occurred.

With regard to intelligence reform, the bill establishes, within the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, an inspector general of the intelligence community, which will strengthen accountability across the community. The bill also requires the declassification of the aggregate budget for all intelligence activities. This longstanding intelligence reform goal, which was recommended by the 9/11 Commission, will allow for basic budget transparency and a level of accountability without damaging our national security.

The bill includes an amendment I offered to the classified annex with Senator ROCKEFELLER calling for more intelligence resources to be directed toward Africa. The continent presents a wide range of threats, such as terrorist havens and the transnational movements of terrorist organizations, while corruption, authoritarianism and poverty allow these conditions to fester. In order to bolster our national security, we need greater information and understanding of these threats. Of particular concern is Somalia, where the committee encouraged the intelligence community to work with other agencies of the U.S. Government on a comprehensive strategic plan for stability. Unfortunately, since the amendment was originally accepted by the committee in May 2006, the situation in the Horn of Africa has only deteriorated and the overall U.S. Government strategy for addressing the crisis remains sorely inadequate.

Finally, I am pleased that, in response to the concerns of Senator WYDEN and myself, a provision creating a new exemption to the Privacy Act has been removed. Widespread abuses involving National Security Letters recently uncovered by the Department of Justice inspector general only underscore why Congress must conduct vigorous oversight of how current authorities are being used before providing new ones.

I again express my disappointment that the bill is being filibustered and hope that the bill will soon be passed into law.

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, I rise to talk to my colleagues about my amendment No. 866 to protect the classified information handled by Congress.

Having served on the Intelligence Committee for 8 years, no one needs to tell me how important it is for Congress to have the information it needs to perform oversight of the intelligence community.

However, we must be mindful that much of this information could do great damage to our national security.

This bill includes what I believe are misguided provisions related to clandestine prisons, the Detainee Treatment Act, and the enormous expansion of access to highly sensitive national security information.

The bill would declassify information about the intelligence budget, dramatically expand the number of members and staff with access to the most sensitive national security information our government holds, and provide details of the interrogation techniques used by our military and intelligence community.

Can anyone imagine what would happen if al-Qaida became privy to the interrogation techniques our military and intelligence community use? Does anyone think al–Qaida wouldn't adapt and train its terrorists accordingly?

I believe disseminating this information is a mistake. But, if we are going to disseminate it, we must put in place a mechanism to ensure this sensitive information does not get into the hands of our enemies. And we must give pause to those who would use this information to conduct their own personal foreign policies, as has been seen in the systematic use of leaks of classified information in recent years.

My amendment will ensure this information is treated as it should be by imposing a 10-year criminal penalty on those Members and staff who leak our national security secrets.

I urge adoption of the amendment.

MEDICARE

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss the Medicare prescription drug program that Congress passed a little over 3 years ago with a bipartisan majority. We have all heard the very impressive statistics associated with the Medicare Part D program. More than 90 percent of seniors eligible for the benefit have drug coverage, and they will save on average $1,200 per year.

More importantly, more than 80 percent of enrolled seniors have expressed their satisfaction with the program. Competition in the prescription drug benefit has forced down costs far below what was anticipated. In 2007, the average premium for the benefit was $22 a month, 40 percent less than projected at the outset.

The Congressional Budget Office's new budget estimate for the next 10 years shows that net Medicare costs for the prescription drug benefit will be more than 30 percent, or $256 billion, lower than originally forecast. Not only are the costs for this prescription drug benefit lower than expected, but for 2007 more drugs are also being covered by participating plans than last year. The average plan now covers 4,300 drugs in its formulary versus 3,800 last year, a 13-percent increase.

The basic point is this: We passed a prescription drug benefit that uses market competition to provide critical medications to seniors at a cost much lower than originally projected. The results so far demonstrate a familiar principle: competition and choice bring lower prices and, I might add, better service.

There are some who want to change that successful model, so we have to ask ourselves: How does their plan improve on this very successful Government program?

Since I believe being a zealous guardian of the taxpayers' dollars is one of the reasons my constituents sent me here, one of the first questions I ask is: Will the alternative plan of interfering with this market-based competition actually save taxpayers money while continuing to provide choice and access to prescription drugs for seniors?

The simple answer to this question is, no, and you don't have to take my word for it. The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office determined that the proposal that is before us would have a ''negligible effect'' on reducing Government spending.

The advocates of this particular proposal that is pending before us cannot point to any Government source that will support their claim that the Federal Government can negotiate more effectively than the private market. Specifically, CBO writes that ''CBO estimates that H.R. 4 would have a negligible effect on Federal spending because we anticipate that the Secretary would be unable to negotiate prices across the broad range of covered part D drugs that are more favorable than those obtained by PDPs under current law.'' Secretary Leavitt describes in practice how having the Government negotiate drug prices will not lead to lower costs for beneficiaries or taxpayers. He has written:

> We are seeing large-scale negotiations with drug manufacturers, but they are being conducted by private plans, not the government. A robust market with a lot of competitors has driven down prices. It's the magic of the market. To assume that the government, in our genius, could improve on this belies the reality of a complex task.

In fact, public opinion polls back up Secretary Leavitt's comments. A study by the Tarrance Group found that only 28 percent of seniors believe that the Government would do a better job in setting drug prices than a competitive marketplace.

The Washington Post agrees. It has written, on January 14:

> Governments are notoriously bad at setting prices, and the U.S. Government is notoriously bad at setting prices in the medical realm.

As policymakers, it is also our job to ask: What are the potential consequences of this new legislation that is pending before us? Quite simply, the consequences are dire. Since Government will decide which drugs seniors have access to, seniors will be left with fewer choices.

In terms of analyzing the consequences of this alternative plan, it is helpful to look at examples in other countries that have tried what Democrats are now advocating in this model. We don't have to guess about what the consequences would be because other countries have tried it. I recently read a piece published in the Washington Post and written by Alberto Mingardi, president of a think tank in Italy, and I want to quote from this article because I believe it demonstrates my point. He writes about the Democrats' plan to require the Government to set prices, or at least giving the Secretary the authority to do that. He said:

> It would create a Medicare drug program that looks a lot like the system we have in my country, Italy, where drug prices are among the lowest in Europe. At first glance, this might seem like an enviable model for America to follow. But before Pelosi rushes down the road to Italian-style health care, let me offer a word of caution. Italy is hardly a health care paradise. In fact, it's more like a quagmire of red tape.
>
> For the most part, Italy's lower drug prices are the product of government price controls. In Italy, these price controls have created a number of problems. The government's attempt to force down drug prices has not produced overall health-care spending. Rather, it has resulted in a spike in demand—which is one reason why Italy's health-care spending has skyrocketed, growing nearly 68 percent between 1995 and 2003.
>
> As for the quality of Italy's care, that, too, has suffered. With demand for drugs rising, the Italian government has attempted to save money by adopting reimbursement policies that favor certain drugs over others. Unfortunately, the most innovative products often aren't considered reimbursable by the government precisely because they are the most expensive.
>
> It's a great system if you just need an antibiotic. But if you're hoping to avoid open heart surgery through access to a miracle drug, it can be a nightmare.

He concludes.

> The economy is also harmed. Because it's simply not profitable for companies to invent cures in Italy, price controls have decimated Italy's pharmaceutical industry. So by attempting to hold down drug prices, the Italian government has deprived its citizens of the best care without reducing health-care spending. And it has deprived the country of what could be a vibrant sector of the economy. In their rush to revamp Medicare, U.S. policy leaders should be careful not to make the same mistake.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the article be printed in its entirety in the RECORD at the conclusion of my comments.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MENENDEZ). Without objection, it is so ordered.

(See exhibit 1.)

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I also want to stress the last sentence that I read one more time, where he says: It is a great system, if you need an antibiotic. But if you are hoping to avoid open heart surgery through access to a miracle drug, it can be a nightmare.

We don't need to go down this path. We don't have to change course. Right now, under Medicare Part D, market forces and competition have created a wildly popular benefit that uses market competition to provide critical medications to seniors at costs much lower than projected a few short years ago.

I have spent a few moments describing my concern with the Democrats'

plan to ''so-called'' negotiate prices. I would say to ration drugs is a more accurate description. But by far my biggest concern about this bill is, of course, another example of their preference for Government control in health care rather than market-driven, patient-centered approaches favored by those of us on this side of the aisle.

I would urge my colleagues to call this debate what it is: It is not so much about noninterference clauses in Medicare prescription drug laws. There is a much more importantly and potentially consequential debate about whom Americans want to be making decisions in our health care system. Do they want it to be the Government or do they want it to be patients themselves and their doctors?

I recently read a quote from a physician in Switzerland that I found particularly poignant. He reminds us that:

> We all have a single-payer health care system. Citizens always wind up paying for health care, either through taxes, insurance premiums, or out-of-pocket costs. The real question is whether they will have a single-decider system. In many European countries, there are single-decider systems in which governments and their agents control what medical services its citizens will or will not receive.

Of course, we know all too well how close we are in this country to having a single-payer health care system. Roughly, 50 cents of every health care dollar we spend in the United States is spent directly by the U.S. Government. The health care economy is approximately $2 trillion annually, or one-sixth of the entire U.S. economy. I believe we have to reform our health care system, emphasizing individual choice and trusting patients and their families and their doctors to make the right choices—not lawyers or, yes, even bureaucrats in Washington, DC,—to make the important health care and treatment decisions.

So make no mistake about it, this bill is about a much larger issue than the title of the legislation itself would suggest. We are not debating some sterile provision called a noninterference clause. We are debating something far more significant.

The Washington Post believes this debate is about something much larger than the noninterference clause as well, and they have written:

> The Democrats' stance is troubling because it suggests an excessively governmental-led view of health care reform. The better approach is to let each insurer offer its own version of the right balance, see whether it attracts customers, and then adapt flexibly.

In my State, the Dallas Morning News has written:

> When congressional Democrats press for this change next year, remember they're pushing for much more than lower prices. They're seeking to move the line where government should stop and the marketplace should start.

I do agree with the Democrats that this debate is about negotiation, but the real question is not should we have negotiation but who should negotiate. The proponents of this legislation believe it should be the Government, and I couldn't disagree more. The proponents of this legislation believe the Government is more skilled in making pricing decisions than the free market, and I have to say, I think that is wrong.

We have been presented in this legislation with a remarkably clear choice: If you believe the way to improve our broken health care system is to embrace a market-driven approach that lowers costs and does not reduce choices for seniors, then you will vote to continue the prescription drug program that we passed a few short years ago. If you believe, as the advocates of this legislation do, that Government bureaucrats are better suited than the free market to make pricing decisions for thousands of prescription drugs, then you will want to vote for this legislation.

I will vote for the current market-driven approach that provides choices for seniors and puts patients and doctors in control rather than the Government, and I urge my colleagues to join me.

EXHIBIT 1

[From the Washington Post, Nov. 12, 2006]

DRUG PRICE PATH TO AVOID

(By Alberto Mingardi)

The next speaker of the House, Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.), has let it be known that within her first 100 hours on the job, she will move to allow the government to negotiate directly with pharmaceutical companies to obtain lower drug prices for Medicare patients.

Her plan would create a Medicare drug program that looks a lot like the system we have in my country, Italy, where drug prices are among the lowest in Europe. And that's pretty low, considering that drugs in Europe average about 60 percent less than in the United States. Even as U.S. prices rose, Italian drug prices decreased by 5 percent last year.

At first glance, this might seem an enviable model for America to follow. But before Pelosi rushes down the road to Italian-style health care, allow me to offer a word of caution. Italy is hardly a health-care paradise. In fact, it's more like a quagmire of red tape.

For the most part. Italy's lower drug prices are the product of government price controls. The state purchases nearly 60 percent of the nation's prescription drugs. And it supposedly negotiates prices directly with pharmaceutical companies. But since the Italian government controls such a disproportionate share of the market, it in effect dictates drug prices. In Italy, these price controls have created a number of problems.

First, they distort the laws of supply and demand. Because of the country's artificially low drug prices, demand for pharmaceuticals is artificially high—higher than it would be under free-market conditions. The point is that the Government's attempt to force down drug prices has not reduced overall health-care spending. Rather, it has resulted in a spike in demand—which is one reason why Italy's health-care spending has skyrocketed, growing nearly 68 percent between 1995 and 2003.

As for the quality of Italy's care, that, too, is suffering. With demand for drugs rising, the Italian government has attempted to save money by adopting reimbursement policies that favor certain drugs over others. Unfortunately, the most innovative products often aren't considered reimbursable by the government precisely because they are the most expensive.

It's a great system if you just need an antibiotic. But if you're hoping to avoid open-heart surgery through access to a miracle drug, it can be a nightmare. And Italians are lacking more than just choice in cutting-edge drugs. They also lack information. According to a recent survey, more than 50 percent of Italy's patients believe that the national health service cannot even supply adequate information about treatments and drugs.

The economy is also harmed. Because it's simply not profitable for companies to invent cures in Italy, price controls have decimated Italy's pharmaceutical industry. Today not one of the world's 50 largest drug manufacturers has its headquarters in Italy, even though the country is the world's seventh-largest economy. Because most drug and biotechnology companies are outside Italy's borders, there are only 84,000 pharmaceutical workers in Italy's entire drug industry. The industry has become a perfect target for Italy's politicians, because they can rail against it with little political downside. The more we follow this path, the less likely it is for Italian companies to develop valuable innovations—at great risk for both our economy and our health.

So by attempting to hold down drug prices, the Italian government has deprived its citizens of the best care without reducing health-care spending. And it has deprived the country of what could be a vibrant sector of the economy. In their rush to revamp medicare, U.S. Policy leaders should be careful not to make the same mistake.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I rise to express my deep concerns about S. 3, the Medicare Fair Prescription Drug Price Act of 2007.

Back in 2003, I helped draft the Medicare Modernization Act. I was one of the Senate's chief negotiators for the House-Senate conference on this legislation. We wrote legislation that was approved by both Chambers of Congress and signed into law by the President in December 2005. And by enacting this legislation, Medicare beneficiaries are now offered a quality prescription drug benefit at an affordable price. It is a successful program by any measure.

I want to take a few minutes to talk about the Medicare Modernization Act of 2003 and what a difference it has made in the lives of Medicare beneficiaries.

Today, there are 38 million Medicare beneficiaries and over 90 percent participate in the Medicare Part D program. Eighty percent of Medicare Part D beneficiaries are happy with their Medicare prescription drug plan. And they are happy with their plans, because they have a choice in coverage—beneficiaries are able to get a plan that meets their needs. We don't have a one-size-fits-all program attempting to stretch over 38 million people. The cost savings have been profound for both beneficiaries and for taxpayers.

When the Medicare Part D plan first began in January 2006, we thought that the average premium would be around

$37 per month. Because of plan competition, the average premium is $22 a month. That has reflected for taxpayers over $113 billion of savings over what Congress had originally estimated. And the other good news is that if a beneficiary hits the doughnut hole—the point where the beneficiary has to pay out of pocket for his or her prescriptions—there are now plans in every State that will provide coverage through the doughnut hole period.

As we all know, back in January, the House of Representatives passed legislation that would require the prices of prescription drugs received under the Medicare Part D program to be negotiated by the Secretary of Health and Human Services. Late last week, the Senate Finance Committee also approved S. 3, the Medicare Fair Prescription Drug Price Act of 2007. While this legislation does not mandate that the Secretary negotiate drug prices for the Medicare Part D benefit, it gives the Secretary the discretion to do so.

Any way you look at it, Congress requiring the Secretary to negotiate prescription drug prices would lead to a one-size-fits-all drug plan which would result in fewer choices. Beneficiaries would have less satisfaction with a one-size-fits-all plan. And, in my opinion, drug prices will not be lower.

In addition, beneficiaries would have fewer choices. When you negotiate drug prices, there is really only one way to do it. You limit the choices available. You say I am going to take your medication off your drug plan or I am only going to pay X amount for a drug, a price so low that perhaps the manufacturer cannot participate. If the Government starts doing that, suddenly you have the Government making choices about who can get what drug as opposed to beneficiaries and their doctors making those decisions.

Currently there are over 4,400 drugs available on Medicare Part D plans. Beneficiaries may choose a plan that meets their needs. That is exactly why 80 percent of Medicare Part D beneficiaries are happy. And for those who aren't, the good news is we can help find a plan that serves them better. If we had one plan, one formulary, then we would have a lot more unhappy people.

And how does the Secretary of Health and Human Services feel about this new responsibility? I would like to take a minute to read an editorial that appeared in the Washington Post on January 11, 2007. This editorial was written by Secretary Mike Leavitt, not only a good friend of mine but a very thoughtful, knowledgeable, and open-minded Secretary of HHS as far as health care policy is concerned. ''Medicare And the Market Government Shouldn't Be Negotiating Prescription Prices,'' by Mike Leavitt, Thursday, January 11, 2007; Page A25:

We all want people with Medicare to get the prescription drugs they need at the lowest possible prices. The issue before Congress this week is how best to do that. Should consumer choice and private-sector competition determine prices—or should government?

The success of the Medicare prescription drug benefit provides strong evidence that competition among private drug plans has contributed significantly to lowering costs. The average monthly premium has dropped by 42 percent, from an estimated $38 to $22—and there is a plan available for less than $20 a month in every state. The net Medicare cost of the drug program has fallen by close to $200 billion since its passage in 2003.

Seniors and people with disabilities like the benefit. Studies consistently show that three-quarters of Medicare beneficiaries are satisfied with their coverage. Individuals like being able to choose the plan that best fits their needs. A single, one-size-fits-all drug plan would have made the choice easier, and Congress did create a standard plan. But fewer than 15 percent of enrollees have selected that standard plan—opting instead for plans with lower premiums, no deductibles and enhanced coverage.

Despite the success of the benefit, some people believe government can do a better job of lowering prices than a competitive marketplace. Legislation under consideration would require the secretary of health and human services to negotiate and set the prices of drugs. In effect, one government official would set more than 4,400 prices for different drugs, making decisions that would be better made by millions of individual consumers.

There is also the danger that government price setting would limit drug choices. Medicare provides access to the broadest array of prescription drugs, including the newest drugs. But price negotiation inevitably results in the withholding of access to some drugs to get manufacturers to lower prices.

The Department of Veterans Affairs, often cited as an example of how government can negotiate prices, operates an excellent program for veterans, but the VA formulary excludes a number of new drugs covered by the Medicare prescription benefit. Even Lipitor, the world's best-selling drug, isn't on the VA formulary. That may be one reason more than a million veterans are also getting drug coverage through Medicare.

Some observers point to the massive buying power of the federal government as the means to exert clout over drug companies, but the federal government has nowhere near the market power of the private sector. Private-sector insurance plans and pharmacy benefit managers, who negotiate prices between drug companies and pharmacies, cover about 241 million people, or 80 percent of the population. Medicare could cover at most 43 million.

The independent Congressional Budget Office has said that government price negotiation would have a ''negligible effect on federal spending.'' And previous experience with Congress and Medicare regulating drug prices has not been reassuring. Medicare Part B, which covers physician services, outpatient hospital care and other services, sets the prices for some medicines—notably a number of cancer drugs. It has a history of reimbursing at rates substantially greater than prevailing prices. In 2005, Part B drug spending increased by almost 20 percent.

If the Federal Government begins picking drugs and setting prices for all Medicare beneficiaries, administrative costs would add a new burden to taxpayers. The Department of Health and Human Services would have to hire hundreds of new employees. Legions of lobbyists would follow, each seeking higher Medicare payments for the drug companies they represent. As a Post editorial noted in November, ''having the government set drug prices is a sure way of flooding the political system with yet more pharmaceutical lobbyists and campaign spending.''

There is a proper role for government in setting standards and monitoring those who provide the benefit. We should ensure that beneficiaries have access to medically necessary treatments. But government should not be in the business of setting drug prices or controlling access to drugs. That is a first step toward the type of government-run health care that the American people have always rejected.

There are many ways the administration and Congress can work together to make health care more affordable and accessible. But undermining the Medicare prescription drug benefit, which has improved the lives and health of millions of seniors and people with disabilities, is not one of them.

Secretary Leavitt is correct—providing flexible prescription drug plans to beneficiaries should be one of our top goals. Getting Medicare beneficiaries the best price possible for their prescription drugs should be one of our top goals. And offering Medicare beneficiaries high quality prescription drug plans should be one of our top goals. In my reading of this legislation, passage will result in none of these goals being achieved and, in fact could result in the Medicare prescription drug benefit becoming a national formulary which could result in higher prices for drugs and limited choices for Medicare beneficiaries.

When we were drafting this bill, we took great care to provide protections to Medicare beneficiaries who decided to participate in the Medicare Prescription Drug Plan. We wanted to provide beneficiaries with a drug benefit that would not cost them an arm and a leg, and that would allow access to a wide range of prescription drug choices.

In order to preserve those choices, the Medicare Modernization Act prohibits the Secretary from establishing a formulary. If the Secretary cannot lower prices without a formulary and if it is prohibited by law for the Secretary to establish a formulary then I ask you—what is the purpose of this bill?

I believe that, should this bill become law, it will be no time before its supporters decide that now they want the Secretary to establish a formulary. I think this bill is a Trojan horse with a Medicare formulary hidden inside.

Mr. President, I urge my colleagues to think carefully about this issue. I urge them to talk to their Medicare beneficiaries in their states and ask them whether or not they are happy with their prescription drug plans. I believe that they will find that almost everyone is happy with their current

benefit and changing this benefit is a terrible mistake on our part.

FEDERAL INCOME TAX FILING DEADLINE

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, today the tax man cometh.

Americans have April 17 circled on their calendars, and not with a smiley face.

This year, roughly 135 million Americans sat down to complete their tax returns. Many have made the unfortunate discovery that they owe additional money to the IRS.

Others are shocked to learn that they owe something called the alternative minimum tax.

I would like to emphasize one point today, a point that many of my constituents have learned the hard way: their tax burden is already too high.

For middle-class Americans, tax day has become an aggravation at best, and an outrage at worst.

Many Utahns, as well as distraught taxpayers throughout the Nation, know the look of tax overload. They see it when they look in the mirror, and they see it when they look at their spouse.

There is the kitchen table. A late night. Some scattered papers and receipts. An elbow on the table. And a hand on the forehead in disbelief. This is the look of overtaxed Americans. It is the look of misery and confusion. It does not need to be this way.

There are economic burdens as well, and that burden is only going to grow if the Democrats get their way.

Many of us pay too much in taxes already. But the policies of the congressional majority are a blueprint for even higher taxes. Neither our citizens nor our economy can bear much more.

Middle-class Americans are overtaxed.

According to the Tax Foundation, this year Americans will work 120 days to pay their total tax burden.

Let's put this in perspective. They will work 62 days to pay for their house and home. They will work 52 days for health and medical care. They will work 30 days for food. But they will work 120 days to pay their taxes.

If you told my parents' generation that their tax burden would be that high, they would have thought we lost a war to France.

But the Democrats are not satisfied. They want the so-called rich to pay more of their so-called fair share.

Let me translate. By ''rich'' they mean anyone with a job.

And by ''fair share,'' they mean empty your wallet.

According to recent data from the IRS, persons making more than $30,122, or the top 50 percent of all income earners, paid 97 percent of all income taxes in 2004, the latest year there were data available.

Those who made more than $60,041 in 2004, the top 25 percent, paid 85 percent of all income taxes.

These people are not rich.

As one of my Democratic colleagues noted earlier this year, a mother and a father making $90,000 a year in a place like Virginia or New York or California or New Jersey are not rich. They are doing the best they can to provide for their families. And once you factor in taxes, housing, clothing, medical care, and college savings, those paychecks do not go that far.

The middle class is already paying out much more in taxes than is spent by the Government on its behalf.

According to the Tax Foundation, an individual making over $65,000 a year pays $7,217 more in taxes every year than is spent for him or her.

But for some Members of this body, our system is still not progressive enough.

I know that there are some policy wonks and political strategists who think the days of tax revolt are over.

Apparently we are at some postpartisan, end of history, where Americans just accept big government and big bites out of their paychecks.

I for one am not buying it.

It seems some things never change in this country.

One of those things is the commitment of Americans to their rights of life, liberty, and property.

Americans remain very jealous of their liberties, and rightly so. Chief among our liberties is the freedom to use the money you earn through your hard work and initiative, to build your business, buy a home, and take care of your family.

Working hard to fund some new Government bureaucracy is not at the top of the list. If taxes go up significantly, the party responsible is going to be in for a rude awakening. They are going to be reminded, with grave electoral consequences, that the Government can take only so much.

Along with many of my colleagues on this side of the aisle, I think our tax burden is still too high. Many Americans still pay too much. The estate tax still destroys family businesses. Too many startup businesses are killed off by taxes before they have begun. We need to be providing tax incentives so people can responsibly save for their retirement and health care. We need to be coming up with innovative tax policies and entitlement reforms.

Instead, the Democrats are keeping mum as Medicare and Social Security take on water, keeping to themselves their foolproof plan to bail us out: Raise taxes.

The combined unfunded liability for Social Security and Medicare is $84 trillion. That is ''trillion'' dollars. Where is that money coming from? They are having a hard time coming up with money today for a $50 billion 1-year fix for the AMT, the alternative minimum tax. Where are they going to get $84 trillion?

Do not worry, they tell us; they are going to fix Social Security and Medicare. But fixing it their way will break the backs of middle-class taxpayers. Mark my words, they will raise taxes on the middle class, taking away or limiting savings vehicles for health and retirement. They will raise taxes on individuals, hiking rates and hurting families. And they will raise taxes on businesses, killing industry and choking initiative.

Conservatives are fond of saying that ideas have consequences. They certainly do. There are important differences between the parties. In their guts, Democrats distrust markets, believe that more Government intervention and Government programs are the answer, and are willing to hike taxes to achieve their goals.

Those of us on this side of the aisle believe in personal responsibility, low taxes, and encouraging the freedom, entrepreneurialism, and dynamism of the American people.

Ideas have consequences. One leads to economic prosperity; the other leads to national stagnation. I want my constituents to know that on these debates to come, I stand with the taxpayers. We need to be encouraging industry. We need to be growing our economy. We need to be lowering and simplifying our tax burden.

Today's Democratic majority promised real change. Instead, we are getting the same tired song. They are not taking our Nation's fiscal woes seriously. They are hoping Americans will not object when their taxes are hiked to pay for our coming entitlement train wreck.

They should think twice before going down this road. Middle-class Americans, such as my constituents in Utah, are trying to get their taxes done by midnight tonight. They want their tax burden lowered, and so do I. There are lots of promises made by our friends on the other side to get rid of the AMT. They have had at least three chances to vote to get rid of the AMT for the vast majority in the middle class and they have refused do so.

If left unchecked, the AMT is going to, within the next 10 years, be assessed on over 35 million Americans. Remember, it started out because there were about 159 people who did not pay their taxes, people who were immensely rich. Now we are talking up to 25 million Americans as we stand here today, and up to 35 million Americans within the next ten years. I am calling on my colleagues on the other side to live up to their campaign promises and let us get rid of AMT. It is very unfair to the middle class, and frankly, for most Americans.

I promise to do all I can to see we do that.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia is recognized.

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as if in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, I rise today to oppose S. 372, the fiscal year 2007 Intelligence authorization bill, in its current form. I believe, without amendment, this legislation will

deteriorate the existing working relationship and trust the intelligence community has with Congress.

I voted against this legislation in both the Intelligence Committee and the Armed Services Committee because I believed significant alterations needed to be made before I could offer my support. As a member of the Intelligence Committee, I am fully cognizant of the importance of passing an authorization bill to guide our intelligence community as well as to advise the Senate appropriations process. Passing an authorization bill reasserts much needed Congressional oversight of the intelligence community, and it ensures that the Senate is relevant on national security issues that are critically important.

At this time, I question whether the Senate is serious about the need to examine all possible improvements to the bill or is willing to devote the time necessary to discuss and debate all amendments. Given the natural and conflicting interests involved, it is prudent that Congress act carefully and work with the executive branch to ensure that its needs are met, rather than hastily making demands through legislation that many provisions of this bill attempt to do. This will only create further friction between the two branches. I believe there are other ways to ensure effective oversight.

Some sections of this bill, particularly sections 304 and 107, are problematic to me, and I believe they will not further meaningful Congressional oversight. Therefore, I have offered amendments to strike these sections and urge my colleagues to support my amendments.

Let me detail my concerns with these two sections. First, section 304 requires the intelligence community to notify all of the members of the Senate and House Intelligence Committees whenever the House and Senate leadership and committee leaders are briefed on highly sensitive intelligence or covert actions. It requires that the notification include a statement of the reasons why only the leadership was informed, as well as a description of the main features of the matter.

There is a history of compromise and cooperation between the executive and legislative branches regarding the sharing of sensitive intelligence with Congress. The President has the duty to protect intelligence sources and methods. One such way is to limit the number of people who are privy to the information. Congress recognized this duty in the National Security Act, which states that information be shared:

> with due regard for the protection from unauthorized disclosure of classified information relating to sensitive intelligence sources or methods or other exceptionally sensitive matters.

The reporting requirement in section 304 may disclose the very sensitive information the President has determined only the leadership has a need to know. As a member of the Intelligence Committee, I recognize there are some highly sensitive matters I do not have a need to know, and I support having limited notification when absolutely necessary to protect the information.

Frequently the Congressional leadership will be informed of tightly controlled classified operations in which limiting knowledge of them is appropriate. Many of us do not have a need to know about various sensitive operations which, if leaked, could result in lives being lost as well as the termination of Congressional access to information.

Additionally, I have confidence in the chairman and vice chairman of the Intelligence Committee. I count on the leaders of the committee to be responsible for determining when additional access to information is warranted and for requesting that additional members be briefed as necessary. Section 304 seeks to abandon these practices which have been refined over three decades of aggressive Congressional oversight.

Next, section 107 requires the public disclosure of the National Intelligence Program budget requests and Congressional authorizations and appropriations for the intelligence community. Disclosing these figures to the public also discloses them to our enemies who will be watching for fluctuations in these figures, which may damage intelligence sources and methods over time.

Additionally, declassifying the overall budget for the intelligence community may lead others to demand that each agency declassify their budget. No doubt this would have grave effects on the capabilities of our intelligence agencies. For those reasons I oppose S. 372 in its current form and the managers' amendment to it. I urge my colleagues to support my amendments to strengthen this bill.

FAIR TAX ACT

Mr. President, today is the deadline for all taxes to be filed. As many millions of Americans rush to file their taxes, I rise to bring attention to our horribly broken, overly complex, and unfair American tax system. I have and will continue to support significant reform of the Tax Code in this country, as I have consistently done during my service in Congress.

Accordingly, I have recently introduced the Fair Tax Act of 2007 on behalf of myself, my colleague from Georgia, Senator ISAKSON, Senator COBURN, and Senator CORNYN, because we are in desperate need of tax reform.

Imagine the economic freedom and purchasing power provided by a tax system that would allow us to retain 100 percent of our earnings while maintaining the benefits of Government-sponsored programs, and allowing them to flourish. Such would be the case under the system proposed in the Fair Tax Act.

The Fair Tax Act would create a national sales tax as the primary source of Federal revenue, would eliminate our current archaic and inefficient Tax Code, and would replace it with a simpler, fairer means of collecting revenue. Specifically, the Fair Tax Act would repeal the individual income tax, the corporate income tax, capital gains tax, all payroll taxes, self-employment tax, and the estate and gift taxes in lieu of a 23-percent tax on the final sale of all goods and services.

Elimination of these inefficient taxing mechanisms would bring about equality and simplicity to our overly complex tax system. Moreover, the Fair Tax Act would abrogate any double taxation that occurs under our current tax system because it would provide tax relief for business-to-business transactions. These transactions, including used-product transactions that have already been taxed, are not subject to the sales tax.

More importantly, under the Fair Tax Act, the Federal Government's revenue would go unchanged. Social Security and Medicare benefits would remain untouched under the Fair Tax bill, and there would be no financial reductions to either one of these vital programs. Instead, the source of the trust fund revenue for these two programs would be replaced simply by consumption tax revenue instead of payroll tax revenue.

Finally, under the Fair Tax Act, every American would receive a monthly rebate check equal to spending, up to the Federal poverty level according to the Department of Health and Human Services guidelines. This rebate would ensure that no American pays taxes on the purchase of necessities. This is a critical component.

INVEST IN AMERICA ACT

Mr. President, I also rise today as an original cosponsor of the Invest in America Act. While I firmly believe significant overhaul of the Tax Code is the best way to achieve absolute fairness and transparency in our tax system, until we actually get to that point, we simply cannot allow the current rate reductions and other provisions of the 2001–2003 tax relief packages to expire, which is what the Democrats have proposed in their budget for the 2008 fiscal year. This would be a drastic blow to the economy and a misguided step in the wrong direction. The Invest in America Act would make the individual tax rates permanent. The lower rates have been essential to our continued economic growth over the past several years, and have encouraged Americans to work harder, be more productive, and retain more of their hard-earned money.

Additionally, this bill corrects current wrongs in our tax codes, such as the death tax and the AMT. It would make the repeal of the death tax permanent, and would save more than 130,000 families each year from confronting a loss of the family farms, ranches, or family-owned businesses. It would permanently repeal the AMT which, while designed to ensure every American pays some minimum tax, is

in fact now hitting more and more middle-income families, and this it was not designed to do.

Most significant to the growth of our economy, this bill would also make the current reduced capital gains and dividend rates permanent. Since the reduction of these investment rates in 2003, it has become easier for new businesses, and existing ones, to attract the capital they need to start, succeed, and expand.

Moreover, with greater than half of all Americans owning stock, middle-class families, seniors, and other Americans are greatly benefitting from these lower rates, including the 5-percent rate, which drops to zero percent in 2008.

The proposals in this bill would also help American families by making permanent the increased child tax credit, the marriage penalty relief, the adoption tax credit, the tuition deduction, and the teacher deduction. These provisions, along with other proposals in the Invest in America Act, make permanent the R&D tax credit and the increased small business expensing rates, enabling both the taxpayer and the American economy to grow.

Most importantly, the Invest in America Act sets forth a tax system that would gave back to those who invest in the strengthening of the American economy. We need to overhaul our tax system, impose fairness, and implement policies that encourage economic growth rather than stifle it. That is what Georgians want and deserve, and that is what Americans want and deserve.

VIRGINIA TECH TRAGEDY

I rise today with a very heavy heart to extend my condolences to the families who lost loved ones as a result of yesterday's tragic shootings on the Virginia Tech campus. One of those victims includes a young man, 22-year-old Ryan Clark of Martinez, GA, who served as a resident adviser at West Ambler Johnston dormitory where the first shooting occurred. Ryan was set to graduate this spring with a degree in biology and English, and he hoped to pursue a Ph.D., a pretty amazing young man from an academic standpoint. In his spare time, he also helped out the disadvantaged children in the area, as well as disabled children. On this particular day, he came to the rescue of the first victim and, as a result, became a victim himself.

I wish to convey my extreme sorrow to his family as they try to grasp the reality and gain a better understanding of what has happened. While he was still in his very young years, it is clear that he had already impacted so many lives and in so many different ways. While I know that words may be of little comfort at this time, the Clark family and all of the families involved and the Virginia Tech community will remain in my prayers as we try to find peace in the coming days.

It is difficult to fathom how something like this could happen. Words can't fully describe the grief we all feel as the weight of this tragedy settles over our Nation. My prayer is that through faith and resolve, our country will emerge from this disaster in unity and strength as together we find healing. While I know that we are still learning the facts surrounding these despicable acts, it is my hope that we can all work together and renew our commitment to ensure that our communities and schools are safe from similar future events.

I join my colleagues in the Senate who have spoken so eloquently on this matter and our entire Nation in mourning the 32 lives lost yesterday, and I pray for the strength of our country during this time of grief and sorrow.

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, news of yesterday's tragic killings at Virginia Tech reached me piecemeal as I was traveling back to Washington.

We are still far from final answers and explanations. Even today, facts are still being confirmed, evidence is still being collected, and the impact of the tragedy is still reverberating.

Last night, the Senate formally reacted to these terrible events through a resolution of sympathy.

I rise today to personally express my sorrow and condolences to the family and friends of the victims, to the survivors, and to the Virginia Tech community at large. The magnitude of this tragedy is unimaginable. You are in my thoughts and prayers, and I hope you know that the hearts of millions of Americans go out to you in your time of grief.

As we come to understand more about the events that unfolded so tragically yesterday, there will be plenty of time for us to argue about policy and politics and how to distribute blame. Today we should be mourning the loss of these lives, and doing what we can to help the wounded and comfort the bereaved.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I don't need to remind my colleagues that our country is at war. We face tremendous challenges in keeping America safe. On the other side of the aisle, in the last couple of days we have heard some talk about the Intelligence authorization bill which the Republican majority failed to pass in 2 separate years, the first time in 27 years this bill has not been passed, but it wasn't passed the last 2 years.

This year I thought it would be good if we passed an Intelligence authorization bill. We have 16 agencies that deal with the espionage, the security, the intelligence of our Nation. A bipartisan bill came out of the Intelligence Committee, the committee agreeing that something should be done. But it gets over here and word comes from the White House: Don't let that bill go. Like lemmings off a cliff, the Republicans do not allow this bill to go forward. The excuses, a fourth grade student could see through, maybe a second grade student.

They say: Democrats wouldn't allow us to offer amendments. That is absolutely false, untrue. From the very beginning, when they refused to let us proceed to the bill initially and we had to file cloture, cloture was invoked because it gave them 30 hours to stall doing nothing. I said that during that 30-hour period amendments could be offered. Not a single amendment was proffered.

So then we come to cloture on the bill itself. Even the vice chairman of the committee did not vote to go forward with this legislation. Again, I said: OK, cloture wasn't invoked. Let's go ahead and offer some amendments. They did. Guess what the first amendment was to show how serious they are about the intelligence operations of this country. An amendment was offered by a Republican 34 pages long dealing with immigration which shows how they want to solve the immigration problems of this country and the intelligence problems. This is no place for immigration. We are going to debate immigration the last 2 weeks of this work period.

It is beyond my ability to comprehend how Senators on this side of the aisle, looking over there, could vote this way, people whom I have always believed to be patriots. Why would they not vote on this? I will tell you why they didn't. Vice President CHENEY wants to be the czar of intelligence of this country, as he has been for 6 years. He can rest well tonight because he is going to be able to continue, without this bill setting certain standards for interrogation with our intelligence agencies and other things that on a bipartisan basis were said to be important to improve the intelligence apparatus of our country.

The amendments offered this afternoon were not in good faith. A 34-page immigration amendment on an Intelligence authorization bill? They were nothing more than an effort to make the White House happy. It is no secret. Senators have told Senators on this side that is why they voted against cloture: they were told to do so by the White House.

Maybe my friends on the other side of the aisle think it is not important, that they can pull this one off and get away with it. We have a war on terror going on, and we have intelligence agencies—16 in number—that are working every day trying to keep ahead of the bad guys. The bipartisan bill that has been before the Senate for the last several days was drafted based upon what the intelligence agencies thought they needed to improve their ability to collect information. I don't think it is going to work. The credibility of the Vice President is not very high in this country. For reasons like this, it is apparent why that is.

The White House talks about the war on terror; let's work together to do

something about it. Step back a minute. Is it political posturing to think that the intelligence agencies of this country that should have legislation that should be passed every year not be passed for 3 years?

I am very disappointed. I say this not in a mean or argumentative way. I am terribly disappointed. If the Presiding Officer, other Senators on this floor, if I ever as the leader came to one of you and said: We are not going to let the intelligence bill go forward this year, I think my caucus would tell me what to do with my suggestion. But apparently the White House has more sway than the American people to this group across the aisle. That is really too bad.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. BROWN. I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MEDICARE PRESCRIPTION DRUG BENEFIT

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, Americans as much as any people on Earth have a sense of fair play. That is why I believe 3 or 4 years ago, when the Medicare law was passed literally in the middle of the night in the House of Representatives, where the Presiding Officer and I served at that time, by one vote—the rollcall vote was kept open for 3 hours, arms were twisted, calls from the President and pleas and all kinds of begging on the House floor, and who knows what else—that is why people were angry with the way the Medicare law passed. They were also angry especially because of the sense of betrayal they felt with the Medicare law that clearly was written by the drug companies and for the drug companies and by the insurance companies and for the insurance companies.

In fact, that Medicare law meant as much as $200 billion in extra profits for the drug industry and meant as much as $70 or $80 billion in directed subsidies for insurance companies to entice—the word our friends used—entice those insurance companies to write standalone Medicare prescription drug coverage.

Americans know the score. Americans understand much about this whole Medicare law. We all understand the major employee groups typically in our system negotiate bulk discounts on prescription drugs. Americans also understand that the VA negotiates bulk discounts on prescription drugs. The VA, which ensures millions of our Nation's veterans, will go to the drug industry, company by company, and negotiate on a drug formulary, negotiate a price that gives the Government paying for these prescription drugs for our Nation's veterans a discount of about 50 percent on average, the same kind of thing that large insurance companies will do. But under this Medicare law—again, written by the drug companies, written by the insurance companies, pushed through because of the lobbying force and the advertisements and all that the drug industry did and the insurance industry did—Medicare is prohibited under law from negotiating bulk discounts on prescription drugs. That is a prohibition only the drug industry and their friends in Congress—and they number many—could love.

When Medicare has to pay higher prices for medicines, dollars are taken from taxpayers' pockets and placed directly into the pockets of the multinational drug industry. For many years, I have taken bus trips with senior citizens to Canada, when I was in the House of Representatives, from my northern Ohio congressional district. We drove up through Detroit to Windsor to allow senior citizens to buy prescription drugs at a discount of 50, 60, 70 percent because the Canadians have a system where they negotiate drug prices directly with the manufacturer. It is the same drugs, the same manufacturer, the same packaging. The only difference between the medicine sold here and the medicine sold in Canada is the price.

That is the same in country after country after country. We pay two and three and four times more for prescription drugs than people in any other country given the same drug, the same dosage, the same manufacturer. It is a great deal for the drug industry and a bum deal for consumers, especially for senior citizens and for taxpayers in our country.

Medicare is the single largest prescription drug consumer in the country, and jacked-up prices jeopardize Medicare's future.

The legislation we will consider tomorrow ends the prohibition on price negotiations. It takes the handcuffs off Medicare and enables Medicare to negotiate price discounts—the kind of discounts Medicare should receive, given the huge volume of medicines it purchases.

Medicare is a system with more than 40 million Americans in that system. That kind of bulk discount buying will save billions—tens of billions—of dollars for American taxpayers and for senior citizens.

The drug industry, however, has taken to the airwaves, as it always does, and gone to Nation's newspapers to fight this legislation. In the Washington Post today is an example of an outrageous kind of ad the drug industry has written: ''89% of Voters Oppose Government Negotiation of Medicare Drug Prices.'' That is what it says: ''89 percent of Voters Oppose Government Negotiation of Medicare Drug Prices.'' That does not even pass the straightface test. I hardly know anyone in Ohio—a Democrat, a Republican, an independent—I hardly know anyone who does not think the Government should use the bulk discount process of negotiating directly with the drug industry on behalf of 40 million Medicare beneficiaries. Yet, they claim, in bold print, in a full-page ad that costs tens of thousands of dollars—not much for the drug industry, to be sure—that ''89% of Voters Oppose Government Negotiation of Medicare Drug Prices.''

If you read the small print, it says:

> Majorities of Democratic, Republican and Independent voters do not want the government negotiating prescription drug prices under Medicare. In fact, 89 percent oppose government negotiation if it could limit access to new prescription medications.

Well, no kidding, if it limits access, then they say they do not like it. But, of course, they do not. And, of course, because of high drug company prices, we are seeing limited access to prescription drugs.

How many times, I say to the Presiding Officer, in New Jersey or in Ohio or in Nevada or in Iowa do we hear stories from our constituents who have decided, because they cannot quite afford the drugs, they are going to cut a pill in half so their prescription will last twice as long, or they are only going to take a tablet every other day, even though they are prescribed to take it every day, so their prescription lasts longer? How often do we have to hear that?

That is the issue of access, that too many seniors, too many middle-class Americans, too many low-income Americans simply cannot afford to pay for their prescription drugs because the price is so high because of the drug companies, with their billions of dollars in advertising, with their hundreds of millions of dollars they spend on 600 lobbyists in this institution. There are, at last count, over 600 people paid by the drug industry to lobby this Congress. There are only 535 of us here in Congress; 100 in the Senate, 435 in the House. They have more than 600 lobbyists to talk to us. These most recent ads are particularly offensive.

Allowing Medicare to negotiate lower priced medicines will not reduce access to medicines, it will increase access. If we get lower priced drugs, more people who have these prescriptions will be able to fully fill their prescriptions so, in fact, they will get access to drugs. That is why lower prices for Medicare mean lower copayments for seniors, and that means increased access to medicines.

That is why AARP supports allowing price negotiations. That is why the Alliance for Retired Americans supports allowing price negotiations. That is why the Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare supports allowing price negotiations.

The drug industry, again, stooped pretty low with this misleading poll, and then with this very expensive—tens of thousands of dollars for this one ad in one newspaper in the country. I wonder if there is any line the drug industry would not cross when it comes

to preserving the sweetheart deal they have in this country, where they have far too many politicians in the Senate and in the House, far too many of our colleagues, who simply, again, over and over and over, do the drug companies' bidding.

Every other developed country in the world, as I said earlier, gets better priced prescription drugs than we do. Every other developed country in the world gets better prices than we do. That is because these countries do not put up with the grossly inflated drug prices our Nation does. It is because their drug company lobbyists or their drug company media campaigns simply may not be as effective in France and Canada and Germany and Israel and Japan and Mexico, and all over the world, where drug prices are a half or a third or a fourth of what they are here.

We will put up with most anything, it seems, if an industry has deep enough pockets and an army of lobbyists. Prohibiting the Government from negotiating volume discounts on prescription drugs simply makes no sense. The Government negotiates the price of everything else it buys.

When the Architect of the Capitol buys carpeting for the Senate floor—as we look around at this very nice blue carpet here—they do not take the manufacturer's word that a fair price would impair fiber research. We do not say whatever the carpet makers want, we will pay because it costs a lot to do this research to make these rugs beautiful and make this carpet last, when so many feet walk over it.

When the Park Service buys ranger uniforms, it does not take the first bid that comes in. It gets good quality at the lowest price possible.

But with drugs, the President and his allies here in Congress—and we know how much money the drug industry gave to President Bush; and we know the kinds of effective lobbying the drug industry employs in the Senate—the President and his allies here in Congress say the Government must pay any price the drug industry wants to charge.

That policy is more than a mistake; it is a joke on the American people. It is a betrayal of our constituents. The drug companies are laughing all the way to the bank.

We need to pass this legislation tomorrow and let Medicare bargain for the prices that Medicare beneficiaries deserve.

REMEMBERING FELIX WILLIAM RIVERA

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today to honor the memory of a great Nevada educator and coach, Felix William Rivera. Felix, a physical and health education teacher in the Clark County School District in Las Vegas, NV, was involved in a fatal car accident on February 8, 2007.

Felix proudly lived in the Las Vegas metropolitan area all of his life. He graduated from Basic High School in 1991 and the University of Nevada, Las Vegas in 1996 with degrees in secondary education and sports medicine and certification in athletic training. As a student teacher, Felix was selected as a Distinguished Student Teacher of the Year Award. He began his teaching career at Swainston Middle School in 1997, and thereafter served as a Physical Education Coach and Athletic Trainer at Western High School and Health Teacher and Athletic Trainer at Desert Pines High School.

Felix went above and beyond his job responsibilities in order to provide students with the opportunity to learn and succeed. He spent countless hours treating students who had limited access to health care. Oftentimes, he would arrive early to school in order to provide treatments, limited therapy, or counseling to students who simply needed a listening ear. Felix had outstanding listening skills and frequently utilized his networking base to connect students with the proper resources. As one of his former students noted, ''Not only did Mr. Rivera teach health, he also taught us about life and steps we needed to take in order to become successful.'' A fellow teacher at Desert Pines High School described him as a ''role model for students who took great pride in every lesson that he taught.'' A teacher and friend further commented on his congenial personality, ''He was the kind of person who had an innate ability to get right to the point, an ear-to-ear smile that was contagious and a well-known sense of humor.''

It is clear that Felix was a dedicated educator, a role model, and a mentor who left a lasting impression on his students. On April 18, 2007, family, friends, students, and colleagues will honor his legacy by dedicating a mural with the words ''hard as steel with a heart of gold'' in the training room at Desert Pines High School, where he spent much of his time counseling students. I join in honoring Felix and extend my deepest sympathies to his family and friends, especially his wife and high school sweetheart, Alice ''Cookie'' Masterson and children, Anthony and Felicia. He is deeply missed and his service and dedication to the students of Clark County will always be greatly appreciated.

ARMY MEDICAL DEPARTMENT CENTER AND SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENTS

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, when I began my chairmanship of the Veterans' Affairs committee this January, I assured my colleagues that we would renew our focus on the need for cooperation and collaboration between the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs. As we look at the way these two entities work together, it is important that we highlight the good work and progress being made. One example of progress and excellence in collaboration can be found at the Army Medical Department Center and School, located at Fort Sam Houston, which trains Army, Air Force, and VA nurses.

This year, U.S. News and World Report ranked the Army Medical Department Center and School second in the Nation for their anesthesia nursing program. They missed first place by just a tenth of one point, and have improved their score from 3.8 out of 5.0 in 2003, to 4.0 out of 5.0 in 2007. This notable achievement brings added credibility to their already prestigious program.

Since 2004, VA and DOD have partnered to train VA nurse anaesthetists to work in the VA health care system, the largest health care system in the country. The first class of VA nurse anesthetists recently graduated from the Army Medical Department Center and School. Their graduation represents what I hope will be a steady flow of highly qualified VA nurse anesthetists using their skills and knowledge to give veterans the high-quality health care they have earned through service.

I realize that, with the private sector offering six-figure salaries for nurse anesthetists, those who chose to work within the military and VA do so not for personal gain. They stay to respond to the higher calling of caring for servicemembers and veterans in their times of need, and are to be commended for their dedication and their work. In that spirit, I say 'e ho'omaika'i ia'oukou, or congratulations, to the graduates, students, faculty, staff, and others who have worked to make the Army Medical Department Center and School the success that it is today.

RECOGNITION OF CANUTE DALMASSE

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, today I honor Canute Dalmasse of Stowe, VT, who is retiring after 36 years of dedicated service to the State of Vermont, working to conserve, protect, and enhance our State's natural resources. His extraordinary contribution to the stewardship of Vermont's natural environment calls for special recognition.

Canute retires as the deputy secretary of the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, overseeing fish, wildlife, forests, parks, recreation, and environmental conservation programs and recently served with distinction as acting secretary. His career began in 1971 as one of the first district coordinators implementing Vermont's landmark Act 250 environmental law that uses a holistic approach looking at environmental, visual, and social criteria to assess potential development impacts. A proven leader and innovator, he has served as director of the Office of Water Resources and commissioner of the Department of Environmental Conservation.

Canute is an avid boater and angler on Lake Champlain and an unflinching

advocate for Vermont's waters. He serves on the Lake Champlain Basin Program Steering Committee and as chair of its executive committee, bringing the States of Vermont and New York and the Province of Quebec together to work for a clean, healthy lake. He also serves on the Lake Memphremagog Steering Committee, working with the Province of Quebec to protect and enhance that international water.

Canute received his bachelors degree from Columbia University in New York City and served in the 101st Airborne Division in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War. He and his wife Diane have two sons, Layton and Canute. He is a longtime resident of Stowe, VT, and is a past president of Stowe Youth Hockey and chair of the Stowe Recreation Commission.

Canute Dalmasse is a tribute to his State, his community, and to protecting Vermont's natural environment. The great State of Vermont, with its celebrated natural beauty and well-deserved reputation for exemplary environmental stewardship, honors Canute's dedication, devotion, and hard work that helped set the course for Vermont's environmental future. It is an honor and a privilege to recognize Canute today in the U.S. Senate.

TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY

Mr. BAYH. Mr. President, I wish to speak to legislation to fight a discrepancy in access to care that prevents hundreds of our Nation's heroes from receiving the best possible care for traumatic brain injury.

Traumatic brain injury has been identified as the ''signature injury'' afflicting armed servicemembers returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. After sacrificing so much, we have a moral obligation to ensure that these men and women receive the best care available to them. Unfortunately, administrative and medical capacity problems have prevented many of our heroes from receiving the care they desperately need and deserve. There is an immediate solution to address this.

The Department of Veterans Affairs, VA, has made clear progress in research and development of rehabilitation treatment for individuals who have incurred traumatic brain injuries. However, VA medical facilities have not yet reached the level of private rehabilitation facilities, which have been developing cognitive treatment for the past 30 years.

While VA medical centers offer excellent services, there are barriers to receiving the optimal health care options. These include a confusing array of benefits, overworked and undertrained case managers, and, most importantly, a discrepancy between benefits for those on active duty versus those who are medically retired. This discrepancy in benefits leads to confusion among families who are forced to try to determine what is in the best interest of the servicemember, often without having full knowledge of the difference in benefits offered to Active Duty and veterans. Currently, the TRICARE plan that is available to Active Duty servicemembers permits them to receive coverage for cognitive therapy obtained in private nonmilitary facilities. However, medical retirees do not have this health care coverage option. Consequently, severely injured TBI patients struggle to obtain the critical care they desperately need.

Further, while many armed servicemembers have dedicated family members and loved ones who fight to ensure that they receive the best care possible, not all servicemembers have family to speak and act on their behalf. Thus, many are left without optimal treatment and without an advocate.

The need to ensure that every TBI patient receives the best care possible cannot be understated. This is an immediate problem with an immediate solution. We have the ability to provide a crucial, temporary answer to our armed services members while the VA develops the capability to facilitate care for this unique population. We can not stand idly by, as hundreds of our bravest Americans are prevented from receiving the care they deserve.

HONORING PASTOR RHIO CLEIGH

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, today I take a few minutes to honor a great man of faith. Pastor Rhio Cleigh dedicated the past 25 years to serving his community through the church. The last 15 of those years have been at my home church—Prairie Lakes Church in Cedar Falls, IA.

The work of a pastor is not always easy but, much like my work, it is very rewarding. As a minister in our church, Rhio was responsible for counseling individuals through difficult times, visiting the sick in the hospital, and ministering to the senior citizens of our congregation.

This Sunday our membership will honor Pastor Cleigh as he retires from the ministry. Rhio plans to spend his retirement enjoying time with his wife Patti, his 6 children, 10 grandchildren, and 1 great-grandchild. He also hopes to have a little more time for some of his hobbies—things like woodworking, camping, fishing, and gardening.

Barbara joins me in sincere appreciation to Rhio for his contributions to our church and community. Together we wish him a long and happy retirement.

U.S. FOREIGN POLICY AGENDA

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I rise today in support of a sense-of-the-Congress amendment my good friend and colleague Senator INHOFE has just submitted regarding Presidential authority over setting American foreign policy. Like all of my colleagues, I have the right to visit foreign countries in my capacity as a Member of Congress. However, the Constitution is quite clear about the separation of powers between the legislative and executive branches of our government, and the executive branch has the exclusive authority to conduct negotiations with foreign countries.

As we all know, the Logan Act prohibits American citizens from negotiating with foreign governments without the authority of the United States. What would it mean if a Member of the House or Senate, and especially a member of the leadership, was to visit a foreign country and in discussions with their government, explicitly speak out against our Nation's foreign policy agenda? High ranking Members of Congress, I believe, are seen by foreign governments as carrying an official message of foreign policy, and if such members contradict the administration, it can be very damaging to our country politically and diplomatically.

Members of Congress have the ability to express their dissent from the floor of their respective Chambers, but under no circumstances should Members visit with foreign governments for the sole purpose of demonstrating their opposition to the administration's foreign policy. Such actions would show a sincere lack of respect for the boundaries drawn out by our Constitution, and I would hope that all Members of Congress will use good judgment when visiting with foreign governments in the future.

It is a very dangerous precedent to set if Members of Congress decide to buck the American foreign policy agenda and carry mixed messages to foreign governments, especially foreign governments hostile to our country. While I will continue to support congressional rights to travel abroad and meet with government officials, there is a responsibility that comes along with those visits, and that responsibility is to uphold and support the administration's foreign policy agenda.

For this reason I have joined my colleague Senator INHOFE in submitting this amendment. I believe it sends a clear and strong message that Members of Congress have the responsibility to defer to and support the administration on setting our Nation's foreign policy agenda, and under no circumstances should Members blatantly defy our administration for purely political gain.

REAL ID ACT

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, today my home State of Montana becomes the fourth State in the Nation to declare its opposition to the REAL ID Act by enacting binding legislation that opts Montana out of REAL ID. With it, my State is opting out of the onerous regulation, blatant invasion of privacy, and the high cost of compliance that will come from implementing REAL ID.

I congratulate my Governor, Brian Schweitzer, and both houses of the

Montana State Legislature. Both houses of the legislature approved this legislation unanimously. Thirteen other States have anti-REAL ID legislation that has passed one of the houses of the legislature. In Montana and the rest of these States, opposition to this poorly constructed law is bipartisan.

That is why I am pleased to once again offer my support for the Identification Security Enhancement Act, introduced by Senator AKAKA and Senator SUNUNU—another bipartisan show of opposition to the REAL ID Act.

Why is there so much opposition to REAL ID beyond the beltway? It comes down to three reasons. First, the REAL ID Act puts massive new Federal regulations on the States. From new databases and fraud monitoring, to new network and data storage capacity, the States will be tasked with an enormous range of new regulations and requirements. Once REAL ID becomes effective, every State's Department of Motor Vehicles will have to play immigration official by reconciling discrepancies in social security numbers with the Social Security Administration. DMVs will have to require proof of ''legal presence'' in the United States from immigrants.

I am for a strong immigration policy. I believe we ought to enforce our borders and enforce the laws we have on the books. But it is completely unreasonable for the Federal Government to put that job on the Montana Department of Motor Vehicles, or any other State's DMV.

And these new regulations carry with them a hefty pricetag. DHS now estimates that Real ID will cost the states and their taxpayers $23.1 billion.

Finally, REAL ID raises some very real privacy concerns. Data mining and data theft have become all too common phrases for too many Americans who resent having their personal information collected by the government, or worse, having it stolen from the government. We all recall the massive potential problems that arose from the theft of personal data from the VA last year. I have no doubt that the databases called for in REAL ID will be an even greater target for data thieves.

We can do better than REAL ID. Senator AKAKA's legislation shows that. Today, Montana adds its voice to those calling for the Federal Government to go back to the drawing board. Let's listen to what Montana has to say.

PAYOLA SETTLEMENT

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I would like to briefly comment on an important settlement that has been recently announced by the Federal Communications Commission, FCC.

Four major radio station groups, Clear Channel, Entercom, Citadel, and CBS Radio, have taken an important first step in cleaning up the radio industry through today's consent decree with the FCC and side agreement with the independent music community on airplay and rules of engagement. I want to especially commend Commissioner Adelstein for his tireless work to bring these groups together and then-Attorney General Spitzer for spearheading the initial investigation that has led to State and now Federal settlements.

I was encouraged to see internal business reforms, increased recordkeeping for transactions between labels and radio stations and unfettered access to these records by the FCC as part of the consent decrees. While these provisions are not as broad as those included in my previous payola legislation, the increased recordkeeping and disclosure in the consent decrees represent a step in the right direction. Transparency and accountability through sustained oversight will go a long way in eliminating the pervasive shadowy practices that have plagued the radio industry on and off almost since its inception.

While the parties to the consent decrees do not directly admit wrongdoing, the payment of $12.5 million to the U.S. Treasury from the four station groups is an implicit acknowledgement that the evidence uncovered by then-Attorney General Eliot Spitzer showed that significant abuses had taken place. From all accounts, the stations also deserve some credit for working in good faith with the FCC and the independent music community to work toward a solution that did more than just put this matter behind them. The internal reforms and side agreement negotiated with the American Association of Independent Music, A2IM, appear to show a real desire to change and include the voices of local, unsigned and independent musicians that have unfortunately been missing more often than not from our public airwaves over the past decade or more.

I am pleased by the voluntary side agreement by the radio station groups to provide more airtime and fair rules of engagement. These rules of engagement require nondiscriminatory treatment for labels and musicians seeking to be played at the stations and echo requirements from my previous payola legislation. I am heartened that these major radio station groups have apparently come to the realization that the old system wasn't working and that it was in their best interest to make it easier for small labels and local musicians to be heard. With more and more musicians being successful without or with limited radio airplay—just look at the commercial and critical success of the Dixie Chicks' last album—I hope radio stations are realizing they must change and play what their potential listeners want to hear in order to remain relevant. I hope this important commitment by four station groups will be replicated throughout the rest of the radio industry.

I have a few lingering concerns that both the consent decrees and side agreement depend heavily on continued good faith instead of strong enforceable standards. I have no reason to believe that the potential good from these agreements will not be fulfilled, but we can't allow backsliding, especially after the 3-year term of the decrees expires. This means that the FCC will need to maintain vigorous and continued oversight. I urge the FCC to take the next step of building on this first wave of settlements and reaching agreements or taking enforcement action against the other stations implicated by the Spitzer investigation.

TAX RELIEF

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that a posting by someone under the name ''Blue Bunting'' made to the Care2 News Network be printed in the RECORD. This posting is a supplement to a speech I gave last Thursday, April 12, on attempts by some Democrats to elude responsibility for tax relief permanence.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From Care2 News Network]

THE MONSTER REPUBLICAN TAX HIKE

COMMENTS

Blue Bunting: Tuesday April 3, 2007, 8:32 pm

Last week I made a note to link to this post at Obsidian Wings. I just spotted the note.

Hilzoy notes the commentary in some quarters that:

Following the example set by their Senate brethren last Friday, House Democrats will adopt a budget resolution containing the largest tax increase in U.S. history amid massive national inattention.

Bet you didn't know that, eh? The Dems are already pushing through the largest tax increase in U.S. history! and nobody is paying attention!

Anyway, Hilzoy digs a bit further into the story. It really is worth reading.

Long story short . . . Republican Congresses chose not to make their tax cuts (or, as PGL would note, their tax deferments) permanent. They didn't have to put in a sunset clause—they chose to, in an attempt to make long term projections look better. Even with that obfuscation, the situation no longer looks quite so rosy. But . . . if the new Democratic Congress doesn't do what the Republican Congresses that preceded it failed to do, namely make the tax cut permanent, well, that's the equivalent of the Democrats pushing the largest tax increase in history.

Maybe it's just me . . . but since this whole thing was planned and executed by a Republican Congress under a Republican President, shouldn't we be referring to this as the Republican's tax increase? And my bet is that there are a lot of Republicans in Congress now, and that will be seeking re-election some time soon, that voted for this massive tax increase.

Blue Bunting: Tuesday April 3, 2007, 9:07 pm

Fact Check

Robert Novak wrote this in today's Washington Post:

''Following the example set by their Senate brethren last Friday, House Democrats will adopt a budget resolution containing the largest tax increase in U.S. history amid massive national inattention.

Nobody's tax payment will increase immediately, but the budget resolutions set a pattern for years ahead. The House version

would increase non-defense, non-emergency spending by $22.5 billion for next fiscal year, with such spending to rise 2.4 percent in each of the next three years. To pay for these increases, the resolution would raise taxes by close to $400 billion over five years—about $100 more than what was passed in the Senate.''

Heavens, I said to myself, what can Robert Novak possibly be talking about? The Democrats budget (pdf, h/t The Gavel) does not actually contain any tax increases:

And yet this claim that the Democrats' budget contains a tax increase is being cited all over the place. So what's up?

Novak gives us a clue:

''It had been assumed that the new Democratic majority would end President Bush's relief in capital gains dividend and estate taxation. The simultaneous rollback of Bush-sponsored income tax cuts was a surprise.''

Ah, Rolling back the Bush tax cuts. But wouldn't that still require some actual changes in revenues from the baseline projections? A GOP Budget Caucus press release gives us further details:

Note that word 'automatic'. It's quite worrying. How did the Democrats manage to create an automatic tax increase? Don't tax increases normally have to be enacted? I hope so. It would be awful if tax increases could just happen automatically. Come to think of it, it would be even worse if it turns out that this isn't confined to the tax code, and all sorts of laws could be passed automatically. I mean, who knows what the U.S. Code might decide to do to itself, without the intervention of any human agent? We could wake up one morning to find that ping pong had been automatically criminalized, or that a requirement that all Americans wear silly clown costumes had automatically come into force, or that all our national parks had automatically sold themselves to WalMart. The possibilities are horrifying.

Imagine my relief when I realized what was actually going on. The Bush tax cuts are set to expire automatically. They were written that way. What the Democrats are proposing to do is simply not to change this.

Moreover, guess who wrote these sunset provisions into the tax increases? The Republicans, that's who. They were trying to make the tax increases seem less fiscally ruinous than they were, so they made them last only so long before they expired. (This is why I expect 2010 to produce a spike in mortality among the very rich; the heirs of people who die during 2010 pay no estate tax; the heirs of people who die in 2011 pay 50% on all the money they inherit above the level at which the estate tax kicks in. As Paul Krugman said, ''That creates some interesting incentives. Maybe they should have called it the Throw Momma From the Train Act of 2001.'')

So here's what Novak's ''largest tax increase in U.S. history'' actually comes to the Republicans passed a series of tax cuts that they set up to expire. They intended to make them permanent, but never got around to it. The Democrats are proposing to leave their tax cuts alone. But this counts as a tax increase, apparently on the grounds that whatever Republicans sorta kinda thought they were going to do, but never actually got around to doing, counts as already done, and anyone who proposes to leave things alone counts as undoing the things they were intending to do.

That's a fun way to think. Maybe we should also count the Democrats as having dramatically increased the budget deficit, on the grounds that the Republicans kinda sorta said they were going to make it go away, so even though they didn't, we should act as though they did and compare whatever deficits the Democrats incur to the Republicans' imaginary balanced budget. Maybe, if things in Iraq continue to go badly, we should compare that not to the situation when the Democrats took over, but to the situation that would have obtained if the Republicans had in fact produced a beacon of democracy that transformed the Middle East, and say: hey, you awful Democrats, we were being greeted with flowers and candy, and hailed as liberators, and now look what's happened to Baghdad!!!!

Or maybe we should try living in the real world. The Democrats are proposing to leave tax laws written and enacted by Republicans alone. That does not count as increasing taxes.

Michaelena Whittaker: Thursday April 5, 2007, 11:21 am

Ditto, Blue . . . it' all a political ploy, as usual (''High Treason'' has been THE neocon agenda since the 80's.)

Indigo Star Nation: Saturday April 7, 2007, 11:14 pm

Impeachment is the only way to end these atrocities and reclaim America's conscience and honor.

http://www.care2.com/c2c/groups/disc.html?gpp=11736&pst=633140

Read this thread and take action to impeach.

Also follow my news shares on withholding your taxes as a protest.

SMALL BUSINESS TAX BURDEN

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, today millions of taxpayers, many owners of small businesses, will file their income tax returns while some States in the Northeast, including my home State of Maine, have rightfully been given an additional 48 hours to file due to the devastating storms resulting in disastrous flooding, wind damage, and power outages.

As citizens file their taxes this week, I am very happy to say that a wide majority of Mainers and Americans alike will be fully compliant in reporting the appropriate amount of income, with the Internal Revenue Service estimating 84 percent of taxpayers are compliant. The unfortunate flip side to that statistic is that 16 percent of taxpayers either fail to report income or underreport income and thus fail to pay all the taxes owed. This misreporting of income has resulted in a $345 billion gross tax gap, which is the difference between taxes owed and paid.

Unquestionably, we must ensure that taxes owed are taxes paid. While the Congressional Budget Office, CBO, projects a deficit of around $200 billion this fiscal year without any abatement through 2011, the fact remains that narrowing the tax gap would help reduce the deficit—plain and simple.

Not only does the tax gap prevent us from balancing the budget, equally disturbing is how noncompliance breeds disrespect for the tax system and can lead to the further shirking of obligations. The result could be that, to fill the gap, law-abiding taxpayers would have to pay higher taxes. Consider the following: According to preliminary IRS data, for 2005, taxpayers filed 134.5 million individual income tax returns. If we were to shrink the tax gap, each of those returns would have to be assessed additional tax in the amount of $2,566. I would not want to be in position to ask my constituents for more of their hard-earned money, especially to cover those who are not paying their fair share.

Last year, the Treasury Department issued ''A Comprehensive Strategy for Reducing the Tax Gap.'' This document astutely points out, the Tax Code's complexity is itself a significant source of noncompliance. The current Tax Code costs the Government revenue since even those who try their best to follow the rules, often end up underpaying tax because the rules are too complicated and difficult to decipher. Therefore, any solution to the tax gap must also require simplifying the Tax Code.

A top priority I hear from small businesses across Maine and this country is the need for tax relief. Despite the fact that small businesses are the real job-creators for Maine's and our Nation's economy, the current tax system is placing an entirely unreasonable burden on them when trying to satisfy their tax obligations. The current Tax Code imposes a large, and expensive, burden on all taxpayers in terms of satisfying their reporting and record-keeping obligations. The problem, though, is that small companies are disadvantaged most in terms of the money and time spent in satisfying their tax obligation.

For example, according to the Small Business Administration's Office of Advocacy, small businesses spend an astounding 8 billion hours each year complying with Government reports. They also spend more than 80 percent of this time on completing tax forms. What's even more troubling is that companies that employ fewer than 20 employees spend nearly $1,304 per employee in tax compliance costs, an amount that is nearly 67 percent more than larger firms. A recent survey by the National Federation of Independent Businesses found that 88 percent of small-employer taxpayers used a tax professional and the two reasons small-employer taxpayers most frequently cite for using tax professionals are to assure compliance and the complexity of the law.

For that reason, I have introduced a package of proposals that will provide not only targeted, affordable tax relief to small business owners, but also simpler rules under the Tax Code. By simplifying the Tax Code, small business owners will be able to satisfy their tax obligation in a cheaper, more efficient manner, allowing them to be able to devote more time and resources to their business.

I have introduced legislation, S. 269, in response to the repeated requests from small businesses in Maine and from across the Nation to allow them to expense more of their investments, like the purchase of essential new equipment. My bill modifies the Internal Revenue Code by doubling the amount a small business can expense

from $100,000 to $200,000, and make the provision permanent, as President Bush proposed this change in his fiscal year 2007 tax proposals. With small businesses representing 99 percent of all employers, creating 75 percent of net new jobs and contributing 51 percent of private-sector output, their size is the only ''small'' aspect about them.

By doubling and making permanent the current expensing limit and indexing these amounts for inflation, this bill will achieve two important objectives. First, qualifying businesses will be able to write off more of the equipment purchases today, instead of waiting 5, 7 or more years to recover their costs through depreciation. That represents substantial savings both in dollars and in the time small businesses would otherwise have to spend complying with complex and confusing depreciation rules. Moreover, new equipment will contribute to continued productivity growth in the business community, which economic experts have repeatedly stressed is essential to the long-term vitality of our economy.

Second, as a result of this bill, more businesses will qualify for this benefit because the phase-out limit will be increased to $800,000 in new assets purchases. At the same time, small business capital investment will be pumping more money into the economy. This is a win-win for small business and the economy as a whole and I am pleased to have Senators LOTT, ISAKSON, CHAMBLISS and COLLINS join me as cosponsors of this legislation.

Another proposal that I have introduced with Senators LINCOLN and LOTT, the Small Business Tax Flexibility Act of 2007, S. 270, will permit start-up small business owners to use a taxable year other than the calendar year if they generally earn fewer than $5 million during the tax year.

Specifically, the Small Business Tax Flexibility Act of 2007 will permit more taxpayers to use the taxable year most suitable to their business cycle. Until 1986, businesses could elect the taxable year-end that made the most economic sense for the business. In 1986, Congress passed legislation requiring partnerships and S corporations, many of which are small businesses, to adopt a December 31 year-end. The Tax Code does provide alternatives to the calendar year for small businesses, but the compliance costs and administrative burdens associated with these alternatives prove to be too high for most small businesses to utilize.

Meanwhile, C corporations, as large corporations often are, receive much more flexibility in their choice of taxable year. A C corporation can adopt either a calendar year or any fiscal year for tax purposes, as long as it keeps its books on that basis. This creates the unfair result of allowing larger businesses with greater resources greater flexibility in choosing a taxable year than smaller firms with fewer resources. This simply does not make sense to me. My bill changes these existing rules so that more small businesses will be able to use the taxable year that best suits their business.

To provide relief and equity to our Nation's 1.5 million retail establishments, most of which have less than five employees, I have introduced a bill, S. 271, with Senators LINCOLN, HUTCHISON, and KERRY that reduces from 39 to 15 years the depreciable life of improvements that are made to retail stores that are owned by the retailer. Under current law, only retailers that lease their property are allowed this accelerated depreciation, which means it excludes retailers that also own the property in which they operate. My bill simply seeks to provide equal treatment to all retailers.

Specifically, this bill will simply conform the Tax Codes to the realities that retailers on Main Street face. Studies conducted by the Treasury Department, Congressional Research Service and private economists have all found that the 39-year depreciation life for buildings is too long and that the 39-year depreciation life for building improvements is even worse. Retailers generally remodel their stores every 5 to 7 years to reflect changes in customer base and compete with newer stores. Moreover, many improvements such as interior partitions, ceiling tiles, restroom accessories, and paint, may only last a few years before requiring replacement.

Finally, I joined Senator BOND in introducing S. 296 that will simplify the Tax Code by permitting small business owners to use the cash method of accounting for reporting their income if they generally earn fewer than $10 million during the tax year. Currently, only those taxpayers that earn less than $5 million per year are able to use the cash method. By increasing this threshold to $10 million, more small businesses will be relieved of the burdensome recordkeeping requirements that they currently must undertake in reporting their income under a different accounting method.

This package of proposals are a tremendous opportunity to help small enterprises succeed by providing an incentive for reinvestment and leaving them more of their earnings to do just that. Notably, providing tax relief by passing these simplification measures will also help us reduce the tax gap by increasing compliance. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting these proposals.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

INVENT IOWA PROGRAM

• Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, on April 21, some 360 young Iowa inventors will gather at Hilton Coliseum on the campus of Iowa State University for the Invent Iowa 2007 State Invention Convention. This gathering will mark the 20th year for Invent Iowa.

Over the last two decades, thousands of Iowa students have participated in this important statewide event. The annual Invention Convention has showcased the skill, imagination and creativity of some of our best and brightest—and most creative—youngsters.

From the Motorized Guinea Pig Walker invented by Nicholas Schrunk of Spirit Lake to the Oops! Proof No-spill Feeding Bowl invented by Alexis Abernathy of Cedar Rapids, students have created innovative solutions to everyday problems.

In Nicholas' case, he needed to figure out a way for his guinea pig, Freckles, to get some exercise without running around the house and annoying his mother. Alexis got the idea for her invention by watching a 2-year-old child spill his cereal again and again. These two inventions were creative solutions that earned recognition for the young inventors. In the last 20 years, there have been thousands of other inventions.

Each year, approximately 30,000 Iowa students begin the journey to the State Convention by participating in local and regional competitions. The staffs from Iowa's Area Education Agencies do a tremendous job working with educators on curriculum ideas and setting up the regional events. Since the inception of the program in 1987, more than half a million students have participated in Invent Iowa.

The seed for Invent Iowa was planted at a statewide conference I sponsored in conjunction with Iowa State University in 1986 on the future of Iowa communities. In his keynote address, David Morris from the Institute for Local Self-Reliance focused on the need to rekindle the spirit of innovation in the United States, and he also spoke of his experience as a judge for the Minnesota Metropolitan Young Inventor's Fair. Following that event, my office, led by Dianne Liepa, began working with Carol McDanolds Bradley at the Iowa Department of Education, statewide education groups, nonprofit organizations and businesses to form a steering committee to establish a statewide invention program for students. Invent Iowa was born.

In 1989, the Invent Iowa Board of Directors contracted with the Belin-Blank Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development at the University of Iowa to serve as the home for the organization's State coordinator. Eleven years later, Invent Iowa would become a program under the full direction of Belin-Blank. Under the leadership of the dedicated staff at Belin-Blank, Invent Iowa has grown and flourished.

In particular, I would like to salute the excellent work of Dr. Nicholas Colangelo, director of the Belin-Blank Center, and Dr. Clar Baldus, who serves a dual role as administrator of Rural Schools Programs and Inventiveness Programs at Belin-Blank as well as State coordinator for Invent Iowa. They have been tireless advocates for the program and are dedicated to its success far into the future.

Invent Iowa is a great program, and I am very proud to recognize all of the

people and organizations that continue to carry on Iowa's tradition for innovation and invention. Congratulations on reaching this important milestone to the advisory board for Invent Iowa and to the sponsors including the Belin-Blank Center, Iowa Area Education Agencies, Iowa Intellectual Property Law Association, Rockwell Collins Corporation, McKee, Voorhees and Sease patent attorneys Larry Engman and David Belin, Dean P. Barry Butler and the College of Engineering at the University of Iowa, and Dean Mark J. Kushner and the College of Engineering at Iowa State University.

The most important partners in the success of Invent Iowa have been classroom teachers across Iowa. They help guide students through all phases of the invention process from the documentation of need, to the inception of the idea, creation of the prototype, research to ensure the innovativeness of the invention, and the final presentation to a panel of evaluators. Without these dedicated teachers working with the young inventors, there would be no Invent Iowa.

On the 20th anniversary, I congratulate all the Iowans who have worked so hard to make Invent Iowa such a success. I wish them even greater success in their next 20 years. Also, good luck to the students who will be participating in the 2007 Invention Convention this weekend.●

IN RECOGNITION OF THE POTTER FAMILY

● Mr. NELSON of Nebraska. Mr. President, today I pay tribute to the Potter family, who are being honored with the Family Tree Alumni Award from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, UNL. This award was established in 1995 for families having at least three generations of UNL graduates and at least two family members with a record of outstanding service to the university, the alumni association, their community and/or their profession.

This legacy finds its roots in Herb ''Cub'' Potter, Sr., who began attending the University of Nebraska in 1910. Herb lettered as a quarterback on the dominating ''Stiehm Rollers'' Nebraska football teams of 1911, 1912, and 1914. The latter of those teams finished with 7 wins, 0 losses and 1 tie, which was said to be deserving of the mythical national title. At the university, Herb met his wife, Carrie Coman, a fellow student and an Alpha Omicron Pi member.

The two sons of Herb and Carrie Potter, Herb, Jr., and younger brother Brooks, became the next generation of Huskers during the early 1940s. Herb, Jr., graduated in 1943 with a degree in business administration and soon married a fellow graduate, Lois Ballantyne, class of 1940. Brooks attended the University of Nebraska until he enlisted in the U.S. Navy at the onset of World War II. Unfortunately, Brooks passed away while serving his country as a member of the ''greatest generation.''

Herb, Jr.'s close ties to Nebraska did not end with his graduation. He embarked on a career spanning 30 years at the University of Nebraska Foundation as secretary/treasurer and later vice president. Upon his retirement in 1982, Herb's tenure spanned a period during which the foundation grew from a staff of 5 employees and assets of $1 million to a staff of 22 and assets of $80 million.

Herb and Lois passed on the Husker tradition to their two daughters, Barbara and Carol. Barbara, class of 1967, met and married Robert Reynolds, class of 1971, at Nebraska. Robert went on to serve in the U.S. Department of the Interior with distinction for 33 years. In recognition of his outstanding contributions to the National Park Service, Robert was given the Meritorious Service Award in 1991, the second highest award given in the Department of the Interior. Then in 2000, he was awarded the Distinguished Service Award, which is given to only 4 out of 20,000 each year.

Carol, class of 1973, M.S. 1975, also met her husband, Paul Lou, class of 1973, M.S. 1976, at the university. Paul has spent the past 25 years as an instructor teaching a broad range of computer classes at Diablo Valley Community College in Pleasant Hill, CA, where he is considered one of the most popular teachers.

From the Ballantyne family, there have been several other Nebraska graduates, with the latest being Kevin Zimmerman, a lawyer who is currently serving his country in the armed services. Other graduates have gone on to become doctors—Doug Peter—teachers—Sandra Peter, Pat Kahre and Frank Daily—artists—Joyce Ballantyne and Beverly Ballantyne—and business professionals—Byron Ballantyne and Jim Peter.

Finally, current marching band member Kyle Peter represents the fifth generation of the Potter family tree to attend the University of Nebraska.

In addition to this legacy being deep in its years, it is also wide in its spread. From 1910 up to the present, there has been a member of either the Potter or Ballantyne families affiliated with the University of Nebraska during every single decade. What a rich tradition at Nebraska.●

TRIBUTE TO COACH DOUG ROSS

● Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I would like to congratulate and make some remarks today about a very valuable asset to the University of Alabama in Huntsville and the entire State of Alabama—Ice Hockey Head Coach Doug Ross, who is retiring after 25 years of coaching the UAH Chargers hockey team.

Coach Ross began his coaching career at Ohio University in 1976 where he coached for one season, and then at Kent State University for 2 years. He came to UAH in 1982. The hockey team at that time was a top team and the only NCAA hockey team south of the Mason-Dixon line. Under his leadership, the team has had great success, reaching NCAA Division I status. Quoting Coach Joe Ritch, his predecessor at UAH. ''Doug brought UAH championships, unique notoriety, and national respect in the collegiate hockey world. We all owe Doug Ross a debt of gratitude for his commitment to UAH and hockey for this state.''

The team went to the NCAA Regional Tournament this year where they played the third longest game in NCAA Regional Tournament history. In a thrilling game with top-ranked and top-seeded Notre Dame, the Chargers lost 3–2 in double overtime on a power-play goal. If winning it all could not happen, this game was one on which to cap a career.

Coach Ross is known for recruiting top notch student athletes to UAH. Following their success on the ice, many of his players are active alumni, living in the Huntsville area and actively involved in the community.

Thank you, Coach Ross, for bringing NCAA hockey to the forefront in Alabama and for your loyalty and support for the University of Alabama in Huntsville. Your legacy is a great one and I join with UAH, the Huntsville community, and the State of Alabama in wishing you the very best in your retirement.●

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 2:31 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Niland, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 988. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 5757 Tilton Avenue in Riverside, California, as the ''Lieutenant Todd Jason Bryant Post Office''.

The message also announced that the House has agreed to the following concurrent resolutions, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H. Con. Res. 71. Concurrent resolution commemorating the 85th Anniversary of the founding of the American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association (AHEPA), a leading association for the Nation's 1.3 million American citizens of Greek ancestry, and Philhellenes.

H. Con. Res. 88. Concurrent resolution honoring the life of Ernest Gallo.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bill was read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 988. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 5757 Tilton Avenue in Riverside, California, as the ''Lieutenant Todd Jason Bryant Post Office''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

The following concurrent resolution was read, and referred as indicated:

H. Con. Res. 71. Concurrent resolution commemorating the 85th Anniversary of the

founding of the American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association (AHEPA), a leading association for the Nation's 1.3 million American citizens of Greek ancestry, and Philhellenes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC–1485. A communication from the Chief Counsel, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Changes in Flood Elevation Determination'' (72 FR 14449) received on April 12, 2007; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–1486. A communication from the Chief Counsel, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Changes in Flood Elevation Determinations'' (72 FR 14447) received on April 12, 2007; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–1487. A communication from the Chief Counsel, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Changes in Flood Elevation Determination'' (72 FR 14456) received on April 12, 2007; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–1488. A communication from the Chief Counsel, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Final Flood Elevation Determinations'' (72 FR 14461) received on April 12, 2007; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–1489. A communication from the Chairman, Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Council's 2006 Annual Report; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–1490. A communication from the Regulatory Specialist, Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Expanded Examination Cycle for Certain Small Insured Depository Institutions and U.S. Branches and Agencies of Foreign Banks'' (OCC–2007–0007) received on April 12, 2007; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–1491. A communication from the Director, Office of Thrift Supervision, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Office's compensation plan for 2007; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–1492. A communication from the Principal Deputy, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Department's oversight of recruiter misconduct; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–1493. A communication from the Senior Attorney, Office of the Secretary, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Review of Data Filed by Certificated or Commuter Air Carriers to Support Continuing Fitness Determinations Involving Citizenship Issues'' (RIN2105-AD25) received on April 13, 2007; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1494. A communication from the Program Analyst, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Electronic Stability Control'' (RIN2127-AJ77) received on April 13, 2007; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1495. A communication from the Program Analyst, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Upgrade Door Retention Performance'' (RIN2127–AH34) received on April 13, 2007; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1496. A communication from the Program Analyst, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''New Car Assessment Program; Safety Labeling'' (RIN2127–AJ76) received on April 13, 2007; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1497. A communication from the Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Modification of Class E Airspace; Phillipsburg, KS'' ((RIN2120–AA66)(Docket No. 06–ACE–13)) received on April 13, 2007; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1498. A communication from the Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Modification of Class E Airspace; Thedford, NE'' ((RIN2120–AA66)(Docket No. 06–ACE–12)) received on April 13, 2007; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1499. A communication from the Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Modification of Class E Airspace; Alliance, NE'' ((RIN2120–AA66)(Docket No. 06–ACE–15)) received on April 13, 2007; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1500. A communication from the Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Bombardier Model DHC–8–400 Series Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64)(Docket No. 2006–NM–155)) received on April 13, 2007; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1501. A communication from the Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Pacific Aerospace Corporation Ltd. Model 750XL Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64)(Docket No. 2006–CE–69)) received on April 13, 2007; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1502. A communication from the Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; CTRM Aviation Sdn. Bhd. Model Eagle 150B Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64)(Docket No. CE–11)) received on April 13, 2007; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1503. A communication from the Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Empresa Brasileira de Aeronautica S.A. Model EMB–135BJ, –135ER, –135KE, –135KL, and –135LR Airplanes; and Model EMB–145, –145ER, –145MR, –145LR, –145XR, –145MP, and –145EP'' ((RIN2120–AA64)(Docket No. 2006–NM–120)) received on April 13, 2007; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1504. A communication from the Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Empresa Brasileira de Aeronautica S.A. Model EMB–135 Airplanes and Model EMB–145, –145ER, –145MR, –145LR, –145XR, –145MP, and –145EP Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64)(Docket No. 2006–NM–167)) received on April 13, 2007; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1505. A communication from the Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; BAE Systems Limited Model BAe 145 and Avro 146–RJ Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64)(Docket No. 2005–NM–106)) received on April 13, 2007; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1506. A communication from the Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Model A300 Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64)(Docket No. 2006–NM–145)) received on April 13, 2007; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1507. A communication from the Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; McDonnell Douglas Model DC–8–62, DC–8–63, DC–8–62F, and DC–8–63F Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64)(Docket No. 2006–NM–063)) received on April 13, 2007; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1508. A communication from the Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Turbomeca S.A. Arrius 2F Turboshaft Engines'' ((RIN2120–AA64)(Docket No. 2005–NE–33)) received on April 13, 2007; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1509. A communication from the Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Empresa Brasileira de Aeronautica S.A. Model ERJ 170 and ERJ 190 Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64)(Docket No. 2006–NM–166)) received on April 13, 2007; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1510. A communication from the Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Pilatus Aircraft Ltd. Models PC–6, PC–6–H1, PC–6–H2, PC–6/350, PC–6/350–H1, PC–6/350–H2, PC–6/A, PC–6/A–H1, PC–6/A–H2, PC–6/B–H2, PC–6/B1–H2, PC–6/B2–H2, PC–6/B2–H4, PC–6/C–H2, and PC–6/C1–H2 Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64)(Docket No. 2006–CE–19)) received on April 13, 2007; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1511. A communication from the Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Safety Approvals'' ((RIN2120–AI50)(Docket No. FAA–2006–21332)) received on April 13, 2007; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1512. A communication from the Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule

entitled ''Miscellaneous Changes to Commercial Space Transportation Regulations'' ((RIN2120–AI45)(Docket No. FAA–2005–21234)) received on April 13, 2007; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1513. A communication from the Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Human Space Flight Requirements for Crew and Space Flight Participants'' ((RIN2120–AI57)(Docket No. FAA–2005–23449)) received on April 13, 2007; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1514. A communication from the Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Extended Operations of Multi-Engine Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AI03)(Docket No. FAA–2002–6717)) received on April 13, 2007; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1515. A communication from the Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Licensing and Safety Requirements for Launch'' ((RIN2120–AG37)(Docket No. FAA–2000–7953)) received on April 13, 2007; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1516. A communication from the Administrator, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, transmitting, the report of draft legislation to amend the National Aeronautics and Space Act of 1958, as amended, and the NASA Flexibility Act of 2004 to provide NASA additional workforce flexibilities; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1517. A communication from the Secretary, Federal Trade Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''Federal Trade Commission Report to Congress on Marketing Violent Entertainment to Children: A Fifth Follow-Up Review of Industry Practices in the Motion Picture, Music Recording and Electronic Game Industries''; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1518. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Designation of Critical Habitat for Cirsium hydrophilum var. hydrophilum (Suisun thistle) and Cordylanthus mollis ssp. mollis (soft bird's-beak)'' (RIN1018–AU44) received on April 13, 2007; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–1519. A communication from the Acting Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Migratory Bird Subsistence Harvest in Alaska; Harvest Regulations for Migratory Birds in Alaska During the 2007 Season'' (RIN1018–AU59) received on April 12, 2007; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–1520. A communication from the Secretary of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''Pilot Testing of Electronic Prescribing Standards—Cooperative Agreements''; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–1521. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Regulations: Application of Section 409A to Nonqualified Deferred Compensation Plans'' ((RIN1545–BE79)(TD9321)) received on April 13, 2007; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–1522. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''2007 Automobile Depreciation Limits'' (Rev. Proc. 2007–30) received on April 13, 2007; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–1523. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''April—June 2007 Section 42 Bond Factor Amounts'' (Rev. Rul. 2007–25) received on April 13, 2007; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–1524. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Revision to Regulations Relating to Portfolio Interest'' ((RIN1545–BF64)(TD9323)) received on April 13, 2007; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–1525. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Mirror Legislation and the United Kingdom'' (Uniform Issue List Number 1503.06–00) received on April 13, 2007; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–1526. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Guidance Regarding the Application of Section 409A to Split-Dollar Insurance Arrangements'' (Notice 2007–34) received on April 13, 2007; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–1527. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Section 911 Waiver Rev. Proc.—2006 Update'' (Rev. Proc. 2007–28) received on April 13, 2007; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–1528. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Anti-Avoidance and Anti-Loss Reimportation Rules Applicable Following a Loss on Disposition of Stock of Consolidated Subsidiaries'' ((RIN1545–BG26) (TD9322)) received on April 13, 2007; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–1529. A communication from the President and CEO, Overseas Private Investment Corporation, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the development and effects of the Corporation's fiscal year 2006 projects; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–1530. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to Taiwan's participation in the World Health Organization; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–1531. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, the notification of a proposed exercise of the Federal Aviation Administration to transfer $11 million in fiscal year 2006 Economic Support Funds to the Peacekeeping Operations account to support security sector reform in Liberia; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–1532. A communication from the Assistant Legal Adviser for Treaty Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to the Case-Zablocki Act, 1 U.S.C. 112b, as amended, the report of the texts and background statements of international agreements, other than treaties (List 2007–50—2007–60); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–1533. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to methods employed by Cuba to comply with the United States-Cuba September 1994 ''Joint Communique'' and the treatment by the Government of Cuba of persons returned to Cuba; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–1534. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Millennium Challenge Corporation's activities for fiscal year 2006; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–1535. A communication from the Interim Director, Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Benefits Payable in Terminated Single-Employer Plans; Allocation of Assets in Single-Employer Plans; Interest Assumptions for Valuing and Paying Benefits'' (29 CFR Parts 4022 and 4044) received on April 12, 2007; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–1536. A communication from the Director, Regulations Policy and Management Staff, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Dandruff, Seborrheic Dermatitis, and Psoriasis Drug Products Containing Coal Tar and Menthol for Over-the-Counter Human Use; Amendment to the Monograph'' ((RIN0910–AF49) (Docket No. 2005N–0448)) received on April 12, 2007; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–1537. A communication from the Director, Regulations Policy and Management Staff, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Blood Vessels Recovered With Organs and Intended for Use in Organ Transplantation'' (Docket No. 2006N–0051) received on April 12, 2007; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–1538. A communication from the Director, Regulations Policy and Management Staff, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Blood Vessels Recovered With Organs Intended for Use in Organ Transplantation'' ((RIN0910–AF65) (Docket No. 2006N–0051)) received on April 12, 2007; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–1539. A communication from the Chairman, National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities, transmitting, pursuant to law, an annual report relative to the Arts and Artifacts Indemnity Program for fiscal year 2006; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–1540. A communication from the Director, Regulations and Disclosure Law Division, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Advance Electronic Presentation of Cargo Information for Truck Carriers Required to be Transmitted Through ACE Truck Manifest at Ports in the States of Vermont, North Dakota and New Hampshire'' (19 CFR Part 123) received on April 13, 2007; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–1541. A communication from the Director, Office of Personnel Management, transmitting, pursuant to law, an annual report containing certain fiscal year 2006 statistical data relative to Federal sector equal employment opportunity complaints filed with the

Office; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–1542. A communication from the Acting Senior Procurement Executive, Office of the Chief Acquisition Officer, Department of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Federal Acquisition Regulation: Federal Acquisition Circular 2005–16'' (FAC 2005–16) received on April 12, 2007; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–1543. A communication from the Chairman, Postal Regulatory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to its implementation of the Sunshine Act during calendar year 2006; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–1544. A communication from the Chief Administrative Officer, Patent and Trademark Office, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Office's Annual Report for fiscal year 2006; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–1545. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Administrator, Office of Diversion Control, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Control of a Chemical Precursor Used in the Illicit Manufacture of Fentanyl as a List I Chemical'' (RIN1117–AB12) received on April 13, 2007; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC–1546. A communication from the Secretary, Judicial Conference of the United States, transmitting, the report of draft legislation entitled ''Civil Judicial Procedure, Administration, and Technical Amendments Act of 2007''; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC–1547. A communication from the Secretary, Judicial Conference of the United States, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Conference's determinations on four district courts that were subject to review under the Conference's Biennial Survey of Article III Judgeship Needs; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC–1548. A communication from the Secretary, Judicial Conference of the United States, transmitting, a draft bill intended to create additional Article III judgeships and convert temporary judgeships to permanent ones in the U.S. courts of appeals and district courts; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS

The following petitions and memorials were laid before the Senate and were referred or ordered to lie on the table as indicated:

POM–62. A joint resolution adopted by the House of Representatives of the Legislature of the State of Idaho urging Congress to consider adoption of a resolution working toward the development of a federal bipartisan, long-term solution that addresses sustainable management of federal forest lands to stabilize payments, which help support roads and schools, to forest communities throughout the western states; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL NO. 4

Whereas, it has long been the intent and policy of the federal government to hold rural communities harmless from the creation of federal lands and in 1906 the Committee on Public Lands recognized that the presence of federal lands could create hardship for many counties as they provided little revenue or commerce at that time; and

Whereas, in 1908, the federal government promised rural counties twenty-five percent of all revenues generated from the multiple-use management of the newly created national forests to support public roads and public schools; and

Whereas, in recent decades, the forest resources have not been managed in a manner to produce long-term sustainable revenue to share with schools and counties; and

Whereas, in 2000, Congress passed Public Law 106–393, the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act. The Act restored historical payment levels previously made to states and counties from the federal government for road and school purposes because of declining levels of actual forest receipts; and

Whereas, the reauthorization and appropriation of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act is pending before the United States Congress, and Idaho counties are on record as being strongly supportive of a fully funded approval of this Act; and

Whereas, federal land managers continue to be faced with funding shortages. In the event the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act is not reauthorized and appropriated, counties will be faced with higher property taxes or a reduction in services and, even if the Act is reauthorized and appropriated, it will likely be the last time, and the state of Idaho must seek a long-term solution; and

Whereas, in 2006, House Joint Memorial No. 21 was adopted by the members of the Second Regular Session of the Fifty-eighth Idaho Legislature to provide one option to address the problem of declining forest receipts by urging Congress to support federal legislation transferring management of National Forest System lands within Idaho to the state of Idaho to be managed for the benefit of the rural counties and schools; and

Whereas, in February 2007, a concurrent resolution was introduced in the Idaho House of Representatives and will be voted on by the First Regular Session of the Fifty-ninth Idaho Legislature authorizing Idaho's Legislative Council to appoint an interim committee to undertake and complete an assessment of the decline in receipts on National Forest System lands, which have historically been shared with counties. The goal of the interim committee's recommendations will be to develop a federal, bipartisan, long-term solution that addresses sustainable management of federal forest lands to stabilize payments to Idaho's forest counties, which help support roads and schools, and to provide projects that enhance forest ecosystem health, provide employment opportunities, and improve cooperative relationships among those who use and care about the lands the federal government manages. The resolution calls for the interim committee to work in cooperation and coordination with the state of Idaho, its counties, its school and highway districts, along with the recognized Indian tribes of the state of Idaho. The resolution also provides that the interim committee address National Forest System lands, but only those lands that do not have special designations. The interim committee is directed to formulate a solution that will protect all valid existing rights, existing public access and activities, including hunting, fishing and recreation, and that will not be construed to interfere with treaties or any other obligations to the Indian tribes, commitments to county governments, or the General Mining Law or Taylor Grazing Act: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the members of the First Regular Session of the Fifty-ninth Idaho Legislature, the House of Representatives and the Senate concurring therein, That the legislatures of all western states should consider the adoption of similar resolutions, working toward the development of a federal, bipartisan, long-term solution that addresses sustainable management of federal forest lands to stabilize payments to forest counties throughout the western United States, which help support roads and schools, and to provide projects that enhance forest ecosystem health and provide employment opportunities, and to improve cooperative relationships among those who use and care about the lands the federal government manages; and be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives be, and she is hereby authorized and directed to forward a copy of this Memorial to the President of the Senate and Speaker of the House of Representatives of Congress, the congressional delegation representing the State of Idaho in the Congress of the United States and to the Legislatures of the states of Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington and Wyoming.

POM–63. A resolution adopted by the Senate of the Legislature of the State of Michigan expressing the Senate's opposition to Norfolk Southern Corporation's proposed sale of its rail lines from Ypsilanti to Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids to Kalamazoo and continuing to the Indiana border; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 34

Whereas, The Norfolk Southern Corporation is considering the sale of its Michigan lines from Grand Rapids to Kalamazoo and from Ypsilanti to Kalamazoo. The Ypsilanti to Kalamazoo line carries the state's busiest high-speed AMTRAK train, the Wolverine, which travels from Detroit to Chicago. The Wolverine travels on the Norfolk Southern Railroad's rail corridor from Ypsilanti to Kalamazoo until it connects with AMTRAK's own line. Ridership on this line increased six percent in 2006 to 142,185 passengers; and

Whereas, The Ypsilanti to Kalamazoo portion of the Norfolk Southern line is a vital link between Detroit and Chicago. Expanding the high-speed rail capacity on this line is vital to the future development of this area. New industry, including coal energy, biodiesel, and ethanol fuel plants are proposed for Michigan and specifically along the I–94 corridor located near the Ypsilanti to Kalamazoo rail line. Continued operation of this line by Norfolk Southern is essential to expansion of new industry in this area. Over 150 railroad employees' jobs are associated with the rail traffic along this line; and

Whereas, Norfolk Southern is a Class One railroad operator, earning revenue in excess of $250 million annually. As a Class One operator, Norfolk Southern has the capacity to maintain and promote the use of these lines. The proposed sale of the Ypsilanti to Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids to Kalamazoo lines will almost certainly place the lines under the management of a Class Three operator, a rail company earning revenue of $20 million or less annually. A Class Three operator will be far less likely to have the means to maintain the lines, thus increasing the chance of accidents. Class Three operators also rely on federal grants for line and equipment maintenance, grants that are not always guaranteed; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate, That we express opposition to Norfolk Southern's proposed sale of its rail lines from Ypsilanti to Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids to Kalamazoo and continuing to the Indiana border; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States Senate; the Speaker of the United

States House of Representatives; members of the Michigan congressional delegation; the United States Department of Transportation, Surface Transportation Board; the Norfolk Southern Corporation; AMTRAK; and the Michigan Department of Transportation.

POM–64. A joint resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Maine memorializing the President and Congress to fully fund the State Children's Health Insurance Program; to the Committee on Finance.

JOINT RESOLUTION MEMORIALIZING THE PRESIDENT AND CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES TO FULLY FUND THE STATE CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM

Whereas, the State of Maine and at least 13 other states have used up much of the federal subsidies for child health care even though the fiscal year is still not ended, due in part to the great need for these funds and also to the inadequate formula by which the money is apportioned; and

Whereas, the State Children's Health Insurance Program, known as SCHIP, was started by Congress in 1998 and is funded by a combination of federal and state funds, as well as by the premiums of participants; and

Whereas, the program was envisioned as a way to provide health insurance to the children of the working poor and the current budget is $5.5 billion, which is about $745 million short of the needs of the states; and

Whereas, the State of Maine has used its SCHIP funds to help significantly with MaineCare, which has provided valuable and important health care to more than 14,850 children in our State, and without additional federal aid 3,500 to 4,000 Maine children will go uninsured; and

Whereas, the State of Maine needs at least $6,500,000 to help the children at risk and to keep our children healthy, and other states have needs just as important: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That We, your Memorialists, on behalf of the people we represent, take this opportunity to request that the State Children's Health Insurance Program be fully funded not only for the children of the State of Maine, but for all of the children of the working poor in the United States; and be it further

Resolved, That official copies of this resolution, duly authenticated by the Secretary of State, be transmitted to President George W. Bush, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, the President of the United States Senate and to each member of the Maine Congressional Delegation.

POM–65. A joint resolution adopted by the House of Representatives of the Legislature of the State of Idaho urging Congress to use all efforts, energies, and diligence to withdraw the U.S. from any further participation in the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America, or any other bilateral or multilateral activity that seeks to advance, authorize, fund or in any way promote the creation of any structure to create any form of the North American Union; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL NO. 5

Whereas, the U.S. Department of State, the U.S. Department of Commerce and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security participated in the formation of the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America (SPP) on March 23, 2005, representing a trilateral agreement between Canada, Mexico and the United States designed, among other things, to facilitate common regulatory schemes between these countries; and

Whereas, reports issued by the SPP indicate that it has implemented regulatory changes among the three countries that circumvent United States trade, transportation, homeland security and border security functions and that it is the intention of SPP to continue toward a North American Union in the future; and

Whereas, the actions taken by the SPP to coordinate border security by eliminating obstacles to migration between Mexico and the United States actually makes the United States-Mexico border less secure and more vulnerable to possible terrorist activities, and Mexico is the primary source country of illegal immigrants, illegal drug entry and illegal human smuggling into the United States; and

Whereas, according to the U. S. Department of Commerce, the United States trade deficits with Mexico and Canada have significantly increased since the implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), and the volume of imports from Mexico has soared since NAFTA, straining security checks at the U.S. border; and

Whereas, the economic and physical security of the United States is impaired by the potential loss of control of its borders attendant to the full operation of NAFTA and the SPP; and

Whereas, the regulatory and border security changes implemented and proposed by the SPP violate and threaten United States sovereignty; and

Whereas, the NAFTA Superhighway System from the west coast of Mexico through the United States and into Canada has been suggested as part of a North American Union to facilitate trade between the SPP countries; and

Whereas, the stability and economic viability of the U.S. ports along the western coast will be seriously compromised by huge cargos off-loaded at cheaper labor cost from foreign traders into the ports of Mazatlan and Lazaro Cardenas; and

Whereas, the state of Texas has already approved and begun planning of the Trans-Texas Corridor, a major multi-modal transportation project beginning at the United States-Mexico border, which would serve as an initial section of the NAFTA Superhighway System; and

Whereas, plans of Asian trading powers to divert cargo from U.S. ports such as Los Angeles to ports in Mexico will only put pressure on border inspectors, interfering with their already overwhelming job of intercepting the flow of drugs and illegals flowing into this country; and

Whereas, future unrestricted foreign trucking into the United States can pose a safety hazard due to inadequate maintenance and inspection, and the Transportation Security Administration's (TSA) lack of background checks for violations in Mexico, lack of drug and alcohol testing, lack of enforcement of size and weight requirements and lack of national security procedures, which threaten the American people and undermine the very charge given to our homeland security agency to defend our borders against these threats; and

Whereas, the Eisenhower National Highway System was designed for the national security of the United States for movement of the military, purposes of commerce from state to state, not from foreign countries, and this highway system should not be compromised by treaties or agreements with other countries that would supplant the control and management of our nation's highways by our U.S. Department of Transportation and the various states; and

Whereas, we strongly object to any treaty or agreement, which threatens to violate national security, private property, United States commerce, constitutional rights and American sovereignty and emphasize our commitment to the Pacific Northwest Economic Region (PNWER) and other cooperative working nations in mutual beneficial goals; and

Whereas, this trilateral partnership to develop a North American Union has never been presented to Congress as an agreement or treaty, and has had virtually no congressional oversight; and

Whereas, recent reports on internet news, Friday, January 26, 2007, WorldNetDaily, stating that Congressman Poe (R-Texas) asked about the U.S. Department of Transportation's work with the trade group North American Super-Corridor Coalition, Inc. (NASCO) and the department's plans to build the Trans-Texas Corridor, Congressman Poe was told that the NAFTA agreement superhighway corridor plans exist to move goods from Mexico through the United States to Canada; and

Whereas, American citizens and state and local governments throughout the United States would be negatively impacted by the SPP process: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the members of the First Regular Session of the Fifty-ninth Idaho Legislature, the House of Representatives and the Senate concurring therein, That we emphatically urge and petition the Congress of the United States and particularly the congressional delegation representing the state of Idaho to use all efforts, energies and diligence to withdraw the United States from any further participation in the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America or any other bilateral or multilateral activity that seeks to advance, authorize, fund or in any way promote the creation of any structure to create any form of North American Union; and be it further

Resolved, That House Concurrent Resolution 40 of the First Session of the 110th Congress addresses the concern herein expressed by the state of Idaho; and be it further

Resolved, That we are asking our congressional delegation, our U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Mary E. Peters and President Bush to reject appropriated federal fuel tax dollars for such SPP or NAFTA when there is such a need for fuel tax dollars to be dedicated to the needs of the states in the U.S. in order to maintain our highway system; and be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives be, and she is hereby authorized and directed to forward a copy of this Memorial to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives of Congress, and the congressional delegation representing the State of Idaho in the Congress of the United States.

POM–66. A joint resolution adopted by the House of Representatives of the Legislature of the State of Idaho supporting the participation of Taiwan in a meaningful and appropriate way in the World Health Organization; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL NO. 2

Whereas, direct and unobstructed participation in international health cooperation forums and programs is crucial for all parts of the world, especially with today's greater potential for the cross-border spread of various infectious diseases such as AIDS; and

Whereas, Taiwan's achievements in the field of health care are substantial, including life expectancy levels that are some of the highest in Asia, maternal and infant mortality rates that are comparable to those of western countries, free hepatitis B vaccinations for children and the eradication of polio, cholera, smallpox and the plague; and

Whereas, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and its Taiwanese counterpart have enjoyed close collaboration on a wide range of public health issues; and

Whereas, in recent years Taiwan has expressed a willingness to give financial and technical assistance to the international aid and health activities supported by the World Health Organization; and

Whereas, Taiwan's population of twenty-three million is larger than that of seventy-five percent of World Health Organization member states; and

Whereas, the United States, in its 1994 Taiwan Policy Review, declared its intention to support Taiwan's participation in appropriate international organizations; and

Whereas, Taiwan's participation in the World Health Organization could bring many benefits to the state of health care, not only in Taiwan, but also regionally and globally: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the members of the First Regular Session of the Fifty-ninth Idaho Legislature, the House of Representatives and the Senate concurring therein, That we support the participation by Taiwan in a meaningful and appropriate way in the World Health Organization; and be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives be, and she is hereby authorized and directed to forward a copy of this Memorial to the President of the United States, to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives of Congress, to the congressional delegation representing the State of Idaho in the Congress of the United States, to the Director-General of the World Health Organization and to the representative of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office in the United States.

POM–67. A resolution adopted by the Senate of the Legislature of the State of Michigan memorializing Congress to invest in Head Start and quality child care; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 27

Whereas, Head Start and high-quality child care prepare children for school and life success by narrowing the educational achievement gap between lower- and upper-income kids, increasing high school graduation rates, and reducing crime; and

Whereas, Studies show that at-risk children who attend Head Start and high-quality child care are better prepared for school. For example, Head Start narrows the literacy skills gap by nearly half between children in poverty and all children. The research is clear that quality early childhood education programs work to prevent crime. In Ypsilanti, Michigan, three-and four-year-olds from low-income families who were randomly assigned to a group that did not receive preschool preparation were five times more likely to have become chronic lawbreakers by age 27 than those who were assigned to the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation's Perry Preschool program; and

Whereas, Currently, only about half of eligible low-income children can attend Head Start due to state and federal funding limitations, and even fewer infants and toddlers. Less than five percent of eligible children three years old and younger are able to participate in Early Head Start. Moreover, only one in seven eligible children in working, low-income families receives help paying for quality child care through the Child Care and Development Block Grant. The combination of state and federal money for preschool has helped Michigan reach two of three at-risk four-year-olds and one of five at-risk three-year-olds; and

Whereas, Real dollar funding levels for Head Start and child care have been cut for the last several years, falling far behind the rising costs that programs face. Instead of reaching more eligible kids with comprehensive health, nutrition, and early education services, Head Start programs have been forced to shorten program hours, cut back staff, reduce parent coaching, and reduce transportation and other services that help families participate: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate, That we memorialize the Congress of the United States to increase discretionary funding in the federal budget for 2008 by $750 million in additional funding over current levels for Head Start and $720 million in additional funding over current levels for the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG). This request does not address the unmet need in Head Start and CCDBG, but simply restores services to children to the Fiscal Year 2002 level. This is a crucial first step toward meeting the need to provide quality early childhood education and care for at-risk children. Investing in Head Start and quality child care now will improve education outcomes for our nation's at-risk children and will save lives and money down the road; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, and the members of the Michigan congressional delegation.

POM–68. A joint resolution adopted by the House of Representatives of the Legislature of the State of Idaho affirming the state's support of the United States campaign to secure our country and urging members of Idaho's congressional delegation to support measures to repeal the federal REAL ID Act of 2005; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL NO. 3

Whereas, the state of Idaho recognizes the Constitution of the United States as our charter of liberty and the Bill of Rights as affirming the fundamental and inalienable rights of Americans, including freedom of privacy and freedom from unreasonable searches; and

Whereas, Idaho has a diverse population whose contributions are vital to the state's economy, culture and civic character; and

Whereas, Idaho is proud of its tradition of protecting the civil rights and liberties of all its residents, affirming the fundamental rights of all people and providing more expansive protections than are granted by the Constitution of the United States; and

Whereas, the federal REAL ID Act of 2005, Public Law 109–13, creates a national identification card by mandating federal standards for state driver's licenses and identification cards and requires states to share their motor vehicle databases; and

Whereas, the REAL ID Act mandates the documents that states must require to issue driver's licenses and requires states to place uniform information on every driver's license in a standard, machine-readable format; and

Whereas, the REAL ID Act prohibits federal agencies and federally-regulated commercial aircraft from accepting a driver's license or identification card issued by a state that has not fully complied with the act; and

Whereas, the REAL ID Act places a costly, unfunded mandate on states, with initial estimates for Idaho of more than thirty-nine million dollars with ongoing annual expenses of an estimated nine million three hundred thousand dollars and a national estimate of more than eleven billion dollars over the next five years; and

Whereas, the REAL ID Act requires the creation of a massive public sector database containing information on every American that is accessible to all motor vehicle employees and law enforcement officers nationwide and that can be used to gather and manage information on citizens. Such activities are not the business or responsibility of government; and

Whereas, the REAL ID Act enables the creation of additional massive private sector databases, combining both transactional information and driver's license information gained from scanning the machine-readable information contained on every driver's license; and

Whereas, these public and private databases are likely to contain numerous errors and false information, creating significant hardship for Americans attempting to verify their identities in order to travel on commercial aircraft, open a bank account or perform any of the numerous functions required to live in the United States today; and

Whereas, the federal trade commission estimates that ten million Americans are victims of identity theft annually, and because identity thieves are increasingly targeting motor vehicle departments, the REAL ID Act will enable the crime of identity theft by making the personal information of all Americans, including date of birth and signature, accessible from tens of thousands of locations; and

Whereas, the REAL ID Act requires a driver's license to contain a person's actual home address and makes no exception for individuals in potential danger, such as undercover law enforcement personnel or victims of stalking or criminal harassment; and

Whereas, the REAL ID Act contains onerous record verification and retention provisions that place unreasonable burdens on the motor vehicle division and on third parties required to verify records; and

Whereas, the REAL ID Act will place enormous burdens on consumers seeking new driver's licenses, such as longer lines, increased document requests, higher costs and a waiting period; and

Whereas, the REAL ID Act will place state motor vehicle staff on the front lines of immigration enforcement by forcing state employees to determine federal citizenship and immigration status, excessively burdening both foreign-born applicants and motor vehicle staff; and

Whereas, the REAL ID Act passed without sufficient deliberation by Congress and did not receive a hearing by any congressional committee or a vote solely on its own merits, despite opposition from more than six hundred organizations; and

Whereas, the REAL ID Act eliminated a process of negotiated rulemaking initiated under the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004, which had convened federal, state and local policymakers, privacy advocates and industry experts to solve the problem of the misuse of identity documents; and

Whereas, the REAL ID Act provides little security benefit and leaves identification systems open to insider fraud, counterfeit documentation and database failures: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the members of the First Regular Session of the Fifty-ninth Idaho Legislature, the House of Representatives and the Senate concurring therein, That we support the government of the United States in its campaign to secure our country, while affirming the commitment of the United States that this campaign not be waged at the expense of the essential civil rights and liberties of the citizens of this country; and be it further

Resolved, That it is the policy of the state of Idaho to oppose any portion of the REAL ID Act that violates the rights and liberties guaranteed under the constitutions of the State of Idaho and the United States, including the Bill of Rights. Be it further

Resolved, That the Idaho Legislature shall enact no legislation nor authorize an appropriation to implement the provisions of the REAL ID Act in Idaho, unless such appropriation is used exclusively for the purpose of undertaking a comprehensive analysis of the costs of implementing the REAL ID Act or to mount a constitutional challenge to the act by the state Attorney General. Be it further

Resolved, That the Idaho Legislature urges the Idaho congressional delegation to support measures to repeal the REAL ID Act. Be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives be, and she is hereby authorized and directed to forward a copy of this Memorial to the President of the United States George W. Bush, the United States Attorney General Alberto Gonzales, the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives of Congress, the Governor of Idaho C. L. Otter and the congressional delegation representing the State of Idaho in the Congress of the United States.

POM–69. A resolution adopted by the Senate of the Legislature of the State of Massachusetts memorializing the President and Congress to recommend more funding to the Department of Veterans Affairs in the budget for fiscal year 2008; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

RESOLUTION MEMORIALIZING GEORGE W. BUSH, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, AND THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS TO RECOMMEND MORE FUNDING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS IN THE FISCAL YEAR 08 FEDERAL BUDGET.

Whereas, President George W. Bush has recommended 34.2 billion for the Department of Veterans Affairs in his proposed fiscal year 08 budget, which is an inadequate appropriation to adequately address the health of our veterans; and

Whereas, while the Bush Administration continues to tout its recommendation for an increase of $2 billion over the previous fiscal year as a ''landmark budget'', the reality is that this 6% increase is barely enough to account for the cost of inflation and cannot fund the need for improvements in medical care and expansion of services; and

Whereas, more than 27,000 service members have returned home to Massachusetts since September 11, 2001, having faced a new type of warfare in the form of improvised explosive devices and are, upon return home, in need of specialized services and care; and

Whereas, the United States Government must provide to the Department of Veterans Affairs all the tools available to make this specialized care available, particularly for head, spinal cord and sight injuries and the growing need for mental health services; and

Whereas, in 2006, the Veterans Health Administration's Undersecretary for Health Policy and Coordination stated that some areas of the country did not have any mental health services available and that other areas had such long wait times that certain services were ''virtually inaccessible''; and

Whereas, unfortunately, once again, Category 8 Veterans, those veterans deemed ''high income'' veterans by the Veterans Administration—some who make as little as $28,000 a year—and who have been ineligible to enroll in the Veterans Administration Health Care System since 2003, may continue to be shut out of the Veterans Administration Health Care Systen if funding is not increased, adding to the approximately 1 million Category 8 Veterans who have been turned away since 2003; and

Whereas, while the Massachusetts State Senate has supported the Veterans Affairs' recommendations for improvements in medical equipment and facility upgrades to medical centers, for two years, the Senate has fought hard to prevent the possible consolidation of the four existing Veterans Administration medical care facilities in the greater Boston area into one ''mega-plex'', since the negative impact of removing thousands of veterans from their familiar health care environment and forcing them to change physicians would have consequences that cannot be balanced by the creation of one modernized facility: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Massachusetts Senate hereby urges the President of the United States and Congress to address the Veterans Affairs Budget in a timely manner, include in the 2008 budget the Veterans Affairs' recommendations for improvements in medical equipment and facility upgrades to all Massachusetts Veterans Administration Medical Centers and to provide mandatory funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care system so as to appropriately honor and facilitate the healing of our veterans who selflessly risk their lives and well-being to protect our freedom; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of these resolutions be transmitted forthwith by the clerk of the Senate to the President of the United States, the Presiding Officer of each branch of Congress and to the Members thereof from the Commonwealth.

POM–70. A resolution adopted by the Senate of the Legislature of the State of Vermont urging Congress to enact legislation to assure federal funding for veterans' health care; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

SENATE RESOLUTION 13

Whereas, the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) provides medical care for veterans, including men and women, who have risked their lives to protect the security of our nation, and

Whereas, Congress appropriates funding for VA health care each year as part of the discretionary federal budget, and

Whereas, each year's federal budget for veterans' health care has been very seriously under-funded, and

Whereas, this serious and now chronic shortfall affects the access to and the quality of medical care services that the VA provides for our veterans, and

Whereas, the priority of serving veterans must be absolute and irrevocable, and must serve as the foundation for the VA and of our nation's public policy: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate, That the Senate of the State of Vermont urgently requests that Congress enact legislation to assure Federal funding for veterans' health care, and be it further

Resolved, That Governor Douglas also request that Congress enact legislation to assure Federal funding for veterans' health care, and be it further

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Senate be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the Governor, the President, the Vice President, Secretary of Veterans Affairs, James Nicholson; Speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi; House Minority Leader, John Boehner; Senate Majority Leader, Harry Reid; Senate Minority Leader, Trent Lott; to the members of the Vermont Congressional delegation; and to Vermont veterans organizations.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. KYL (for himself, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. LOTT, Mr. ENSIGN, Mr. HATCH, Mr. THOMAS, Mr. SMITH, Mr. BUNNING, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. DEMINT, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. MARTINEZ, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mr. BROWNBACK, Mr. CRAIG, Mr. ALLARD, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. ENZI, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. BURR, and Mr. COBURN):

S. 14. A bill to repeal the sunset on certain tax rates and other incentives and to repeal the individual alternative minimum tax, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. HARKIN (for himself, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. BINGAMAN, and Mr. LIEBERMAN):

S. 1120. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide grants for the training of graduate medical residents in preventive medicine and public health; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. REED (for himself and Mr. COCHRAN):

S. 1121. A bill to authorize the cancellation of Perkins Loans for students who perform public service as librarians in low-income schools and public libraries; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. NELSON of Nebraska:

S. 1122. A bill to improve the calculation of highway mileage to medium and large hub airports, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Ms. STABENOW:

S. 1123. A bill to provide an extension for filing a refund for the excise tax on toll telephone service, and to provide for a safe harbor for businesses claiming such a refund; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. LEVIN (for himself and Mr. COLEMAN):

S. 1124. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to simplify, modernize, and improve public notice of and access to tax lien information by providing for a national, Internet accessible, filing system for Federal tax liens, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. LOTT (for himself, Mr. CONRAD, Mr. SMITH, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. NELSON of Nebraska, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. STEVENS, Mr. HAGEL, Ms. LANDRIEU, and Mr. CRAPO):

S. 1125. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide incentives to encourage investment in the expansion of freight rail infrastructure capacity and to enhance modal tax equity; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. LOTT (for himself, Ms. LANDRIEU, and Mr. COCHRAN):

S. 1126. A bill to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to expand and strengthen cooperative efforts to monitor, restore, and protect the resource productivity, water quality, and marine ecosystems of the Gulf of Mexico; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. LEVIN:

S. 1127. A bill for the relief of Alexandrea S. Banks Desutter and Nicholas S. Banks Desutter; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. DODD (for himself, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. STEVENS, Mr. BINGAMAN, Mr. KERRY, and Mr. ROCKEFELLER):

S. 1128. A bill to amend the National and Community Service Act of 1990 to establish a Summer of Service State grant program, a

Summer of Service national direct grant program, and related national activities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. SMITH (for himself and Mr. BINGAMAN):

S. 1129. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify the definition of governmental plan with respect to Indian tribal governments; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. SMITH (for himself, Mrs. LINCOLN, Ms. SNOWE, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. KERRY, and Mr. ROCKEFELLER):

S. 1130. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to restore, increase, and make permanent the exclusion from gross income for amounts received under qualified group legal services plans; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. COLLINS:

S. 1131. A bill to amend the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978 to establish a program to provide assistance to States and nonprofit organizations to preserve suburban forest land and open space and contain suburban sprawl; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI:

S. 1132. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow Indian tribes to receive charitable contributions of apparently wholesome food; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. AKAKA (for himself, Mr. BINGAMAN, and Mr. DURBIN):

S. 1133. A bill to provide additional protections for recipients of the earned income tax credit; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. NELSON of Nebraska (for himself and Mr. BROWNBACK):

S. 1134. A bill to maximize transparency and accountability for direct appropriations to non-Federal entities, including those instances when Congress appropriates funds to a Federal agency specifically in order to contract with a congressionally identified non-Federal entity; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. SESSIONS:

S. 1135. A bill to amend chapter 1 of title 9, United States Code, to establish fair procedures for arbitration clauses in contracts; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mrs. MURRAY (for herself, Mr. BROWN, and Mr. DODD):

S. 1136. A bill to promote the economic security and safety of victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself, Mr. BAUCUS, and Ms. CANTWELL):

S. 1137. A bill to authorize grants to carry out projects to provide education on preventing teen pregnancies, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. AKAKA (for himself, Mr. VOINOVICH, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. STEVENS, Mr. CARPER, Mr. WARNER, and Mr. LAUTENBERG):

S. Res. 150. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that public servants should be commended for their dedication and continued service to the Nation during Public Service Recognition Week, May 7 through 13, 2007; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. ENZI (for himself and Mr. THOMAS):

S. Res. 151. A resolution commending the University of Wyoming Cowgirls for their championship victory in the Women's National Invitation Tournament; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. BUNNING (for himself, Mr. PRYOR, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. KERRY, Mr. OBAMA, and Mr. CARDIN):

S. Res. 152. A resolution honoring the lifetime achievements of Jackie Robinson; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. REID:

S. Res. 153. A resolution making temporary appointments to the Select Committee on Ethics; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 3

At the request of Mr. BAUCUS, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3, a bill to amend part D of title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for fair prescription drug prices for Medicare beneficiaries.

S. 170

At the request of Mr. ENSIGN, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 170, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the excise tax on telephone and other communications services.

S. 180

At the request of Mrs. HUTCHISON, the name of the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. CORKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 180, a bill to provide a permanent deduction for State and local general sales taxes.

S. 185

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 185, a bill to restore habeas corpus for those detained by the United States.

S. 211

At the request of Mrs. CLINTON, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KENNEDY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 211, a bill to facilitate nationwide availability of 2–1–1 telephone service for information and referral on human services, volunteer services, and for other purposes.

S. 221

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 221, a bill to amend title 9, United States Code, to provide for greater fairness in the arbitration process relating to livestock and poultry contracts.

S. 254

At the request of Mr. ENZI, the names of the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON) and the Senator from Delaware (Mr. CARPER) were added as cosponsors of S. 254, a bill to award posthumously a Congressional gold medal to Constantino Brumidi.

S. 261

At the request of Ms. CANTWELL, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 261, a bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to strengthen prohibitions against animal fighting, and for other purposes.

S. 294

At the request of Mr. LAUTENBERG, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 294, a bill to reauthorize Amtrak, and for other purposes.

S. 338

At the request of Mr. CONRAD, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SPECTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 338, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to ensure and foster continued patient quality of care by establishing facility and patient criteria for long-term care hospitals and related improvements under the Medicare program.

S. 359

At the request of Mr. KENNEDY, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. CLINTON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 359, a bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to provide additional support to students.

S. 387

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. PRYOR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 387, a bill to prohibit the sale by the Department of Defense of parts for F–14 fighter aircraft.

S. 399

At the request of Mr. BUNNING, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 399, a bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to include podiatrists as physicians for purposes of covering physicians services under the Medicaid program.

S. 479

At the request of Mr. HARKIN, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. DOMENICI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 479, a bill to reduce the incidence of suicide among veterans.

S. 486

At the request of Mr. KENNEDY, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. FEINGOLD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 486, a bill to establish requirements for lenders and institutions of higher education in order to protect students and other borrowers receiving educational loans.

S. 543

At the request of Mr. NELSON of Nebraska, the name of the Senator from Utah (Mr. BENNETT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 543, a bill to improve Medicare beneficiary access by extending the 60 percent compliance threshold used to determine whether a hospital or unit of a hospital is an inpatient rehabilitation facility under the Medicare program.

S. 566

At the request of Mr. NELSON of Nebraska, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) was added as a cosponsor of S. 566, a bill to amend

the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act to establish a rural entrepreneur and microenterprise assistance program.

S. 579

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 579, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to authorize the Director of the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences to make grants for the development and operation of research centers regarding environmental factors that may be related to the etiology of breast cancer.

S. 621

At the request of Mr. FEINGOLD, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 621, a bill to establish commissions to review the facts and circumstances surrounding injustices suffered by European Americans, European Latin Americans, and Jewish refugees during World War II.

S. 638

At the request of Mr. ROBERTS, the names of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. CARPER), the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) and the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. COBURN) were added as cosponsors of S. 638, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for collegiate housing and infrastructure grants.

S. 667

At the request of Mr. BOND, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. SNOWE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 667, a bill to expand programs of early childhood home visitation that increase school readiness, child abuse and neglect prevention, and early identification of developmental and health delays, including potential mental health concerns, and for other purposes.

S. 675

At the request of Mr. HARKIN, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mrs. LINCOLN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 675, a bill to provide competitive grants for training court reporters and closed captioners to meet requirements for realtime writers under the Telecommunications Act of 1996, and for other purposes.

S. 742

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 742, a bill to amend the Toxic Substances Control Act to reduce the health risks posed by asbestos-containing products, and for other purposes.

S. 761

At the request of Mr. REID, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 761, a bill to invest in innovation and education to improve the competitiveness of the United States in the global economy.

S. 773

At the request of Mr. WARNER, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. CLINTON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 773, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow Federal civilian and military retirees to pay health insurance premiums on a pretax basis and to allow a deduction for TRICARE supplemental premiums.

S. 805

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KENNEDY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 805, a bill to amend the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 to assist countries in sub-Saharan Africa in the effort to achieve internationally recognized goals in the treatment and prevention of HIV/AIDS and other major diseases and the reduction of maternal and child mortality by improving human health care capacity and improving retention of medical health professionals in sub-Saharan Africa, and for other purposes.

S. 807

At the request of Mrs. LINCOLN, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. ALLARD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 807, a bill to amend the Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation and Liability Act of 1980 to provide that manure shall not be considered to be a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant.

S. 831

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 831, a bill to authorize States and local governments to prohibit the investment of State assets in any company that has a qualifying business relationship with Sudan.

S. 902

At the request of Mr. HARKIN, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 902, a bill to provide support and assistance for families of members of the National Guard and Reserve who are undergoing deployment, and for other purposes.

S. 911

At the request of Mr. BUNNING, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 911, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to advance medical research and treatments into pediatric cancers, ensure patients and families have access to the current treatments and information regarding pediatric cancers, establish a population-based national childhood cancer database, and promote public awareness of pediatric cancers.

S. 958

At the request of Mr. SESSIONS, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 958, a bill to establish an adolescent literacy program.

S. 961

At the request of Mr. NELSON of Nebraska, the names of the Senator from Arkansas (Mrs. LINCOLN), the Senator from Maryland (Ms. MIKULSKI), the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN), the Senator from Maine (Ms. SNOWE) and the Senator from Louisiana (Ms. LANDRIEU) were added as cosponsors of S. 961, a bill to amend title 46, United States Code, to provide benefits to certain individuals who served in the United States merchant marine (including the Army Transport Service and the Naval Transport Service) during World War II, and for other purposes.

S. 962

At the request of Mr. BINGAMAN, the names of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. THOMAS), the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAIG), the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. CORKER) and the Senator from Louisiana (Ms. LANDRIEU) were added as cosponsors of S. 962, a bill to amend the Energy Policy Act of 2005 to reauthorize and improve the carbon capture and storage research, development, and demonstration program of the Department of Energy and for other purposes.

S. 970

At the request of Mr. SMITH, the names of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SESSIONS), the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) and the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) were added as cosponsors of S. 970, a bill to impose sanctions on Iran and on other countries for assisting Iran in developing a nuclear program, and for other purposes.

S. 982

At the request of Mrs. CLINTON, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. KOHL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 982, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide for integration of mental health services and mental health treatment outreach teams, and for other purposes.

S. 991

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the names of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. CARPER) and the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) were added as cosponsors of S. 991, a bill to establish the Senator Paul Simon Study Abroad Foundation under the authorities of the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961.

S. 1018

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1018, a bill to address security risks posed by global climate change and for other purposes.

S. 1040

At the request of Mr. SHELBY, the name of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAIG) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1040, a bill to repeal the current Internal Revenue Code and replace it with a flat tax, thereby guaranteeing economic growth and greater fairness for all Americans.

S. 1055

At the request of Mr. BIDEN, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. CARPER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1055, a bill to promote the future

of the American automobile industry, and for other purposes.

S. 1085

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. SNOWE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1085, a bill to require air carriers to publish customer service data and flight delay history.

S. 1092

At the request of Mr. HAGEL, the names of the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. INOUYE) and the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. DOMENICI) were added as cosponsors of S. 1092, a bill to temporarily increase the number of visas which may be issued to certain highly skilled workers.

S. 1114

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Ms. MIKULSKI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1114, a bill to reiterate the exclusivity of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978 as the sole authority to permit the conduct of electronic surveillance, to modernize surveillance authorities, and for other purposes.

S. CON. RES. 22

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. INOUYE) was added as a cosponsor of S. Con. Res. 22, a concurrent resolution expressing the sense of the Congress that the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee should recommend to the Postmaster General that a commemorative postage stamp be issued to promote public awareness of Down syndrome.

S. RES. 118

At the request of Mr. LEVIN, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 118, a resolution urging the Government of Canada to end the commercial seal hunt.

S. RES. 123

At the request of Mr. DEMINT, the names of the Senator from Nevada (Mr. ENSIGN), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN), the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI), the Senator from Florida (Mr. MARTINEZ) and the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 123, a resolution reforming the congressional earmark process.

AMENDMENT NO. 873

At the request of Mr. CHAMBLISS, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. MARTINEZ) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 873 intended to be proposed to S. 372, an original bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2007 for the intelligence and intelligence-related activities of the United States Government, the Intelligence Community Management Account, and the Central Intelligence Agency Retirement and Disability System, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 874

At the request of Mr. CHAMBLISS, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. MARTINEZ) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 874 intended to be proposed to S. 372, an original bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2007 for the intelligence and intelligence-related activities of the United States Government, the Intelligence Community Management Account, and the Central Intelligence Agency Retirement and Disability System, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 875

At the request of Mr. CHAMBLISS, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. MARTINEZ) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 875 intended to be proposed to S. 372, an original bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2007 for the intelligence and intelligence-related activities of the United States Government, the Intelligence Community Management Account, and the Central Intelligence Agency Retirement and Disability System, and for other purposes.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. KYL (for himself, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. LOTT, Mr. ENSIGN, Mr. HATCH, Mr. THOMAS, Mr. SMITH, Mr. BUNNING, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. DEMINT, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. MARTINEZ, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mr. BROWNBACK, Mr. CRAIG, Mr. ALLARD, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. ENZI, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. BURR, and Mr. COBURN):

S. 14. A bill to repeal the sunset on certain tax rates and other incentives and to repeal the individual alternative minimum tax, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, today, on behalf of the Senate Republican leadership, I am introducing the Invest in America Act, a comprehensive set of legislative proposals that are designed keep American families and the American economy on the path of continued prosperity by preventing—the largest tax increase in our Nation's history—a tax increase that is scheduled to happen in 2011 if Congress fails to extend current tax policies.

The American economy is the envy of the developed world. Our unemployment rate is just 4.4 percent, and 7.8 million new jobs have been created since mid–2003. Not only are more Americans working than ever before, but the benefits of our growing economy are broadly shared by all Americans. Real, inflation-adjusted wages rose 2.2 percent in the last 12 months—faster than the average rate of the late 1990s. This meant an extra $1,279 in the past year for the typical family with two wage earners. To keep our economy growing on this strong and sustainable path, we must avoid tax increases that could damage our economy.

America's economy has been growing at a strong and sustainable pace due in large measure to the fact that Americans are willing to work harder and be more productive in their labor, thus creating more new goods and services at lower costs. Americans will continue to be productive and contribute to our strong economy if we reject marginal tax rate increases on the income they earn. Studies have shown that people really do work more if the tax imposed on their extra labor is relatively low. Arizona State University's distinguished economics professor, Dr. Edward Prescott, won a Nobel Prize in economics for research that proved this theory.

It's interesting that the big investment bank, Goldman Sachs, studied what would happen if taxes increase across-the-board, as is scheduled to happen in 2011 when the various tax rates and other provisions enacted since 2001 expire. The short answer is an immediate recession—a recession that would not be avoided even if the Federal Reserve acted to cut interest rates. This study demonstrates very clearly why Congress cannot allow this tax hike to happen.

The President proposed in his fiscal year 2008 budget to make the tax rates and many other tax incentives enacted since 2001 permanent. In marked contrast, Democrats have produced budget resolutions in both the House and the Senate that assume all of these tax policies will expire and taxes will increase dramatically for virtually every American. In fact, the average family will see its taxes increase by about $3,675 if the Democrats are successful in canceling the tax relief. Today, Senate Republicans are going on the record in support of making these important tax policies permanent and in opposition to plans by Democrats to allow these tax increases to occur.

Our legislation underscores our commitment to American families and to a strong American economy by preventing the largest tax increase in American history. We believe that American families pay enough in taxes—indeed, revenues are running above historical levels. The Invest in America Act makes all of the current-law tax rates permanent so that no American family faces an automatic tax hike in 2011. I want to underscore that Republicans believe that no American family should face a tax increase—not young people just entering the job market and other lower-income Americans who are benefiting so substantially from the 10 percent bracket; not middle-income families; and not more successful Americans, including the almost 80 percent of taxpayers in the top bracket who report small business income.

Our legislation also invests in American families by making the $1,OOO-per-child tax credit, the marriage penalty relief, and the other components of the Economic Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation Act—EGTRRA—of 2001 permanent. American moms and dads face an enormous and unexpected reduction in the child tax credit in 2011,

when the child tax credit is scheduled to be cut in half. Republicans know that the child tax credit helps countless parents offset some of the costs associated with raising their children, and we know that reducing the credit by 50 percent will be a terrible blow to many families. That's why Republicans support making the current $1,000 per-child tax credit permanent.

Married couples will face an unwelcome surprise when the marriage penalty relief expires. The marriage penalty relief the Republicans enacted is aimed squarely at middle-income families because the relief is only provided for the standard deduction and the 15-percent bracket. Republicans believe there is no reason a married couple should face a higher tax burden than they would as two single taxpayers, and so we propose to invest in American families by making the marriage penalty relief permanent.

The Invest in America Act underscores our commitment to investing in America's future by making the important education-related tax benefits enacted in recent years permanent. This will help countless middle-income Americans afford higher education costs. Our legislation invests in America's future by extending the tuition deduction, extending the modifications to Coverdell education savings accounts, extending certain provisions for the student loan interest deduction, and extending the exclusion for employer-provided educational assistance. We also propose to permanently extend the $250 deduction for expenses of elementary and secondary school teachers.

Republicans also believe that parents ought to be able to pass on the fruits of their labor to their children without the Federal death tax confiscating half of their estate, above a small exemption amount. The death tax hits family businesses and family farms and ranches the hardest because the owners are often not wealthy families, but rather have most of their assets tied up in the value of the business or the value of the land. And while the death tax hurts families, it also hurts our economy if it forces family businesses to close down, eliminating good-paying jobs in the process. Under current law, the death tax is repealed in 2010, but springs back to life in 2011, when more than 131,000 families will have to file estate tax returns in that year alone. Americans pay taxes throughout their lives, and Republicans believe they should not have more than half of their assets taken in taxes at death too, so the Invest in America Act makes repeal of the death tax permanent.

The Invest in America Act goes beyond the 2001 and 2003 tax relief laws and also repeals—once and for all—the individual Alternative Minimum Tax (AMT). If you go by rhetoric alone, there is overwhelming bipartisan support in Congress for repealing the AMT. But, American taxpayers want action. The problems we have encountered from the AMT demonstrate what happens when Congress tries to target a tax specifically at the ''wealthy''—we almost always end up hitting the broad swath of middle-income families. The AMT was never intended to hit middle-income taxpayers, and Congress ought to repeal it before it imposes unnecessary and unexpected taxes on more and more families.

Republicans understand that, in addition to not raising taxes on families, we cannot take our strong and dynamic economy for granted; we believe we must invest in American competitiveness. While our legislation should not be viewed as a comprehensive approach to improving American competitiveness, we believe a necessary first step is to prevent tax increases that will surely hurt America's competitive position in the world economy. Specifically, the Invest in America Act makes permanent the current tax rates for capital gains and dividends; it makes the increased expensing amounts available for small businesses permanent; and it makes permanent the newly-enhanced research and development tax credit.

America cannot expect to be the home for worldwide capital markets if it is hostile to American investors, so the Invest in America Act makes the existing tax rates for long-term capital gains and for qualified dividends permanent. These lower tax rates implemented in 2003 and extended in 2006 have encouraged investors of all income categories to put their money to work in the markets, generating solid returns for American investors and providing much needed capital for American businesses to grow and create new jobs. It has been 4 years since these lower rates were enacted-long enough for us to determine once and for all that lower rates really do encourage increased economic activity.

Growth since the 2003 tax relief has averaged more than 3.5 percent, while it averaged just 1.3 percent from the first quarter of 2001 through the second quarter of 2003. The Dow Jones Industrial Average has risen by 40 percent since the lower investment tax rates were enacted. The average 401(k) balance has risen by about 65 percent since 2003. All of this investment activity makes it easier for entrepreneurs and businesses to raise funds to expand and grow their businesses, create more jobs, and improve standards of living around the country.

It's interesting to note that, while the conventional wisdom is that these lower investment tax rates only benefit ''the rich,'' half of all Americans own shares of stock, either on their own or in their retirement savings. In fact, most of the Americans who are benefiting from these lower rates are middle-income taxpayers. Moreover, the current 5 percent rate, which is available for the lower-income investors and drops to zero in 2008, is a sometimes-forgotten benefit, but it is especially important to our senior citizens who rely on their investment income. According to statistics calculated by the Joint Committee on Taxation, the vast majority of elderly taxpayers who report capital gains and dividends income have incomes under $100,000.

In addition to reducing tax rates to encourage more business investment, Congress also significantly increased the amount of investment that small businesses may expense in a given year. This has helped countless small businesses expand their operations by making the purchase of new equipment more cost-effective. Unfortunately, these increased levels are only in effect through 2009. Small businesses create most new jobs in the U.S. and comprise half of our private gross domestic product, so the Invest in America Act proposes to make the enhanced small business expensing levels permanent.

While low tax rates on income and investments are essential to keeping America competitive, Republicans know that many countries around the world are specifically and aggressively working to attract some of the most high-quality jobs and economic activities available: research and development. America hinders its ability to attract and retain R&D here because the tax incentives we give to encourage R&D are not permanent law, but must be extended every year or so. This makes it very difficult for companies to commit to large-scale R&D investments in the U.S., when other countries are offering permanent or longer-term tax incentives. To ensure that America remains the most attractive place for R&D, the Invest in America Act makes the R&D tax credit permanent.

The Invest in America Act also acknowledges that the U.S. tax system imposes a costly and frustrating burden on taxpayers, with filers spending an average 30 hours to complete the typical Form 1040. Six in ten Americans opt instead to hire a professional. The billions of dollars spent each year simply complying with the tax system could be put to a much better, and more economically beneficial, use. The Invest in America Act expresses the Sense of the Senate that the Finance Committee should report tax simplification legislation by the end of the year to make the tax system fair, transparent, and efficient, without raising tax rates.

Finally, I want to address the effect all of the tax changes have had on our budget deficit and to dispute the notion that Congress must raise taxes elsewhere if we are going to make existing tax rates and incentives permanent and repeal the AMT. It is important for all Americans to know that all of the additional tax revenue flowing into the Treasury from our growing economy, hardworking Americans, and from profitable investments has caused our budget deficit to shrink below 2 percent of GDP—well below its historical average. If we stay on our current progrowth path, reject tax increases,

and impose reasonable restraints on spending growth, we will balance the budget by 2012, if not sooner.

As for the notion that Congress must ''pay for'' tax relief with tax increases, I would note that the official estimates about how much certain tax provisions will ''cost'' the Treasury are just that, estimates. And they often prove to be wrong. For example, since 2003, the Treasury has collected $133 billion more in capital gains revenue than was originally projected by the Congressional Budget Office; revenues have exceeded official CBO projections by 68 percent. Second, the concept of requiring corresponding tax increases falsely assumes that the Government is entitled to the revenue, when it really belongs to the American people. Third, revenues are running above their historical average of about 18.2 percent and are projected to continue increasing even if we make the current tax structure permanent, as we propose in the Invest in America Act. If we raise taxes in order to extend the tax policies, we will be taking even more resources out of the private sector and spending them on government programs, which will certainly damage our economy. To protect our growing economy, I believe we must ensure that revenues, as a percentage of our economy, do not rise much above their current level.

I am pleased to be the lead sponsor of this important legislation that underscores the commitment of the Senate Republican leadership to investing in American families, America's future, and American competitiveness. America's economy is growing at a strong and sustainable level, to the benefit of all American families, but this growth will not continue if we unwisely allow taxes to be increased on work, savings, and investment—the very engines of economic growth.

By Mr. REED (for himself and Mr. COCHRAN):

S. 1121. A bill to authorize the cancellation of Perkins Loans for students who perform public service as librarians in low-income schools and public libraries; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I am joined by Mr. COCHRAN in introducing important legislation, the Librarian Incentive to Boost Recruitment and Retention in Areas of Need (LIBRARIAN) Act, to support our Nation's librarians. This legislation is also being introduced in the other body by Representative BECERRA, along with Representatives GRIJALVA, EHLERS, and SHIMKUS.

Public libraries and schools across the Nation are experiencing a shortage of librarians. Approximately 25 percent of America's school libraries do not have a State certified library media specialist on staff and with more than three in five librarians becoming eligible for retirement in the next decade this shortage is anticipated to only worsen.

The LIBRARIAN Act amends the Higher Education Act to provide for Perkins loan forgiveness to individuals with master's degrees in library science who become librarians in low-income schools and public libraries. Librarians working full-time in low-income areas would qualify for up to 100 percent Perkins loan forgiveness depending on the number of years they serve.

Libraries and librarians play an essential role in our schools and communities; this legislation aims to provide the same support to librarians as other public service workers receive, including teachers working in low-income schools, Head Start staff, law enforcement officials, and nurses or medical technicians.

Today we celebrate National Library Workers Day, a day to recognize the valuable contributions made by librarians and others who work in libraries. With this legislation, we have an opportunity to encourage more individuals to pursue the field of library science and retain those skilled librarians who are already serving in our low-income schools and communities.

I was pleased that the text of this bill was included in the Higher Education Act reauthorization bill approved by the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee last Congress. I will again press for its inclusion in the reauthorization bill the Committee is currently working to develop. I urge my colleagues to join us in this endeavor by cosponsoring the LIBRARIAN Act.

I ask unanimous consent that the text of this bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 1121

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 ''Librarian Incentive to Boost Recruitment and Retention in Areas of Need Act of 2007'' or the ''LIBRARIAN Act''.

SEC. 2. LOAN CANCELLATION.

(a) AMENDMENTS.—Section 465(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1087ee(a)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (2)—

(A) by striking ''section 111(c)'' in subparagraph (A) and inserting ''section 1113(a)(5)'';

(B) by striking ''or'' at the end of subparagraph (H);

(C) by striking the period at the end of subparagraph (I) and inserting ''; or''; and

(D) by inserting after subparagraph (I) the following new subparagraph:

''(J) as a full time librarian, if the librarian has a master's degree in library science and is employed in—

''(i) an elementary school or secondary school that is eligible for assistance under title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965; or

''(ii) a public library that serves a geographic area that contains 1 or more schools eligible for assistance under title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.''; and

(2) in paragraph (3)(A)(i), by striking out ''(H), or (I)'' and inserting ''(H), (I), or (J)''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall apply with respect to any year of service that is completed after the date of enactment of this Act.

By Mr. LEVIN (for himself and Mr. COLEMAN):

S. 1124. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to simplify, modernize, and improve public notice of and access to tax lien information by providing for a national, Internet accessible, filing system for Federal tax liens, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, today is the day that millions of Americans across this country perform an important civic duty by paying their taxes. It is also a day when many Members of Congress take the time to reflect on the state of the Federal tax system and consider how we can strengthen it, simplify it, make it more fair, and, in a responsible way, ease the tax burden on our citizens.

Earlier this year, I introduced the Stop Tax Haven Abuse Act, S. 681, to strengthen our tax system. That bipartisan bill, which I introduced with my colleagues, Senators NORM COLEMAN and BARACK OBAMA, targets outrageous, offshore tax abuses that drain $100 billion each year from the U.S. Treasury at the expense of honest, hardworking American families who pay their fair share. Offshore tax abuses eat away at the foundations of our tax system, draining billions in tax revenue, diverting substantial IRS enforcement resources, and demoralizing honest taxpayers who play by the rules. S. 681 offers a host of provisions to stop offshore abuses, and I urge my colleagues to take a serious look at that legislation on this tax day. If enacted, it would make our tax system more effective, more fair, and more productive. It deserves to be enacted into law this year.

Stopping offshore tax abuse, however, is far from the only tax problem that needs to be addressed if we are to achieve a fair and cost effective tax system. So today, I am introducing with Senator COLEMAN legislation offering a cure to a completely different tax problem. The target of this legislation is better administration of Federal tax liens.

It has been 40 years since Congress made any significant changes to the laws regulating how the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) files Federal tax liens and makes them public. Right now, outdated laws are forcing the IRS to waste taxpayer dollars on an old-fashioned, inefficient, and burdensome paper tax lien filing system that should be replaced by a modernized electronic filing system capable of operating at a fraction of the cost. It is time to bring the Federal tax lien system into the 21st century. That's why I am introducing today, along with Senator COLEMAN, the Tax Lien Simplification

Act, which will simplify the process of recording tax liens at an estimated ten-year cost savings of over half a billion dollars, while at the same time improving taxpayer service by speeding up the release of liens after taxes are paid.

Tax liens are a principal way to collect payment from persons who are delinquent in paying their taxes. By law, Federal tax liens arise automatically ten days after a taxpayer's failure to pay an assessed tax. The lien automatically attaches to the taxpayer's real and personal property and remains in effect until the tax is paid. However, the tax lien is not effective against other creditors owed money by the same taxpayer, until a notice of the Federal tax lien is publicly recorded. Generally, between competing creditors, the first to file notice has priority, so the filing of tax lien notices is very important to the government and to the taxpaying public if taxes are to be collected from persons who don't pay them.

Current law requires the IRS to file public notices of Federal tax liens in State, county, or city recording offices around the country. There are currently more than 4,100 of these local recording offices, many of which have developed specific rules regulating how such liens must be formatted and filed in their jurisdictions. This patchwork system developed more by default than by plan, because those local offices were where documents affecting title to real property, judgments, and other lien and security interest documents had always been filed.

In 1966, to help the IRS comply with a proliferating set of local filing rules for Federal tax liens, Congress passed the Tax Lien Act to standardize certain practices. This act provided, for example, that liens against real estate had to be filed where the property was located, and required each State to designate a single place to file Federal tax liens applicable to personal property. Most States subsequently adopted a version of the Uniform Tax Lien Filing Act, enabling the IRS to file a notice of tax lien in each locality where the taxpayer's real estate is located, and a single notice where the taxpayer resides to reach any personal property. For corporations, States typically require the IRS to file a notice to attach real estate in each locality where the real estate is located, and a separate notice, usually at the State level, to attach other types of property. There are often additional rules for trusts and partnerships. The end result of the law was to reduce some but not all of the multiple sets of rules regulating the local filing of Federal tax liens.

In addition, in most cases, the IRS continued to have to physically file the tax lien in the appropriate local recording office. In most cases, that filing is accomplished by mail. Some jurisdictions also allow electronic filings, but those jurisdictions are few and far between. The same is true if a lien has to be corrected, or a related certificate of discharge, subordination, or nonattachment needs to be filed, or when a tax liability has been resolved and the IRS wants to release a lien. Each usually requires a paper filing in one or more local recording offices. If a paper filing is lost or misplaced, the IRS often has to send an employee in person to deal with the problem, adding travel costs to other administrative expenses.

The paper filing system imposes similar burdens on other persons dealing with the tax lien system. Any person who is the subject of a tax lien, for example, or who is a creditor trying to locate a tax lien, is required to make a physical trip to one or more local recording offices to search the documents and see if a lien has been filed. Currently, there is no central database of locally filed tax liens that can be accessed by any member of the public or by any taxpayer that is the subject of a federal tax lien. Not even IRS personnel have access to such a tax lien database. It does not exist.

The result is an inefficient, costly, and burdensome paper filing system that can and should be completely revamped. Businesses across the country learned long ago that electronic filing systems outperform paper; they save personnel costs, material costs, time, and client frustration. Government agencies have learned the same thing as they have moved to electronic databases and recordkeeping, including systems made available to the public on the Internet. Among the many examples of government-sponsored, Internet-based systems currently in operation are the contractor registry operated by the General Services Administration to allow persons to register to bid on federal contracts, the license registry operated by the Federal Communications Commission to allow the public to search radio licenses, and the registry operated by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office to allow the public to search currently registered patents and trademarks. Each of these systems has saved taxpayer money, while improving service to the public.

Just as government agencies gave up the horse and buggy for the automobile, it is time for the IRS to move from a decentralized, paper-based tax lien filing system to an electronic national tax lien registry. But the IRS' hands are tied, until the Congress changes the laws holding back modernization of the federal tax lien filing system.

The bill we are introducing today would make the changes necessary to enable the IRS to take immediate steps to simplify and modernize the Federal tax lien filing system. The operative provisions would require the IRS to create a national registry for the filing of tax lien notices as an electronic database that is Internet accessible and searchable by the public at no cost. It would mandate the use of this system in place of the existing system of local filings. It would establish the priority of Federal tax liens according to the date and time that the relevant notice was filed in the national registry, in the same way that priorities are currently established from the date and time of filing in local recording offices. The bill would also shorten the time allowed to release a tax lien, after the related tax liability has been resolved, from 30 days to 10 days.

To establish this new electronic filing system, the bill would give the Treasury Secretary express authority to issue regulations or other guidance governing the establishment and maintenance of the registry. Among other obligations, Treasury would be required to ensure that the registry was secure and prevent data tampering. In addition, prior to the implementation of the national registry, the Treasury Secretary would be required to review the information currently included in public tax lien filings to determine whether any of that information should be excluded or protected from disclosure on the Internet. For example, the Treasury Secretary would be expected to prevent the disclosure of social security numbers that are currently included in many public tax lien filings, but if disclosed on the Internet, could facilitate identity theft. While such identifying information could continue to be included in a tax lien filing to ensure that the filing is directed toward the correct person, the registry could be constructed to prevent such information from being disclosed publicly and to instead provide such information only upon request from appropriate persons involved in the enforcement of the tax lien or collection of the tax debt. By requiring this information review prior to implementing the national tax lien registry, the bill is expected to provide greater protection of some taxpayer information than occurs in current tax lien filings.

The bill would require the Treasury Secretary to establish a functioning tax lien registry by January 1, 2009, but would also allow the IRS to continue to use the existing paper-based tax lien filing system, in parallel with the new system, for an appropriate period to ensure a smooth transition. The IRS has indicated that it would be able to establish an electronic tax lien filing system within the specified time period.

Moving to a centralized, electronic tax lien filing system, an Internet-based National Registry of tax liens, would accomplish at least three objectives. It would save taxpayer dollars, speed the process for filing and releasing tax liens, and simplify the process for researching Federal tax liens for taxpayers and creditors.

The IRS estimates that moving from a paper-based, locally filed tax lien system to an Internet-based, Federal tax lien filing system would save about $570 million over 10 years. That's half a billion dollars in cost savings. These

savings would come from the elimination of State filing fees, IRS personnel costs, travel costs related to local filing problems, and the cost of lost taxes whenever the IRS makes an error or a tax lien filing is misplaced or delayed. Filing fees, for example, vary widely from state to state, but typically cost at least $10 per filing, and in some States cost as much as $150. If a taxpayer has real estate in multiple jurisdictions, those costs multiply. Personnel costs include the IRS service center staff that is currently charged with filing tax liens nationwide and complying with the myriad filing rules in effect in the 4,100 recording offices across the country. Additional anticipated savings would come from reduced mailing and travel costs.

Electronic filing would not only save money, it would improve taxpayer service. Taxpayers who are the subject of a tax lien filing, for example, would benefit from a centralized registry in several ways. First, taxpayers would be able to review their liens as soon as they are filed online, without having to make a physical trip to one or more local recording offices. Second, taxpayers would have an easy way to look up their liens on multiple occasions, identify any problems, and correct any errors. Third, once the underlying tax liability was resolved, the IRS would be required to release the tax lien in 10 days, instead of the 30 days allowed under current law. The longer 30-day period is necessitated by the current complexities associated with filing a paper lien in one or more local offices, complexities that would be eliminated by the establishment of a centralized, electronic registry.

Creditors who need to research Federal tax liens would also benefit from a centralized, electronic registry. Lenders, security holders and others, for example, would be able to use a simplified search process that could take place online and would not require physical trips to multiple locations. Simplifying the search process would also provide greater certainty that all tax liens were found. The ability to research Federal tax liens remotely and instantaneously should be of particular benefit to larger lenders and to creditors of taxpayers with widely distributed assets.

Federal tax liens are not a topic that normally excites the public's interest. Sound tax administration, however, requires attention to administrative as well as enforcement concerns. Federal law is currently impeding development of a more efficient, cost effective tax lien filing system. Amending the law as indicated in the Tax Lien Simplification Act to streamline the tax lien filing system, moving it from a paper-based to an electronic-based system, would not only advance the more efficient, cost-effective tax system we all want, it would also save half a billion dollars in taxpayer money. At the same time, it would make the system work better for individual taxpayers by reducing the possibility for mistakes and speeding up the release of liens for taxpayers who have paid. Modernizing our tax lien filing system makes sense in every way. I urge my colleagues to join Senator COLEMAN and myself in enacting this bill into law this year.

I ask unanimous consent to print in the RECORD following these remarks a section-by-section analysis of the bill.

There being no objection, the summary was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

The Tax Lien Simplification Act introduced by Senators Levin and Coleman contains the following provisions.

SECTION 1

The short title of the bill is the ''Tax Lien Simplification Act.''

SECTION 2

Section 2 contains the findings and purpose of the bill. It finds that the current federal tax lien filing system is inefficient, burdensome, and expensive, and that current technology permits the creation of an electronic system that would be more efficient, more timely, less burdensome, and less expensive. It states that the purpose of the bill is to simplify and modernize the tax lien filing process, to improve public access to tax lien information, and to save taxpayer dollars by replacing the current decentralized system of local tax lien filings with a centralized, nationwide, Internet accessible, and fully searchable tax lien filing system.

SECTION 3

Section 3 contains the operative provisions of the bill.

Subsection (a) would amend section 6323(f) of title 26 by eliminating the provisions in current law directing tax liens to be filed in state and local recording offices, and by authorizing the filing of federal tax lien notices in a national tax lien registry to be established under a new subsection 6323(k). It would deem such notices, and any related certificate of release, discharge, subordination, or nonattachment of a lien, to be effective for purpose of determining the relative priority of a federal tax lien. It would direct the Secretary of the Treasury to prescribe the form and content of the tax lien notices to be filed on the registry. Filings of tax lien notices and related documents would become effective from the date and time of recording in the national tax lien registry, just as they are now from the date and time of a local filing.

Subsection (b) would provide that if an existing tax lien notice must be re-filed, then the re-filing should be made in the national tax lien registry.

Subsection (c) would require certificates of release, discharge, subordination, and nonattachment of a tax lien to be filed in the national tax lien registry. It would also reduce from 30 days to 10 days the time allotted for the release of a tax lien after the underlying tax liability has been resolved. It would make various conforming amendments in the provisions related to federal tax liens.

Subsection (d)(1) would amend section 6323 of title 26 by establishing a National Registry of federal tax liens and related documents. It would require this National Registry to be established and maintained by the Secretary of the Treasury, and made accessible to and searchable by the public through the Internet at no cost. It would require the registry to identify the taxpayer to whom the tax lien applies and reflect the date and time the notice of lien was filed. It would require the registry to be searchable by, at a minimum, taxpayer name and address, the type of tax, the tax period, and when Treasury determines it is feasible, by the affected property.

Subsection (d)(2) would require Treasury to issue regulations or other guidance for the maintenance and use of the registry, and to secure the registry and prevent data tampering. Prior to the implementation of the registry, the Treasury Secretary would be required to review the information currently provided in public tax lien filings to determine whether any of that information should be excluded or protected from public viewing in the National Registry.

Subsection (e) would establish a transition rule for the move from the existing paper-based tax lien filing system to the National Registry. It would authorize the Treasury Secretary to issue regulations allowing for the continued filing of notices in state and local offices for ''an appropriate period to permit an orderly transition'' to the National Registry.

Subsection (f) would require Treasury to make the National Registry operational as of January 1, 2009, and make the bill applicable to tax lien notices filed after December 31, 2008.

By Mr. DODD (for himself, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. STEVENS, Mr. BINGAMAN, Mr. KERRY, and Mr. ROCKEFELLER):

S. 1128. A bill to amend the National and Community Service Act of 1990 to establish a Summer of Service State grant program, a Summer of Service national direct grant program, and related national activities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce, along with Senators COCHRAN, KENNEDY, STEVENS, BINGAMAN, KERRY and ROCKEFELLER the Summer of Service Act of 2007. This bill offers middle school students the chance to spend a summer in service to their communities as they transition into high school.

The Summer of Service Act would create a competitive grant program that would enable States and localities to offer middle school students an opportunity to participate in a structured community service program over the summer months. It would employ service-learning to teach civic participation skills, help young people see themselves as resources to their communities, expand educational opportunities and discourage ''summer academic slide.'' Providing tangible benefits to their communities, Summer of Service projects would direct grantees to work on unmet human, educational, environmental and public safety needs and encourage all youth, regardless of age, income, or disability, to engage in community service. The program would also grant participants with an educational award of up to $500 which can later be used to pay for college.

Volunteerism not only brings support and services to communities in need, it also provides significant benefits to the students who participate. When young people participate in service activities they feel better able to control their lives in a positive way, avoiding risk

behaviors, strengthening their community connections and become more engaged in their studies. When service is tied to what students are learning in school, they often make gains on achievement tests, complete their homework more often, and increase their grade point average. Students who engage in service learning also improve their communication skills, gain increased awareness of career possibilities, and develop more positive workplace attitudes, setting the foundation for their place as America's future leaders. Studies also show that students who participate in community service are more likely to graduate high school and demonstrate interest in going to college.

We often hear today of the tremendous pressures our young people face at home, in school and in the afterschool hours. Summer of Service provides young people with the chance to be a positive change in their communities. For this reason, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting the Summer of Service Act of 2007. I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 1128

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 ''Summer of Service Act of 2007''.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSES.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

(1) Throughout the United States, there are pressing unmet human, educational, environmental and public safety needs.

(2) Americans desire to affirm common responsibilities and shared values, and join together in positive experiences, that transcend race, religion, gender, age, disability, region, income, and education.

(3) Americans of all ages can improve their communities and become better citizens through service to their communities.

(4) When youth participate in service activities and see that they are able to improve the lives of others, the youth feel better able to control their own lives in a positive way, avoiding risky behaviors, strengthening their community connections, and becoming more engaged in their own education.

(5) When youth service is tied to learning objectives, that service is shown to decrease alienation and behavior problems, and increase knowledge of community needs, commitment to an ethic of service, and understanding of politics and morality.

(6) When service is tied to what students are learning in school, the students make gains on achievement tests, complete their homework more often, and increase their grade point averages.

(7) Students who engage in service-learning improve their communication skills, increase their awareness of career possibilities, have a deeper understanding of social and economic issues that face the United States, and develop more positive workplace attitudes, preparing them to take their places as future leaders of the United States.

(8) In a national poll, more than 80 percent of parents said that their child would benefit from an after school program that offered community service and 95 percent of teens agreed that is important to volunteer time to community efforts.

(b) PURPOSE.—The purposes of this Act are to—

(1) offer youth the chance to spend a summer in service to their communities as a rite of passage before high school;

(2) teach civic participation skills to youth and help youth see themselves as resources and leaders for their communities;

(3) expand educational opportunities and discourage ''summer slide'' by engaging youth in summer service-learning opportunities;

(4) encourage youth, regardless of age, income, or disability, to engage in community service;

(5) provide tangible benefits to the communities in which Summer of Service programs are performed; and

(6) enhance the social-emotional development of youth of all backgrounds.

SEC. 3. SUMMER OF SERVICE PROGRAMS.

Title I of the National and Community Service Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12511 et seq.) is amended—

(1) by redesignating subtitles F, G, H, and I as subtitles G, H, I, and J, respectively;

(2) by redesignating sections 160 through 166 as sections 159A through 159G, respectively; and

(3) by inserting after subtitle E the following:

"Subtitle F—Summer of Service Programs

"SEC. 161. DEFINITIONS.

''In this subtitle:

''(1) EDUCATIONAL AWARD.—The term 'educational award' means an award disbursed under section 162B(d) or 163B(d).

''(2) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—The term 'eligible entity' means a public or private nonprofit organization, an institution of higher education, a local educational agency, a public elementary school or public secondary school, or a consortium of 2 or more of the entities described in this paragraph.

''(3) ELIGIBLE YOUTH.—The term 'eligible youth' means a youth who will be enrolled in the sixth, seventh, eighth, or ninth grade at the end of the summer for which the youth would participate in community service under this subtitle.

"PART I—SUMMER OF SERVICE STATE GRANT PROGRAM

"SEC. 162. GRANTS TO STATES.

''(a) GRANTS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Chief Executive Officer shall award grants on a competitive basis to States, to enable the State Commissions—

''(A) to carry out State-level activities under subsection (d); and

''(B) to award subgrants on a competitive basis under section 162A to eligible entities to pay for the Federal share of the cost of carrying out community service projects.

''(2) FUNDS FOR EDUCATIONAL AWARDS.—The Chief Executive Officer shall decide whether funds appropriated to carry out this part and available for educational awards (referred to in this part as 'educational award funds') shall be—

''(A) included in the funds for such grants to States and subgrants to eligible entities; or

''(B) reserved by the Chief Executive Officer, deposited in the National Service Trust for educational awards, and disbursed according to paragraphs (1) and (3) of section 162B(d).

''(3) PERIODS OF GRANTS.—The Chief Executive Officer shall award the grants for periods of 3 years.

''(4) AMOUNTS OF GRANTS.—The Chief Executive Officer shall award such a grant to a State for a program in a sum equal to—

''(A) the amount obtained by multiplying $500 and the number of youth who will participate in the program (to be used for program expenses);

''(B) unless the Chief Executive Officer decides to deposit funds for educational awards in the National Service Trust, as described in paragraph (2)(B), an additional amount equal to the amount described in subparagraph (A) (to be used for educational awards); and

''(C) an amount sufficient to provide for the reservation for State-level activities described in subsection (d).

''(b) STATE APPLICATION.—To be eligible to receive a grant under this section, a State shall submit an application to the Chief Executive Officer at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Chief Executive Officer may require, including information that—

''(1) designates the State Commission as the agency responsible for the administration and supervision of the community service program carried out under this part in the State;

''(2) describes how the State Commission will use funds received under this part, including funds reserved for State-level activities under subsection (d);

''(3) describes the procedures and criteria the State Commission will use for reviewing applications and awarding subgrants on a competitive basis under section 162A to eligible entities for projects, including how the State Commission will give priority to an entity that—

''(A) offers a quality plan for or has an established track record of carrying out the activities described in the entity's application;

''(B) has a leadership position in the community from which the youth participating in the project described in the application will be drawn;

''(C) proposes a project that focuses on service by the participants during the transition year before high school;

''(D) plans to ensure that at least 50 percent of the participants are low-income eligible youth;

''(E) proposes a project that encourages or enables youth to continue participating in community service throughout the school year;

''(F) plans to involve the participants in the design and operation of the project, including involving the participants in conducting a needs-based assessment of community needs;

''(G) proposes a project that involves youth of different ages, races, sexes, ethnic groups, religions, disability categories, or economic backgrounds serving together; and

''(H) proposes a project that provides high quality service-learning experiences;

''(4) describes the steps the State Commission will take, including the provision of ongoing technical assistance described in subsection (d)(2) and training, to ensure that projects funded under section 162A will implement effective strategies; and

''(5) describes how the State Commission will evaluate the projects, which shall include, at a minimum—

''(A) a description of the objectives and benchmarks that will be used to evaluate the projects; and

''(B) a description of how the State Commission will disseminate the results of the evaluations, as described in subsection (d)(4)(C).

''(c) APPLICANT REVIEW.—

''(1) SELECTION CRITERIA.—The Chief Executive Officer shall evaluate applications for grants under this section based on the quality, innovation, replicability, and sustainability of the State programs proposed by the applicants.

''(2) REVIEW PANELS.—The Chief Executive Officer shall employ the review panels established under section 165A in reviewing the applications.

''(3) NOTIFICATION OF APPLICANTS.—If the Chief Executive Officer rejects an application submitted under this section, the Chief Executive Officer shall promptly notify the applicant of the reasons for the rejection of the application.

''(4) RESUBMISSION AND RECONSIDERATION.—The Chief Executive Officer shall provide an applicant notified of rejection with a reasonable opportunity to revise and resubmit the application. At the request of the applicant, the Chief Executive Officer shall provide technical assistance to the applicant as part of the resubmission process. The Chief Executive Officer shall promptly reconsider an application resubmitted under this paragraph.

''(d) STATE-LEVEL ACTIVITIES.—A State that receives a grant under this section may reserve up to 5 percent of the grant funds for State-level activities, which may include—

''(1) hiring staff to administer the program carried out under this part in the State;

''(2) providing technical assistance, including technical assistance concerning the professional development and training of personnel, to eligible entities that receive subgrants under section 162A;

''(3) conducting outreach and dissemination of program-related information to ensure the broadest possible involvement of eligible entities and local eligible youth in the program carried out under this part; and

''(4)(A) conducting an evaluation of the projects carried out by eligible entities under this part;

''(B) using the results of the evaluation to collect and compile information on best practices and models for such projects; and

''(C) disseminating widely the results of the evaluation.

''SEC. 162A. SUBGRANTS TO ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.

''(a) SUBGRANTS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—A State that receives a grant under section 162 shall use the grant funds to award subgrants on a competitive basis to eligible entities to pay for the Federal share of the cost of carrying out community service projects.

''(2) PERIODS OF SUBGRANTS.—The State shall award the subgrants for periods of 3 years.

''(3) AMOUNTS OF SUBGRANTS.—The State shall award such a subgrant to an eligible entity for a project in a sum equal to—

''(A) the amount obtained by multiplying $500 and the number of youth who will participate in the project (to be used for project expenses); and

''(B) unless the Chief Executive Officer decides to deposit funds for educational awards in the National Service Trust, as described in section 162(a)(2)(B), an additional amount equal to the amount described in subparagraph (A) (to be used for educational awards).

''(b) APPLICATIONS.—To be eligible to receive a subgrant under this section for a project, an entity shall submit an application to the State Commission at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the State Commission may require, including information that—

''(1) designates the community in which the entity will carry out the project, which community may be the service area of an elementary school or secondary school, a school district, a city, town, village, or other locality, a county, the area in which a public housing project is located, a neighborhood, or another geographically or politically designated area;

''(2) describes the manner in which the entity will—

''(A) engage a substantial portion of the youth in the designated community;

''(B) engage a variety of entities and individuals, such as youth organizations, elementary schools or secondary schools, elected officials, organizations offering summer camps, civic groups, nonprofit organizations, and other entities within the designated community to offer a variety of summer service opportunities as part of the project;

''(C) ensure that the youth participating in the project engage in service-learning;

''(D) engage as volunteers in the project business, civic, or community organizations or individuals, which may include older individuals, volunteers in the National Senior Volunteer Corps established under title II of the Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973 (42 U.S.C. 5000 et seq.), participants in the school-based and community-based service-learning programs carried out under parts I and II of subtitle B, participants in the AmeriCorps program carried out under subtitle C, or students enrolled in secondary schools or institutions of higher education;

''(E) ensure that youth participating in the project provide at least 100 hours of community service for the project;

''(F) recruit eligible youth to participate in the project;

''(G) recruit service sponsors for community service activities carried out through the project, if the eligible entity intends to enter into an arrangement with such sponsors to provide project placements for the youth;

''(H) promote leadership development and build an ethic of civic responsibility among the youth;

''(I) provide team-oriented, adult-supervised experiences through the project;

''(J) conduct opening and closing ceremonies honoring participants in the project;

''(K) involve youth who are participating in the project in the design and planning of the project; and

''(L) provide training, which may include life skills, financial education, and employment training, in addition to training concerning the specific community service to be provided through the project, for the youth; and

''(3)(A) specifies project outcome objectives relating to youth development or education achievement, community strengthening, and community improvement;

''(B) describes how the eligible entity will establish annual benchmarks for the objectives, and annually conduct an evaluation to measure progress toward the benchmarks; and

''(C) provides an assurance that the eligible entity will annually make the results of such evaluation available to the State.

''(c) CONTINUED ELIGIBILITY.—To be eligible to receive funds under this section for a second or subsequent year of a subgrant period, an entity shall demonstrate that the entity has met the annual benchmarks for the objectives described in subsection (b)(3).

''(d) SELECTION OF SUBGRANT RECIPIENTS.—In awarding subgrants under this section, the State shall ensure that projects are funded in a variety of geographic areas, including urban and rural areas.

''SEC. 162B. SUMMER OF SERVICE PROJECTS.

''(a) USE OF FUNDS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—An eligible entity that receives a subgrant under section 162A shall use the subgrant funds to carry out a community service project.

''(2) SPECIFIC USES.—The eligible entity may use the subgrant funds to pay for—

''(A) hiring staff to administer the project;

''(B) developing or acquiring service-learning curricula for the project, to be integrated into academic programs, including making modifications for students who are individuals with disabilities and students with limited English proficiency;

''(C) forming local partnerships to develop and offer a variety of service-learning programs for local youth participating in the project;

''(D) establishing benchmarks, conducting evaluations, and making evaluation results available, as described in subparagraphs (B) and (C) of section 162A(b)(3);

''(E) conducting outreach and dissemination of program-related information to ensure the broadest possible involvement of local eligible youth and community partners in the project;

''(F) conducting ceremonies as described in section 162A(b)(2)(J);

''(G) carrying out basic implementation of the community service project; and

''(H) carrying out planning activities, during an initial 6 to 9 months of the subgrant period.

''(3) NON-FEDERAL SHARE.—An eligible entity that receives a subgrant under section 162A shall provide the non-Federal share of the costs described in section 162A(a)(1) from private or public sources other than the subgrant funds. The sources may include fees charged to the parents of the youth participating in the community service project involved and determined on a sliding scale based on income.

''(b) SERVICE PROJECTS.—

''(1) ELIGIBLE SERVICE CATEGORIES.—The eligible entity may use the subgrant funds to carry out a community service project to meet unmet human, educational, environmental, or public safety needs.

''(2) INELIGIBLE SERVICE CATEGORIES.—The eligible entity may not use the subgrant funds to carry out a service project in which participants perform service described in section 132(a).

''(c) PERIOD OF SERVICE PROJECTS.—The eligible entity—

''(1) shall carry out the community service project funded under section 162A during a period, the majority of which occurs in the months of June, July, and August; and

''(2) may carry out the project in conjunction with a related after school or in-school service-learning project operated during the remaining months of the year.

''(d) EDUCATIONAL AWARD.—

''(1) ELIGIBILITY.—Each eligible youth who provides at least 100 hours of community service for a project carried out under this part shall be eligible to receive an educational award of not more than $500. An eligible youth may participate in more than 1 such project but shall not receive in excess of $1,000 in total for such participation.

''(2) DISBURSEMENTS BY ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—If the Chief Executive Officer decides under section 162(a)(2)(A) to include educational award funds in subgrants under this part, the eligible entity carrying out the project shall—

''(A) disburse an educational award described in paragraph (1) in accordance with regulations issued by the Chief Executive Officer, which—

''(i) may permit disbursal of the award to the parents of the youth that have established a qualified tuition program account under section 529 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, for deposit into the account; but

''(ii) shall not otherwise permit disbursal of the award to the parents; or

''(B) enter into a contract with a private sector organization to hold the educational award funds and disburse the educational award as described in subparagraph (A).

''(3) DISBURSEMENTS BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER.—If the Chief Executive Officer decides under section 162(a)(2)(B) to reserve

educational award funds, the Chief Executive Officer shall disburse the educational award as described in paragraph (2)(A).

"SEC. 162C. SUPPLEMENTAL GRANTS.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—The Chief Executive Officer may award a supplemental grant to an eligible entity that demonstrates the matters described in subsection (b), to assist the entity in carrying out a community service project in accordance with the requirements of this part, as determined appropriate by the Chief Executive Officer.

''(b) APPLICATION.—To be eligible to receive a supplemental grant under subsection (a), an entity shall submit an application to the Chief Executive Officer, at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Chief Executive Officer may require, including information demonstrating—

''(1) that the entity received a subgrant under section 162A for a community service project; and

''(2) that the entity would be unable to carry out the project without substantial hardship unless the entity received a supplemental grant under subsection (a).

''(c) AMOUNT OF GRANT.—The Chief Executive Officer shall award such a grant to an eligible entity for the project in the amount obtained by multiplying $250 and the number of youth who will participate in the project (to be used for project expenses).

"SEC. 162D. INDIAN TRIBES AND TERRITORIES.

''From the funds made available to carry out this part under section 165(b)(2)(A) for any fiscal year, the Chief Executive Officer shall reserve an amount of not more than 3 percent for payments to Indian tribes, the United States Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, to be used in accordance with the requirements of this part, as determined appropriate by the Chief Executive Officer.

"PART II—SUMMER OF SERVICE NATIONAL DIRECT GRANT PROGRAM

"SEC. 163. NATIONAL DIRECT GRANTS.

''(a) GRANTS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Chief Executive Officer shall award grants on a competitive basis to public or private organizations (referred to individually in this part as an 'organization')—

''(A) to carry out quality assurance activities under subsection (d); and

''(B) to pay for the Federal share of the cost of carrying out a community service program—

''(i) in a State where the State Commission does not apply for funding under part I; or

''(ii) in multiple States.

''(2) FUNDS FOR EDUCATIONAL AWARDS.—The Chief Executive Officer shall decide whether funds appropriated to carry out this part and available for educational awards (referred to in this part as 'educational award funds') shall be—

''(A) included in the funds for such grants to organizations and any subgrants to local providers; or

''(B) reserved by the Chief Executive Officer, deposited in the National Service Trust for educational awards, and disbursed according to paragraphs (1) and (3) of section 163B(d).

''(3) PERIODS OF GRANTS.—The Chief Executive Officer shall award the grants for periods of 3 years.

''(4) AMOUNTS OF GRANTS.—The Chief Executive Officer shall award such a grant to an organization for a program in a sum equal to—

''(A) the amount obtained by multiplying $500 and the number of youth who will participate in the program (to be used for program expenses);

''(B) unless the Chief Executive Officer decides to deposit funds for educational awards in the National Service Trust, as described in paragraph (2)(B), an additional amount equal to the amount described in subparagraph (A) (to be used for educational awards); and

''(C) an amount sufficient to provide for the reservation for quality assurance activities described in subsection (d).

''(b) NATIONAL DIRECT APPLICATIONS.—To be eligible to receive a grant under this section for a community service program, an organization shall submit an application to the Chief Executive Officer at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Chief Executive Officer may require, including information that—

''(1) describes how the organization will use funds received under this part, including funds reserved for quality assurance activities under subsection (d);

''(2)(A) describes the procedures and criteria the organization will use for reviewing applications and awarding subgrants on a competitive basis under section 163A to local providers for projects, including how the organization will give priority to a provider that, with respect to each project described in the application—

''(i) offers a quality plan for or has an established track record of carrying out the activities described in the provider's application;

''(ii) has a leadership position in the community from which the youth participating in the project will be drawn;

''(iii) proposes a project that focuses on service by the participants during the transition year before high school;

''(iv) plans to ensure that at least 50 percent of the participants are low-income eligible youth;

''(v) proposes a project that encourages or enables youth to continue participating in community service throughout the school year;

''(vi) plans to involve the participants in the design and operation of the project, including involving the participants in conducting a needs-based assessment of community needs;

''(vii) proposes a project that involves youth of different ages, races, sexes, ethnic groups, religions, disability categories, or economic backgrounds serving together; and

''(viii) proposes a project that provides high quality service-learning experiences; or

''(B) if the organization will carry out the community service program directly, demonstrates that the organization meets the requirements of clauses (i) through (viii) of subparagraph (A) with respect to each project described in the application;

''(3) describes the steps the organization will take, including the provision of ongoing technical assistance described in subsection (d)(2)) and training, to ensure that projects funded under this part will implement effective strategies; and

''(4) describes how the organization will evaluate the projects funded under this part, which shall include, at a minimum—

''(A) a description of the objectives and benchmarks that will be used to evaluate the projects; and

''(B) a description of how the organization will disseminate widely the results of the evaluations, as described in subsection (d)(3)(C).

''(c) APPLICANT REVIEW.—

''(1) SELECTION CRITERIA.—The Chief Executive Officer shall evaluate applications for grants under this section based on the quality, innovation, replicability, and sustainability of the programs proposed by the applicants.

''(2) REVIEW PANELS.—The Chief Executive Officer shall employ the review panels established under section 165A in reviewing the applications.

''(3) NOTIFICATION OF APPLICANTS.—If the Chief Executive Officer rejects an application submitted under this section, the Chief Executive Officer shall promptly notify the applicant of the reasons for the rejection of the application.

''(4) RESUBMISSION AND RECONSIDERATION.—The Chief Executive Officer shall provide an applicant notified of rejection with a reasonable opportunity to revise and resubmit the application. At the request of the applicant, the Chief Executive Officer shall provide technical assistance to the applicant as part of the resubmission process. The Chief Executive Officer shall promptly reconsider an application resubmitted under this paragraph.

''(d) QUALITY ASSURANCE ACTIVITIES.—An organization that receives a grant under this section may reserve up to 5 percent of the grant funds for quality assurance activities, which may include—

''(1) hiring staff to administer the program carried out under this part by the organization;

''(2) providing technical assistance, including technical assistance concerning the professional development and training of personnel, to local providers that receive subgrants under section 163A; and

''(3)(A) conducting an evaluation of the projects carried out by local providers of the organization under this part;

''(B) using the results of the evaluation to collect and compile information on best practices and models for such projects; and

''(C) disseminating widely the results of the evaluation.

"SEC. 163A. SUBGRANTS TO LOCAL PROVIDERS.

''(a) SUBGRANTS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—An organization that receives a grant under section 163 may use the grant funds to award subgrants on a competitive basis to local providers to pay for the Federal share of the cost of carrying out community service projects.

''(2) PERIODS OF SUBGRANTS.—The organization shall award the subgrants for periods of 3 years.

''(3) AMOUNTS OF SUBGRANTS.—The organization shall award such a subgrant to a local provider for a project in a sum equal to—

''(A) the amount obtained by multiplying $500 and the number of youth who will participate in the project (to be used for project expenses); and

''(B) unless the Chief Executive Officer decides to deposit funds for educational awards in the National Service Trust, as described in section 163(a)(2)(B), an additional amount equal to the amount described in subparagraph (A) (to be used for educational awards).

''(b) LOCAL PROVIDER APPLICATION.—To be eligible to receive a subgrant under this section, a local provider shall submit an application to the organization at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the organization may require, including information that—

''(1) designates the communities in which the local provider will carry out projects under the subgrant, each of which communities may be the service area of an elementary school or secondary school, a school district, a city, town, village, or other locality, a county, the area in which a public housing project is located, a neighborhood, or another geographically or politically designated area;

''(2) for each project described in such application, describes the manner in which the local provider will—

''(A) engage a substantial portion of the youth in the designated community involved;

''(B) engage a variety of entities and individuals, such as youth organizations, elementary schools or secondary schools, elected officials, organizations offering summer camps, civic groups, nonprofit organizations, and other entities within the designated community to offer a variety of summer service opportunities as part of the project;

''(C) ensure that the youth participating in the project engage in service-learning;

''(D) engage as volunteers in the project business, civic, or community organizations or individuals, which may include older individuals, volunteers in the National Senior Volunteer Corps established under title II of the Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973 (42 U.S.C. 5000 et seq.), participants in the school-based and community-based service-learning programs carried out under parts I and II of subtitle B, participants in the AmeriCorps program carried out under subtitle C, or students enrolled in secondary schools or institutions of higher education;

''(E) ensure that youth participating in the project provide at least 100 hours of community service for the project;

''(F) recruit eligible youth to participate in the project;

''(G) recruit service sponsors for community service activities carried out through the project, if the local provider intends to enter into an arrangement with such sponsors to provide project placements for the youth;

''(H) promote leadership development and build an ethic of civic responsibility among the youth;

''(I) provide team-oriented, adult-supervised experiences through the project;

''(J) conduct opening and closing ceremonies honoring participants in the project;

''(K) involve youth who are participating in the project in the design and planning of the project; and

''(L) provide training, which may include life skills, financial education, and employment training, in addition to training concerning the specific community service to be provided through the project, for the youth; and

''(3)(A) specifies project outcome objectives relating to youth development or education achievement, community strengthening, and community improvement;

''(B) describes how the local provider will establish annual benchmarks for the objectives, and annually conduct an evaluation to measure progress toward the benchmarks; and

''(C) provides an assurance that the local provider will annually make the results of such evaluation available to the organization.

''(c) CONTINUED ELIGIBILITY.—To be eligible to receive funds under this section for a second or subsequent year of a subgrant period, a local provider shall demonstrate that all the projects for which the subgrant was awarded met the annual benchmarks for the objectives described in subsection (b)(3).

''(d) SELECTION OF SUBGRANT RECIPIENTS.—In awarding subgrants under this section, the organization shall ensure that projects are funded in a variety of geographic areas, including urban and rural areas.

''SEC. 163B. SUMMER OF SERVICE PROJECTS.

''(a) USE OF FUNDS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—A local provider that receives a subgrant under section 163A shall use the subgrant funds to carry out a community service project.

''(2) SPECIFIC USES.—The local provider may use the subgrant funds, to pay for—

''(A) hiring staff to administer the project;

''(B) developing or acquiring service-learning curricula for the project, to be integrated into academic programs, including making modifications for students who are individuals with disabilities and students with limited English proficiency;

''(C) forming local partnerships to develop and offer a variety of service-learning programs for local youth participating in the project;

''(D) establishing benchmarks, conducting evaluations, and making evaluation results available, as described in subparagraphs (B) and (C) of section 163A(b)(3);

''(E) conducting outreach and dissemination of program-related information to ensure the broadest possible involvement of local eligible youth and community partners in the project;

''(F) conducting ceremonies as described in section 163A(b)(2)(J);

''(G) carrying out basic implementation of the community service project; and

''(H) carrying out planning activities, during an initial 6 to 9 months of the grant period.

''(3) NON-FEDERAL SHARE.—A local provider that receives a subgrant under section 163A shall provide the non-Federal share of the cost described in section 163A(a)(1) from private or public sources other than the subgrant funds. The sources may include fees charged to the parents of the youth participating in the community service project involved and determined on a sliding scale based on income.

''(b) SERVICE PROJECTS.—

''(1) ELIGIBLE SERVICE CATEGORIES.—The local provider may use the subgrant funds to carry out a community service project to meet unmet human, educational, environmental, or public safety needs.

''(2) INELIGIBLE SERVICE CATEGORIES.—The local provider may not use the subgrant funds to carry out a service project in which participants perform service described in section 132(a).

''(c) PERIOD OF SERVICE PROJECTS.—The local provider—

''(1) shall carry out the community service project funded under section 163A during a period, the majority of which occurs in the months of June, July, and August; and

''(2) may carry out the project in conjunction with a related after school or in-school service-learning project operated during the remaining months of the year.

''(d) EDUCATIONAL AWARD.—

''(1) ELIGIBILITY.—Each eligible youth who provides at least 100 hours of community service for a project carried out under this part shall be eligible to receive an educational award of not more than $500. An eligible youth may participate in more than 1 such project but shall not receive in excess of $1,000 in total for such participation.

''(2) DISBURSEMENTS BY LOCAL PROVIDER.—If the Chief Executive Officer decides under section 163(a)(2)(A) to include educational award funds in subgrants under this part, the local provider carrying out the project shall—

''(A) disburse an educational award described in paragraph (1) in accordance with regulations issued by the Chief Executive Officer, which—

''(i) may permit disbursal of the award to the parents of the youth that have established a qualified tuition program account under section 529 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, for deposit into the account; but

''(ii) shall not otherwise permit disbursal of the award to the parents; or

''(B) enter into a contract with a private sector organization to hold the educational award funds and disburse the educational award as described in subparagraph (A).

''(3) DISBURSEMENTS BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER.—If the Chief Executive Officer decides under section 163(a)(2)(B) to reserve educational award funds, the Chief Executive Officer shall disburse the educational award as described in paragraph (2)(A).

''(e) APPLICATION OF SECTION.—References in this section to local providers, with respect to the use of subgrant funds received under section 163A, apply equally to organizations that carry out community service projects directly, with respect to the use of grant funds received under section 163.

''SEC. 163C. SUPPLEMENTAL GRANTS.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—The Chief Executive Officer may award a supplemental grant to a local provider that demonstrates the matters described in subsection (b), to assist the provider in carrying out a community service project in accordance with the requirements of this part, as determined appropriate by the Chief Executive Officer.

''(b) APPLICATION.—To be eligible to receive a supplemental grant under subsection (a), a provider shall submit an application to the Chief Executive Officer, at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Chief Executive Officer may require, including information demonstrating—

''(1) that the provider received a subgrant under section 163A for a community service project; and

''(2) that the provider would be unable to carry out the project without substantial hardship unless the provider received a supplemental grant under subsection (a).

''(c) AMOUNT OF GRANT.—The Chief Executive Officer shall award such a grant to a local provider for the project in the amount obtained by multiplying $250 and the number of youth who will participate in the project (to be used for project expenses).

''PART III—SUMMER OF SERVICE NATIONAL ACTIVITIES

''SEC. 164. NATIONAL ACTIVITIES.

''(a) NATIONAL QUALITY AND OUTREACH ACTIVITIES.—The Chief Executive Officer may use funds reserved under section 165(b)(1), either directly or through grants and contracts, to—

''(1) provide technical assistance and training to recipients of grants and subgrants under parts I and II;

''(2) conduct outreach and dissemination of program-related information to ensure the broadest possible involvement of States, eligible entities, organizations, local providers, and eligible youth in programs carried out under parts I and II; and

''(3) to carry out other activities designed to improve the quality of programs carried out under parts I and II.

''(b) NATIONAL EVALUATION.—

''(1) RESERVATION.—For each fiscal year, the Chief Executive Officer shall reserve not more than the greater of $500,000, or 1 percent, of the funds described in subsection (a) for the purposes described in paragraph (2).

''(2) EVALUATION.—The Chief Executive Officer shall use the reserved funds—

''(A) to arrange for an independent evaluation of the programs carried out under parts I and II, to be conducted in the second and third years in which the programs are implemented; and

''(B) using the results of the evaluation, to collect and compile information on models and best practices for such programs; and

''(C) to disseminate widely the results of the evaluation.

''(3) REPORT.—The Chief Executive Officer shall annually submit to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate and the Committee on Education and the Workforce of the House of Representatives, a report concerning the results

of the evaluations conducted under paragraph (2). Such reports shall also contain information on models of best practices and any other findings or recommendations developed by the Chief Executive Officer based on such evaluations. Such reports shall be made available to the general public.

"PART IV—GENERAL PROVISIONS

"SEC. 165. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS AND AVAILABILITY.

''(a) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this subtitle $100,000,000 for fiscal year 2008 and such sums as may be necessary for each subsequent fiscal year.

''(b) AVAILABILITY.—Of the funds appropriated under subsection (a) for a fiscal year, the Chief Executive Officer—

''(1) shall reserve not more than 4 percent to carry out activities under part III (relating to national activities); and

''(2) from the remainder of such funds, shall make available—

''(A) a portion equal to 66⅔ percent of such funds for programs carried out under part I (relating to the State grant program), including programs carried out under section 162D; and

''(B) a portion equal to 33⅓ percent of such funds for programs carried out under part II (relating to the national direct grant program).

''(c) REALLOCATION.—If the Chief Executive Officer determines that funds from the portion described in subsection (b)(2)(A) will not be needed to carry out programs under part I for a fiscal year, the Chief Executive Officer shall make the funds available for programs under part II for that fiscal year.

"SEC. 165A. REVIEW PANELS.

''The Chief Executive Officer shall establish panels of experts for the purpose of reviewing applications submitted under sections 162, 162C, 162D, and 163.

"SEC. 165B. CONSTRUCTION.

''An individual participating in service in a program described in this subtitle shall not be considered to be an employee engaged in employment for purposes of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (29 U.S.C. 201 et seq.).''.

SEC. 4. CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.

(a) REDESIGNATION OF SUBTITLES.—

(1) Section 118(a) of the National and Community Service Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12551(a)) is amended by striking ''subtitle H'' and inserting ''subtitle I''.

(2) Section 122(a)(2) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 12572(a)(2)) is amended by striking ''subtitle I'' and inserting ''subtitle J''.

(3) Section 193A(f)(1) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 12651d(f)(1)) is amended by striking ''subtitles C and I'' and inserting ''subtitles C and J''.

(4) Section 501(a)(2) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 12681(a)(2)) is amended—

(A) in the paragraph heading, by striking ''SUBTITLES C, D, AND H'' and inserting ''SUBTITLES C, D, AND I'';

(B) in subparagraph (A), by striking ''subtitles C and H'' and inserting ''subtitles C and I''; and

(C) in subparagraph (B), by striking ''subtitle H'' and inserting ''subtitle I''.

(b) REDESIGNATION OF SECTIONS.—

(1) Section 155(d)(3) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 12615(d)(3)) is amended by striking ''section 162(a)(3)'' and inserting ''section 159C(a)(3)''.

(2) Section 156(d) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 12616(d)) is amended by striking ''section 162(a)(3)'' and inserting ''section 159C(a)(3)''.

(3) Section 159(c) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 12619(c)) is amended—

(A) in paragraph (2)(C)(i), by striking ''section 162(a)(2)'' and inserting ''section 159C(a)(2)''; and

(B) in paragraph (3), by striking ''section 162(a)(2)(A)'' and inserting ''section 159C(a)(2)(A)''.

(4) Section 159B(b)(1)(B) of such Act (as redesignated by section 3(2)) is amended by striking ''section 162(a)(3)'' and inserting ''section 159C(a)(3)''.

(c) RELATIONSHIP TO NATIONAL SERVICE EDUCATIONAL AWARD PROVISIONS.—

(1) NATIONAL SERVICE TRUST.—Section 145 of the National and Community Service Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12601) is amended—

(A) in subsection (a)—

(i) in paragraph (2), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(ii) in paragraph (3), by striking the period and inserting '', other than interest or proceeds described in paragraph (4)(B); and''; and

(iii) by adding at the end the following:

''(4)(A) any amounts deposited in the Trust under subtitle F; and

''(B) the interest on, and proceeds from the sale or redemption of, any obligations held by the Trust for a program carried out under subtitle F.''; and

(B) in subsection (c), by inserting ''(other than any amounts deposited in the Trust under subtitle F)'' after ''Amounts in the Trust''.

(2) AVAILABILITY OF AMOUNTS IN NATIONAL SERVICE TRUST.—Section 148(a) of the National and Community Service Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12604(a)) is amended by inserting ''(other than any amounts deposited in the Trust under subtitle F)'' after ''Amounts in the Trust''.

By Ms. COLLINS:

S. 1131. A bill to amend the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978 to establish a program to provide assistance to States and nonprofit organizations to preserve suburban forest land and open space and contain suburban sprawl; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, the people of Maine have always been faithful stewards of the forest because we understand its tremendous value to our economy and to our way of life. From the vast tracts of undeveloped land in the north to the small woodlots in the south, forest land has helped to shape the character of our entire State.

While our commitment to stewardship has preserved the forest for generations, there is a threat to Maine's working landscape that requires a fresh approach. This threat is suburban sprawl, which has already consumed tens of thousands of acres of forest land in southern Maine. Sprawl occurs because the economic value of forest or farm land cannot compete with the value of developed land.

Sprawl threatens our environment and our quality of life. It destroys ecosystems, increasing the risk of flooding and other environmental hazards. It burdens the infrastructure of the affected communities, increases traffic on neighborhood streets, and wastes taxpayer money. Sprawl causes the unnecessary fragmentation of open space that reduces the economic viability of the remaining working forests.

In the State of Maine, suburban sprawl has already consumed tens of thousands of acres of forest and farm land. The problem is particularly acute in southern Maine where an 108 percent increase in urbanized land over the past two decades has resulted in the labeling of greater Portland as the ''sprawl capital of the Northeast.''

I am particularly alarmed by the amount of working forest and farm land and open space in southern and coastal Maine that has given way to strip malls and cul-de-sacs. Once these forests, farms, and meadows are lost to development, they are lost forever.

Maine is trying to respond to this challenge. The people of Maine continue to contribute their time and money to preserve important lands and to support our State's 88 land trusts. It is time for the Federal Government to help support these State and community-based efforts.

For these reasons, I have introduced the Suburban and Community Forestry and Open Space Program Act. This legislation, which was drafted with the advice of land owners and conservation groups, establishes a $50 million grant program within the U.S. Forest Service to support locally driven land conservation projects that preserve working forests. Local government and nonprofit organizations would compete for funds to purchase land or access to land to protect working landscapes threatened by development.

Projects funded under this initiative must be targeted at lands located in parts of the country that are threatened by sprawl. In addition, this legislation requires that Federal grant funds be matched dollar-for-dollar by State, local, or private resources.

This is a market-driven program that relies upon market forces rather than government regulations to achieve its objectives. Rather than preserving our working forests, farmland and open spaces by zoning or other government regulation, with this program we will provide the resources to allow a landowner who wishes to keep his or her land as a working woodlot to do so.

My legislation also protects the rights of property owners with the inclusion of a ''willing-seller'' provision, which requires the consent of a landowner if a parcel of land is to participate in the program.

The $50 million that would be authorized by my bill would help achieve stewardship objectives: First, this bill would help prevent forest fragmentation and preserve working forests, helping to maintain the supply of timber that fuels Maine's most significant industry. Second, these resources would be a valuable tool for communities that are struggling to manage growth and prevent sprawl.

Understanding that land ownership issues differ in other parts of the Nation, I have included a geographic limitation in this bill. This limitation would exempt any State where the Federal Government owns 25 percent or more of that State's land from the Suburban and Community Forestry and Open Space Program. With the 25 percent limitation, a figure used in previous bills, the twelve States with the highest percentage of federally owned land would not be eligible to participate in this new program. Those

States, however, who are struggling most with the loss of working landscapes would be authorized to receive Federal assistance in their efforts to combat sprawl.

Third, the bill would help to preserve open space and family farms. Currently, if the town of Gorham, ME, or another community trying to cope with the effects of sprawl turned to the Federal Government for assistance, none would be found. My bill will change that by making the Federal Government an active partner in preserving forest and farm land and managing sprawl, while leaving decision-making at the State and local level where it belongs.

The Suburban and Community Forestry and Open Space Program Act has had a successful history in the Senate. In 2002, this legislation was included in the forestry title of the Senate approved version of the Farm Bill. Unfortunately, the forestry title was stripped out of the Farm Bill conference report. And again, in 2003, this legislation passed the Senate. This time, during consideration of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act. Unfortunately, this provision was removed from the Healthy Forests Restoration Act conference report. This new Congress and the reauthorization of the Farm Bill provide an excellent opportunity to enact this important legislation.

There is great work being done on the local level to protect working landscapes for the next generation. By enacting the Suburban and Community Forestry and Open Space Act, Congress can provide an additional avenue of support for these conservation initiatives, help prevent sprawl, and help sustain the vitality of natural resource-based industries.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI:

S. 1132. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow Indian tribes to receive charitable contributions of apparently wholesome food; to the Committee on Finance.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I rise to introduce a bill that will help increase the amount of food donations going to American Indians and Alaska Natives nationwide.

Unfortunately, the poverty rate among American Indians and Alaska Natives continues to be high. Specifically, the poverty rate for our Nation's American Indians and Alaska Natives is over three times that of non-Hispanic whites, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Not only do natives face greater challenges in securing basic household necessities, but in securing food as well.

According to a 2005 U.S. Department of Agriculture report, 35.1 million Americans face challenges in getting enough food to eat. This includes 12.4 million children. Of these statistics, Natives constitute a disproportionate number due to the higher poverty rate among this group.

And yet, charitable organizations that provide hunger relief are unable to meet the basic needs of Natives due to an oversight in the federal tax code. Section 170(e)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code allows corporations to take an enhanced tax deduction for donations of food; however, the food must be distributed to 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations, such as food banks. Nonprofit organizations cannot then transfer such donations to tribes. Although many donations to tribes are tax deductible under section 7871 of the Internal Revenue Code, tribes are not among the organizations listed under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. To clarify, section 170(e)(3) does not allow tribes to be eligible recipients of corporate food donations to nonprofit organizations since they are not listed under Section 501(c)(3) as an eligible entity.

With this legislation, I intend to make a simple correction to the tax code that clearly indicates that tribes are eligible recipients of food donated under section 170(e)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. This correction is long overdue and would remedy an egregious inequity in the Federal tax code that affects natives nationwide.

Please allow me to provide a few examples of how this legislation could foster positive change. In Alaska, approximately half of the food donated to the Food Bank of Alaska from corporations could go to tribes throughout Alaska. Much of this food would go to villages that are only accessible by air or water. In South Dakota, roughly 30 percent of the food the Community Food Banks of South Dakota distributes could go to reservations. In North Dakota, the amount of food donated to the Great Plains Food Bank could double if this legislation were enacted. The Montana Food Bank Network projects that food donations could increase by 16 percent. A food bank based in Albuquerque, NM, estimates that their food donations could triple in the first year alone.

It is imperative that we address this important issue expeditiously. The health and well-being of low income American Indians and Alaska Natives across the Nation is at stake.

I ask unanimous consent that the text of this bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD as follows:

S. 1132

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

SECTION 1. CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS OF APPARENTLY WHOLESOME FOOD TO INDIAN TRIBES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 170(e)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (relating to special rule for contributions of inventory and other property) is amended—

(1) by redesignating subparagraph (E) as subparagraph (F); and

(2) by inserting after subparagraph (D) the following new subparagraph:

''(E) SPECIAL RULE FOR INDIAN TRIBES.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of this paragraph, an Indian tribe (as defined in section 7871(c)(3)(E)(ii)) shall be treated as an organization eligible to be a donee under subparagraph (A) with respect to apparently wholesome food (as defined in section 22(b)(2) of the Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act (42 U.S.C. 1791(b)(2)) (as in effect on the date of the enactment of this subparagraph)) only.

''(ii) USE OF PROPERTY.—For purposes of subparagraph (A)(i), if the use of the apparently wholesome food donated is related to the exercise of an essential governmental function of the Indian tribal government (within the meaning of section 7871), such use shall be treated as related to the purpose or function constituting the basis for the organization's exemption.''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to taxable years beginning after December 31, 2007.

By Mr. AKAKA (for himself, Mr. BINGAMAN, and Mr. DURBIN):

S. 1133. A bill to provide additional protections for recipients of the earned income tax credit; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, today, I am reintroducing the Taxpayer Abuse Prevention Act. Earned income tax credit (EITC) benefits intended for working families are significantly reduced by the use of refund anticipation loans (RALs), which typically carry three or four digit interest rates. In 2005, EITC filers accounted for more than half of the refund anticipation loans issued despite being only 17 percent of the taxpayer population. EITC recipients lost an estimated $649 million in loan fees plus application or documentation fees in 2005. The EITC is intended to help working families meet their food, clothing, housing, transportation, and education needs. Working families cannot afford to lose a significant portion of their EITC funds by expensive, short-term, RALs.

The interest rates and fees charged on RALs are not justified because of the short length of time that these loans are outstanding and the minimal risk they present. These loans carry little risk because of the Debt Indicator program.

The Debt Indicator (DI) is a service provided by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) that informs the lender whether or not an applicant owes Federal or State taxes, child support, student loans, or other government obligations, which assists tax preparers in ascertaining the ability of applicants to obtain their full refund so that the RAL is repaid. The Department of the Treasury should not be facilitating these predatory loans that allow tax preparers to reap outrageous profits by exploiting working families.

Unfortunately too many working families are susceptible to predatory lending because they are left out of the financial mainstream. Between 25 and 56 million adults are unbanked, or not using mainstream, insured financial institutions. The unbanked rely on alternative financial service providers to obtain cash from checks, pay bills,

send remittances, utilize payday loans, and obtain credit. Many of the unbanked are low-and moderate-income families that can ill afford to have their earnings unnecessarily diminished by high-cost and often predatory financial services. In addition, the unbanked are unable to save securely to prepare for the loss of a job, a family illness, a down payment on a first home, or education expenses.

My legislation will protect consumers against predatory loans, reduce the involvement of the Department of the Treasury in facilitating the exploitation of taxpayers, and expand access to opportunities for saving and lending at mainstream financial services.

My bill prohibits refund anticipation loans that utilize EITC benefits. Other Federal benefits, such as Social Security, have similar restrictions to ensure that the beneficiaries receive the intended benefit.

My bill also limits several of the objectionable practices of RAL providers. It will prohibit lenders from using tax refunds to collect outstanding obligations for previous RALs. In addition, mandatory arbitration clauses for RALs that utilize federal tax refunds would be prohibited to ensure that consumers have the ability to take future legal action if necessary.

It is troubling that the Department of the Treasury facilitates refund anticipation loans. In 1995, the use of the DI was suspended because of massive fraud in e-filed returns with RALs. The use of the DI was reinstated in 1999. Use of the Debt Indicator should once again be stopped. The DI is helping tax preparers make excessive profits from low- and moderate-income taxpayers who utilize RALs. The IRS should not aide unscrupulous preparers who take the earned benefit away from low-income families. My bill terminates the DI program. In addition, this bill removes the incentive to meet congressionally mandated electronic filing goals by facilitating the exploitation of taxpayers. My bill would exclude any electronically filed tax returns resulting in tax refunds distributed by refund anticipation loans from being counted towards the goal established by the IRS Restructuring and Reform Act of 1998, which is to have at least 80 percent of all returns filed electronically by 2007.

My bill also expands access to mainstream financial services. Electronic Transfer Accounts (ETA) are low-cost accounts at banks and credit unions intended for recipients of certain federal benefit payments. Currently, ETAs are provided for recipients of other federal benefits such as Social Security payments. My bill expands the eligibility for ETAs to include EITC benefits. These accounts will allow taxpayers to receive direct deposit refunds into an account without the need for a refund anticipation loan. Furthermore, my bill would mandate that low- and moderate-income taxpayers be provided opportunities to open low-cost accounts at federally insured banks or credit unions via appropriate tax forms. Providing taxpayers with the option of opening a bank or credit union account through the use of tax forms provides an alternative to RALs and immediate access to financial opportunities found at banks and credit unions.

I want to thank my colleagues, Senators BINGAMAN and DURBIN for cosponsoring this legislation. I also appreciate the efforts of Representative JAN SCHAKOWSKY who will be reintroducing the companion legislation in the other body. I ask unanimous consent that the text of the Taxpayer Abuse Prevention Act be printed in the RECORD.

I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation that will restrict predatory RALs and expand access to mainstream financial services.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 1134

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 ''Taxpayer Abuse Prevention Act''.

SEC. 2. PREVENTION OF DIVERSION OF EARNED INCOME TAX CREDIT BENEFITS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 32 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (relating to earned income tax credit) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(n) PREVENTION OF DIVERSION OF CREDIT BENEFITS.—The right of any individual to any future payment of the credit under this section shall not be transferable or assignable, at law or in equity, and such right or any moneys paid or payable under this section shall not be subject to any execution, levy, attachment, garnishment, offset, or other legal process except for any outstanding Federal obligation. Any waiver of the protections of this subsection shall be deemed null, void, and of no effect.''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by this section shall take effect on the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 3. PROHIBITION ON DEBT COLLECTION OFFSET.

(a) IN GENERAL.—No person shall, directly or indirectly, individually or in conjunction or in cooperation with another person, engage in the collection of an outstanding or delinquent debt for any creditor or assignee by means of soliciting the execution of, processing, receiving, or accepting an application or agreement for a refund anticipation loan or refund anticipation check that contains a provision permitting the creditor to repay, by offset or other means, an outstanding or delinquent debt for that creditor from the proceeds of the debtor's Federal tax refund.

(b) REFUND ANTICIPATION LOAN.—For purposes of subsection (a), the term ''refund anticipation loan'' means a loan of money or of any other thing of value to a taxpayer because of the taxpayer's anticipated receipt of a Federal tax refund.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—This section shall take effect on the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 4. PROHIBITION OF MANDATORY ARBITRATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Any person that provides a loan to a taxpayer that is linked to or in anticipation of a Federal tax refund for the taxpayer may not include mandatory arbitration of disputes as a condition for providing such a loan.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—This section shall apply to loans made after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 5. TERMINATION OF DEBT INDICATOR PROGRAM.

The Secretary of the Treasury shall terminate the Debt Indicator program announced in Internal Revenue Service Notice 99–58.

SEC. 6. DETERMINATION OF ELECTRONIC FILING GOALS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Any electronically filed Federal tax returns, that result in Federal tax refunds that are distributed by refund anticipation loans, shall not be taken into account in determining if the goals required under section 2001(a)(2) of the Restructuring and Reform Act of 1998 that the Internal Revenue Service have at least 80 percent of all such returns filed electronically by 2007 are achieved.

(b) REFUND ANTICIPATION LOAN.—For purposes of subsection (a), the term ''refund anticipation loan'' means a loan of money or of any other thing of value to a taxpayer because of the taxpayer's anticipated receipt of a Federal tax refund.

SEC. 7. EXPANSION OF ELIGIBILITY FOR ELECTRONIC TRANSFER ACCOUNTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The last sentence of section 3332(j) of title 31, United States Code, is amended by inserting ''other than any payment under section 32 of such Code'' after ''1986''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by this section shall apply to payments made after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 8. PROGRAM TO ENCOURAGE THE USE OF THE ADVANCE EARNED INCOME TAX CREDIT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 6 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Treasury shall, after consultation with such private, nonprofit, and governmental entities as the Secretary determines appropriate, develop and implement a program to encourage the greater utilization of the advance earned income tax credit.

(b) REPORTS.—Not later than the date of the implementation of the program described in subsection (a), and annually thereafter, the Secretary of the Treasury shall report to the Committee on Finance of the Senate and the Committee on Ways and Means of the House of Representatives on the elements of such program and progress achieved under such program.

(c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated such sums as are necessary to carry out the program described in this section. Any sums so appropriated shall remain available until expended.

SEC. 9. PROGRAM TO LINK TAXPAYERS WITH DIRECT DEPOSIT ACCOUNTS AT FEDERALLY INSURED DEPOSITORY INSTITUTIONS.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT OF PROGRAM.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Treasury shall enter into cooperative agreements with federally insured depository institutions to provide low- and moderate-income taxpayers with the option of establishing low-cost direct deposit accounts through the use of appropriate tax forms.

(b) FEDERALLY INSURED DEPOSITORY INSTITUTION.—For purposes of this section, the term ''federally insured depository institution'' means any insured depository institution (as defined in section 3 of the Federal Deposit Insurance Act (12 U.S.C. 1813)) and any insured credit union (as defined in section 101 of the Federal Credit Union Act (12 U.S.C. 1752)).

(c) OPERATION OF PROGRAM.—In providing for the operation of the program described in

subsection (a), the Secretary of the Treasury is authorized—

(1) to consult with such private and nonprofit organizations and Federal, State, and local agencies as determined appropriate by the Secretary, and

(2) to promulgate such regulations as necessary to administer such program.

(d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated such sums as are necessary to carry out the program described in this section. Any sums so appropriated shall remain available until expended.

By Mr. SESSIONS:

S. 1135. A bill to amend chapter 1 of title 9, United States Code, to establish fair procedures for arbitration clauses in contracts; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I rise and send to the desk a bill entitled the ''Fair Arbitration Act of 2007.'' This bill continues the legislative process that I started several years ago with the introduction of the ''Consumer and Employee Arbitration Bill of Rights'' and the ''Arbitration Fairness Act of 2002.'' The purpose of the Fair Arbitration Act of 2007, like my earlier proposals, is to improve the Federal Arbitration Act so that it will remain a cost-effective means of resolving disputes, but will do so in a fair way. The Fair Arbitration Act will provide procedural protections to everyone who enters into a contract with an arbitration clause. This bill ensures that consumers, employees, and small businesses that enter into contracts covered by the Federal Arbitration Act will have their disputes resolved in accordance with fundamental principles of due process, and in a speedy and cost-effective manner.

Congress originally enacted the Federal Arbitration Act in 1925. It has served us well for over three-quarters of a century. Under the Act, if the parties agree to a contract affecting interstate commerce that contains a clause requiring arbitration, the clause will be enforceable in court. In short, the Federal Arbitration Act allows parties to a contract to agree not to take their disputes to court, but to resolve any dispute arising from that contract before a neutral decision-maker, generally selected by a nonprofit arbitration organization, such as the American Arbitration Association or the National Arbitration Forum. The parties can generally present evidence and be represented by counsel. And the decision-makers will apply the relevant State law in resolving the dispute. Arbitration is generally quicker and less expensive than going to court.

In recent years, there have been some cases where the arbitration process has not worked well, but thousands of disputes have been fairly and effectively settled by arbitrators. Such a system is even more important because of skyrocketing legal costs where attorneys require large contingency fees. Accordingly, I have opposed piecemeal legislative changes to the act. Instead, I believe that the Senate should approach the Federal Arbitration Act in a comprehensive manner.

The approach of reforming arbitration rather than abandoning the arbitration process provides a better solution in several respects. Arbitration is one of the most cost-effective means of resolving disputes. Unlike businesses, consumers and employees generally cannot afford a team of lawyers to represent them. And their claims are often not big enough so that a lawyer would take the case on a 25 percent or even a 50 percent contingent fee. In a 1998 article in the Columbia Human Rights Law Review, Lewis Maltby, then the Director of the National Task Force on Civil Liberties in the Workplace of the American Civil Liberties Union and a Director of the American Arbitration Association, explained how court litigation is often just too expensive for most employees:

> Even if the client has clearly been wronged and is virtually certain to prevail in court, the attorney will be forced to turn down the case unless there are substantial damages. A survey of plaintiff employment lawyers found that a prospective plaintiff needed to have a minimum of $60,000 in provable damages not including pain and suffering or other intangible damages before an attorney would take the case.
>
> Even this, however, does not exhaust the financial obstacles an employee must overcome to secure representation. In light of their risk of losing such cases, many plaintiffs' attorneys require a prospective client to pay a retainer, typically about $3,000. Others require clients to pay out-of-pocket expenses of the case as they are incurred. Expenses in employment discrimination cases can be substantial. Donohue and Siegelman found that expenses in Title VII cases are at least $10,000 and can reach as high as $25,000. Finally, some plaintiffs' attorneys now require a consultation fee, generally $200–$300, just to discuss their situation with a potential client.
>
> The result of these formidable hurdles is that most people with claims against their employer are unable to obtain counsel, and thus never receive justice. Paul Tobias, founder of the National Employment Lawyers' Association, has testified that ninety-five percent of those who seek help from the private bar with an employment matter do not obtain counsel. Howard's survey of plaintiffs' lawyers produced the same result. A Detroit firm reported that only one of eighty-seven employees who came to them seeking representation was accepted as a client.

Without arbitration, consumers and employees are faced with having to pay a lawyer's hourly rate, which may amount to several thousand dollars to litigate a claim in court. If that is what consumers and employees are left with, many will have no choice but to drop their claim. That is not right. It is not fair. Thus, Professor Stephen Ware of the Cumberland Law School stated in a paper published by the CATO Institute that ''current [arbitration] law is better for all consumers [than an exemption from the Federal Arbitration Act] except those few who are especially likely to have large liability claims. . . .''

Thus, while some have argued that the Congress should enact exemptions from the Federal Arbitration Act for different classes of contracts from automobile franchise contracts to employment contracts to chicken farmers, such exemptions would not help the overwhelming majority of the people who could not afford a lawyer to litigate in court. This is where arbitration can give consumers and employees a cost-effective forum to assert their claims. Thus, before we make exceptions to the Federal Arbitration Act for special interests with friends in Washington, I think it is our duty to consider how we can improve the system for everyone.

We can improve the arbitration system, but we must take a balanced approach. In such an approach, we must protect the sanctity of legal contracts explicitly protected under Article I, Section 10 of the U.S. Constitution. In any contract, the parties must agree to all the terms and clauses included in the contract document. This includes the arbitration clause. This is basic contract law, and the basic premise of the Federal Arbitration Act for over 75 years.

Unfortunately, however, in certain situations consumers, employees, and small businesses have not been treated fairly. That is what the Fair Arbitration Act is designed to correct.

The bill will maintain the cost savings of binding arbitration, but will grant several specific ''due process'' rights to all parties to an arbitration proceeding. The bill is modeled after consumer and employee due process protocols of the American Arbitration Association, which have broad support. The bill provides the following rights:

1. Notice. Under the bill, to be enforceable, an arbitration clause would have to have a heading in large, bold print, would have to state whether arbitration is binding or optional, identify a source that the parties may contact for more information, and state that a consumer could opt out to small claims court.

This will ensure, for example, that consumers who receive credit card notices in the mail will not miss an arbitration clause because it is lost in the ''fine print.'' Further, it would give all parties a means to obtain more information on how to resolve any disputes. Finally, the clause would explain that if a party's claims could otherwise be brought in small claims court, the party would be free to do so. Small claims court, unlike regular trial court, provides another inexpensive and quick means of dispute resolution.

2. Independent selection of arbitrators. The bill grants all parties the right to have potential arbitrators disclose relevant information concerning their business ties and employment. All parties to the arbitration will have an equal voice in selecting a neutral arbitrator. This ensures that the large company who sold a consumer a product will not select the arbitrator itself, because the consumer with a grievance will have the right to nominate potential arbitrators, too. As a result, the

final arbitrator selected will have to have the explicit approval of both parties to the dispute. This helps ensure that the arbitrator will be a neutral party with no allegiance to either party.

3. Choice of law. The bill grants the non-drafting party, usually the consumer or the employee, the right to have the arbitrator governed by the substantive law that would apply under conflicts of laws principles applicable in the forum in which the non-drafting party resided at the time the contract was entered into. This means that the substantive contract law that would apply in a court where the consumer, employee, or business resides at the time of making the contract will apply in the arbitration. Thus, in a dispute arising from the purchase of a product by an Alabama consumer from an Illinois company, a court would have to determine whether Alabama or Illinois law applied by looking to the language of the contract and to the place where the contract was entered into. The bill ensures that an arbitrator would use the same conflict of laws principles that a court would in determining whether Alabama or Illinois law would govern the arbitration proceedings.

4. Representation. The bill grants all parties the right to be represented by counsel at their own expense. Thus, if the claim involves complicated legal issues, consumers, employees, or small businesses would be free to have their lawyer represent him in the arbitration. Such representation should be substantially less expensive than a trial in court because of the more abbreviated and expedited process of arbitration.

5. Hearing. The bill grants all parties the right to a fair hearing in a forum that is reasonably convenient to the consumer or employee. This would prevent a large company from requiring consumers, employees, or small business owners to travel across the country to arbitrate their claim and to expend more in travel costs than their claim is potentially worth.

6. Evidence. The bill grants all parties the right to conduct discovery and to present evidence. This ensures that the arbitrator can have all the facts before making a decision.

7. Cross examination. The bill grants all parties the right to cross examine witnesses presented by the other party at the hearing. This allows a party to test the statements of the other party's witnesses and be sure that the evidence before the arbitrator is correct.

8. Record. The bill grants all parties the right to hire a stenographer or tape record the hearing to produce a record. This right is key to proving later whether the arbitration proceeding was fair.

9. Timely resolution. The bill grants all parties the right to have an arbitration proceeding completed promptly so that they do not have to wait for a year or more to have their claim resolved. Under the bill, a defendant must file an answer not more than 30 days of the filing of the complaint. The arbitrator has 90 days after the answer to hold a hearing. The arbitrator must render a final decision within 30 days after the hearing. Extensions are available in extraordinary circumstances.

10. Written decision. The bill grants all parties the right to a written decision by the arbitrator explaining the resolution of the case and his reasons therefor. If the consumer or employee takes a claim to arbitration, he deserves to have an explanation of why he won or lost.

11. Expenses. The bill grants all parties the right to have an arbitrator provide for reimbursement of arbitration fees in the interests of justice and the reduction, deferral, or waiver of arbitration fees in cases of extreme hardship. It does little good to take a claim to arbitration if the consumer or employee cannot even afford the arbitration fee. This provision ensures that the arbitrator can waive or reduce the fee or make the company reimburse the consumer or employee for a fee if the interests of justice so require.

12. Small claims opt-out. The bill grants all parties the right to opt out of arbitration into small claims court if that court has jurisdiction over the claim and the claim does not exceed $50,000.

The bill also provides an effective mechanism for parties to enforce these rights. At any time, if a consumer or employee believes that another party violated his or her rights, the consumer or employee can request and the arbitrator may award a penalty up to the amount of the claim plus attorneys fees. For example, if a defendant party failed to provide discovery to a plaintiff party, the plaintiff could move for an award of fees. The amount of the fee award is limited, as it is in court, to the amount of cost incurred by the employee in trying to obtain the information from the company. This principle is taken from Rule 37 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. After the decision, if the losing party believes that the rights granted to him by the Act have been violated, it may file a petition with the Federal district court. If the court finds by clear and convincing evidence that the losing party's rights were violated, it may order a new arbitrator appointed. Thus, if a consumer, employee, or small business has an arbitrator that is unfair and this causes him to lose the case, the plaintiff can obtain another arbitrator.

This bill is an important step to continuing a constructive dialog on arbitration. This bill will ensure that those who can least afford to go to court can go to a less expensive arbitrator and be treated fairly. It will ensure that every arbitration carried out under the Federal Arbitration Act is completed fairly, promptly, and economically. I look forward to working with my colleagues in the Senate to ensure that consumers, employees, and small businesses who agree in a contract to arbitrate their claims will be treated fairly under the Federal Arbitration Act.

I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 1135

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 ''Fair Arbitration Act of 2007''.

SEC. 2. ELECTION OF ARBITRATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 1 of title 9, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''§ 17. Election of arbitration

''(a) FAIR DISCLOSURE.—In order to be binding on the parties, a contract containing an arbitration clause shall—

''(1) have a printed heading in bold, capital letters entitled '**ARBITRATION CLAUSE**', which heading shall be printed in letters not smaller than ½ inch in height;

''(2) explicitly state whether participation within the arbitration program is mandatory or optional;

''(3) identify a source that a consumer or employee can contact for additional information regarding—

''(A) costs and fees of the arbitration program; and

''(B) all forms and procedures necessary for effective participation in the arbitration program; and

''(4) provide notice that all parties retain the right to resolve a dispute in a small claims court, as provided in subsection (b)(12).

''(b) PROCEDURAL RIGHTS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—If a contract provides for the use of arbitration to resolve a dispute arising out of or relating to the contract, each party to the contract shall be afforded the rights described in this subsection, in addition to any rights provided by the contract.

''(2) COMPETENCE AND NEUTRALITY OF ARBITRATOR AND ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Each party to the dispute (referred to in this section as a 'party') shall be entitled to a competent, neutral arbitrator and an independent, neutral administration of the dispute.

''(B) ARBITRATOR.—Each party shall have an vote in the selection of the arbitrator, who—

''(i) unless otherwise agreed by the parties, shall be a member in good standing of the bar of the highest court of the State in which the hearing is to be held;

''(ii) shall comply with the Code of Ethics for Arbitrators in Commercial Disputes of the American Bar Association and the American Arbitration Association and any applicable code of ethics of any bar of which the arbitrator is a member;

''(iii) shall have no—

''(I) personal or financial interest in the results of the proceedings in which the arbitrator is appointed; or

''(II) relation to the underlying dispute or to the parties or their counsel that may create an appearance of bias; and

''(iv) prior to accepting appointment, shall disclose all information that might be relevant to neutrality (including service as an arbitrator or mediator in any past or pending case involving any of the parties or their representatives) or that may prevent a prompt hearing.

''(C) ADMINISTRATION.—The arbitration shall be administered by an independent,

neutral alternative dispute resolution organization to ensure fairness and neutrality and prevent ex parte communication between parties and the arbitrator. The arbitrator shall have reasonable discretion to conduct the proceeding in consideration of the specific type of industry involved.

''(3) APPLICABLE LAW.—In resolving a dispute, the arbitrator—

''(A) shall be governed by the same substantive law that would apply under conflict of laws principles applicable in a court of the State in which the party that is not drafter of the contract resided at the time the contract was entered into; and

''(B) shall be empowered to grant whatever relief would be available in court under law or equity.

''(4) REPRESENTATION.—Each party shall have the right to be represented by an attorney, or other representative as permitted by State law, at their own expense.

''(5) HEARING.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Each party shall be entitled to a fair arbitration hearing (referred to in this section as a 'hearing') with adequate notice and an opportunity to be heard.

''(B) ELECTRONIC OR TELEPHONIC MEANS.—Subject to subparagraph (C), in order to reduce cost, the arbitrator may hold a hearing by electronic or telephonic means or by a submission of documents.

''(C) FACE-TO-FACE MEETING.—Each party shall have the right to require a face-to-face hearing, which hearing shall be held at a location that is reasonably convenient for the party who did not draft the contract unless in the interest of fairness the arbitrator determines otherwise, in which case the arbitrator shall use the process described in section 1391 of title 28, to determine the venue for the hearing.

''(6) EVIDENCE.—With respect to any hearing—

''(A) each party shall have the right to present evidence at the hearing and, for this purpose, each party shall grant access to all information reasonably relevant to the dispute to the other parties, subject to any applicable privilege or other limitation on discovery under applicable State law;

''(B) consistent with the expedited nature of arbitration, relevant and necessary prehearing depositions shall be available to each party at the direction of the arbitrator; and

''(C) the arbitrator shall—

''(i) make reasonable efforts to maintain the privacy of the hearing to the extent permitted by applicable State law; and

''(ii) consider appropriate claims of privilege and confidentiality in addressing evidentiary issues.

''(7) CROSS EXAMINATION.—Each party shall have the right to cross examine witnesses presented by the other parties at a hearing.

''(8) RECORD OF PROCEEDING.—Any party seeking a stenographic record of a hearing shall make arrangements directly with a stenographer and shall notify the other parties of these arrangements not less than 3 days before the date of the hearing. The requesting party shall pay the costs of obtaining the record. If the transcript is agreed by the parties, or determined by the arbitrator to be the official record of the proceeding, it shall be provided to the arbitrator and made available to the other parties for inspection, at a date, time, and place determined by the arbitrator.

''(9) TIMELY RESOLUTION.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Upon submission of a complaint by the claimant, the respondent shall have not more than 30 days to file an answer.

''(B) EVIDENCE.—After the answer is filed by the respondent, the arbitrator shall direct each party to file documents and to provide evidence in a timely manner so that the hearing may be held not later than 90 days after the date of the filing of the answer.

''(C) EXTENSIONS.—In extraordinary circumstances (including multiparty, multidistrict, or complex litigation) the arbitrator may grant a limited extension of the time limits under this paragraph, or the parties may agree to such an extension.

''(D) DECISION.—The arbitrator shall notify each party of its decision not later than 30 days after the hearing.

''(10) WRITTEN DECISION.—The arbitrator shall provide each party with a written explanation of the factual and legal basis for the decision. This written decision shall describe the application of an identified contract term, statute, or legal precedent. The decision of the arbitrator shall be subject to review only as provided in subsection (c)(2) of this section and sections 10, 11, and 16 of this title.

''(11) EXPENSES.—The arbitrator or independent arbitration administration organization, as applicable, shall have the authority to—

''(A) provide for reimbursement of arbitration fees to the claimant, in whole or in part, as part of the remedy in accordance with applicable law or in the interests of justice; and

''(B) waive, defer, or reduce any fee or charge due from the claimant in the event of extreme hardship.

''(12) SMALL CLAIMS OPT OUT.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Each party shall have the right to opt out of binding arbitration and to proceed in any small claims court with jurisdiction over the claim. For purposes of this paragraph, no court with jurisdiction to hear claims in excess of $50,000 shall be considered a small claims court.

''(B) EXCEPTION.—If a complaint in small claims court is amended to exceed the lesser of the jurisdictional amount of that court or a claim for $50,000 in total damages, the small claims court exemption of this paragraph shall not apply and the parties shall proceed by arbitration.

''(c) DENIAL OF RIGHTS.—

''(1) DENIAL OF RIGHTS BY PARTY MISCONDUCT.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—At any time during an arbitration proceeding, any party may file a motion with the arbitrator asserting that another party has deprived the movant of a right granted by this section and seeking relief.

''(B) AWARD BY ARBITRATOR.—If the arbitrator determines that the movant has been deprived of a right granted by this section by another party, the arbitrator shall award the movant a monetary amount, which shall not exceed the reasonable expenses incurred by the movant in filing the motion, including attorneys' fees, unless the arbitrator finds that—

''(i) the motion was filed without the movant first making a good faith effort to obtain discovery or the realization of another right granted by this section;

''(ii) the opposing party's nondisclosure, failure to respond, response, or objection was substantially justified; or

''(iii) the circumstances otherwise make an award of expenses unjust.

''(2) DENIAL OF RIGHTS BY ARBITRATOR.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—A losing party in an arbitration proceeding may file a petition in the United States district court in the State in which the party that did not draft the contract resided at the time the contract was entered into to assert that the arbitrator violated a right granted to the party by this section and to seek relief.

''(B) REVIEW.—A United States district court may grant a petition filed under subparagraph (A) if the court finds clear and convincing evidence that an action or omission of the arbitrator resulted in a deprivation of a right of the petitioner under this section that was not harmless. If such a finding is made, the court shall order a rehearing before a new arbitrator selected in the same manner as the original arbitrator as the exclusive judicial remedy provided by this section.

''(d) LIMITATION ON CLAIMS.—Except as otherwise expressly provided in this section, nothing in this section may be construed to be the basis for any claim in law or equity.

''(e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section—

''(1) the term 'contract' means a contract evidencing a transaction involving commerce; and

''(2) the term 'State' includes the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the Virgin Islands.''.

(b) TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 1 of title 9, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''17. Election of arbitration.''.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to any contract (as that term is defined in section 17 of title 9, United States Code, as added by this Act) entered into after the date that is 6 months after the date of enactment of this Act.

By Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself, Mr. BAUCUS, and Ms. CANTWELL):

S. 1137. A bill authorize grants to carry out projects to provide education on preventing teen pregnancies, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, today I am introducing the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Responsibility and Opportunity Act, legislation that creates a comprehensive approach to fighting teen pregnancy and giving young people the support they need to make informed decisions.

The results of a 1997 congressionally-ordered study were released this month. The 6-year study found that youth who participate in abstinence education programs are no more or less likely to engage in sex than those who do not participate in abstinence education programs. Both groups are reported to have similar numbers of sexual partners, and to have sex for the first time at about the same age; around 15 years old. This proves that abstinence-only education isn't working.

But rather than invest in proven programs, the Bush administration continues to insist on a narrow-minded, misguided approach of abstinence-only education. As this study demonstrates, abstinence-only just doesn't cut it. The United States continues to have the highest teen-pregnancy rate and teen birth rate in the western industrialized world. In a human context, this impacts one-third of all teenage girls. In a fiscal context, these unintended pregnancies cost the United States at least $9 billion annually despite Federal appropriations of about $176 million a

year towards promoting abstinence until marriage.

American taxpayers deserve a better rate of return on their investment. American youth deserve quality education, positive role models, effective after school programs, employment opportunities, and medically and scientifically accurate family life education. The time is now for a new direction in sex education.

Adolescents need to know we care. They need to know we care as parents, as educators, as business people, as politicians, and as healthcare providers. They need to know we want them to become successful contributing members of society, but for that to happen we must commit to and invest in them. We need to be opening doors for these young people, and that is just what my Teen Pregnancy Prevention, Responsibility and Opportunity Act will do.

The Teen Pregnancy Prevention, Responsibility and Opportunity Act will establish a comprehensive program for reducing adolescent pregnancy through education and information programs, as well as positive activities and role models both in school and out of school.

While we have done a good job of progressively decreasing teen pregnancy, we can do better. With the sons of teen mothers more likely to end up in prison, and the daughters of teen mothers more likely to end up teen mothers themselves, we must act now to break this problematic cycle.

The time is now to make a real difference in the lives of our youth, and to give them the support they need to grow and lead positive lives.

Our schools, community and faith-based organizations need access to funds to teach age-appropriate, factually and medically accurate, and scientifically-based family life education.

We need programs that encourage teens to delay sexual activity.

We need to provide services and interventions for sexually active teens.

We need to educate both young men and women about the responsibilities and pressures that come along with parenting.

We need to help parents communicate with teens about sexuality.

We need to teach young people responsible decision-making.

And, we need to fund after school programs that will enrich their education, and offer character and counseling services.

We know that after school programs reduce risky adolescent behavior by involving teens in positive activities that also provide positive life skills. Teenage girls who play sports, for instance, are more likely to wait to become sexually active, and to have fewer partners. They are consequently less likely to become pregnant.

Let us join together to recommit ourselves to continuing to decrease the incidence of teen pregnancy, and recommit ourselves to offering family life education and positive after school programs that will foster responsible young adults.

The time is now to invest in our teens. We cannot afford to let doors close on them. Instead we must continue to open the door of opportunity. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this important legislation.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 150—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE THAT PUBLIC SERVANTS SHOULD BE COMMENDED FOR THEIR DEDICATION AND CONTINUED SERVICE TO THE NATION DURING PUBLIC SERVICE RECOGNITION WEEK, MAY 7 THROUGH 13, 2007

Mr. AKAKA (for himself, Mr. VOINOVICH, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. STEVENS, Mr. CARPER, Mr. WARNER, and Mr. LAUTENBERG) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs:

S. RES. 150

Whereas Public Service Recognition Week provides an opportunity to recognize the important contributions of public servants and honor the diverse men and women who meet the needs of the Nation through work at all levels of government;

Whereas millions of individuals work in government service in every city, county, and State across America and in hundreds of cities abroad;

Whereas public service is a noble calling involving a variety of challenging and rewarding professions;

Whereas Federal, State, and local governments are responsive, innovative, and effective because of the outstanding work of public servants;

Whereas the United States of America is a great and prosperous Nation, and public service employees contribute significantly to that greatness and prosperity;

Whereas the Nation benefits daily from the knowledge and skills of these highly trained individuals;

Whereas public servants—

(1) provide vital strategic support functions to our military and serve in the National Guard and Reserves;

(2) fight crime and fire;

(3) ensure equal access to secure, efficient, and affordable mail service;

(4) deliver social security and medicare benefits;

(5) fight disease and promote better health;

(6) protect the environment and the Nation's parks;

(7) enforce laws guaranteeing equal employment opportunities and healthy working conditions;

(8) defend and secure critical infrastructure;

(9) help the Nation recover from natural disasters and terrorist attacks;

(10) teach and work in our schools and libraries;

(11) develop new technologies and explore the earth, moon, and space to help improve our understanding of how our world changes;

(12) improve and secure our transportation systems;

(13) keep the Nation's economy stable; and

(14) defend our freedom and advance United States interests around the world;

Whereas members of the uniformed services and civilian employees at all levels of government make significant contributions to the general welfare of the United States, and are on the front lines in the fight against terrorism and in maintaining homeland security;

Whereas public servants work in a professional manner to build relationships with other countries and cultures in order to better represent America's interests and promote American ideals;

Whereas public servants alert Congress and the public to government waste, fraud, abuse, and dangers to public health;

Whereas the men and women serving in the Armed Forces of the United States, as well as those skilled trade and craft Federal employees who provide support to their efforts, are committed to doing their jobs regardless of the circumstances, and contribute greatly to the security of the Nation and the world;

Whereas public servants have bravely fought in armed conflict in defense of this Nation and its ideals and deserve the care and benefits they have earned through their honorable service;

Whereas government workers have much to offer, as demonstrated by their expertise and innovative ideas, and serve as examples by passing on institutional knowledge to train the next generation of public servants;

Whereas May 7 through 13, 2007, has been designated Public Service Recognition Week to honor America's Federal, State, and local government employees; and

Whereas Public Service Recognition Week is celebrating its 23rd anniversary through job fairs, student activities, and agency exhibits: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) commends public servants for their outstanding contributions to this great Nation during Public Service Recognition Week and throughout the year;

(2) salutes their unyielding dedication and spirit for public service;

(3) honors those government employees who have given their lives in service to their country;

(4) calls upon a new generation to consider a career in public service as an honorable profession; and

(5) encourages efforts to promote public service careers at all levels of government.

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, today I rise to submit a resolution to honor Federal, State, and local government employees during Public Service Recognition Week. I am proud to be joined in this effort by Senators VOINOVICH, LIEBERMAN, COLLINS, LEVIN, STEVENS, CARPER, WARNER, and LAUTENBERG and by Representative DANNY DAVIS, chairman of the House Federal Workforce Subcommittee, who is submitting this resolution in the House.

We all recognize the important work performed by public servants and the impact they have on all of our lives. Over hundreds of years, our country has grown and prospered due in large part to the dedication of public servants at all levels of government. Each day public servants, in small and large ways, work to maintain, and in many cases enhance, the quality of our lives.

Whether they are saving lives as firefighters, police officers, or members of the Coast Guard; preserving our environment by patrolling parks, discovering new ways to live ''green,'' or

working at wastewater treatment plants; working to improve government services by eliminating waste, fraud, and abuse; or working to keep our Nation safe as members of our armed forces or as diplomats, public servants perform duties with excellence and professionalism that Americans rely on every day.

Public Service Recognition Week is a great occasion to draw attention to and underscore the valuable contributions of those who dedicate themselves to public service. For more than 20 years, the Nation has participated in a week-long celebration to highlight their achievements. This year, the 23rd annual Public Service Recognition Week will take place May 7–13, 2007. State and Federal agencies across the Nation plan to host activities to honor their achievements and improve public understanding of their contributions.

As the Federal Government is facing what the Office of Personnel Management calls a retirement tsunami, Public Service Recognition Week also provides an opportunity for the Federal Government to showcase the rewarding and challenging careers in the public sector and inspire a new generation of public servants. Working for the public good is a high and noble calling, and this annual celebration is the perfect opportunity for Federal agencies to recruit new employees.

I want to thank all public employees for the work they do day after day to make government effective, and I urge my colleagues and all Americans to join in Federal, State, and local celebrations and recognize the outstanding contributions made by public servants to our daily lives. I ask my colleagues for their support for this resolution.

SENATE RESOLUTION 151—COMMENDING THE UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING COWGIRLS FOR THEIR CHAMPIONSHIP VICTORY IN THE WOMEN'S NATIONAL INVITATION TOURNAMENT

Mr. ENZI (for himself and Mr. THOMAS) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 151

Whereas, on March 31, 2007, the University of Wyoming Cowgirls defeated the University of Wisconsin Badgers by a score of 72–56 in the championship basketball game of the Women's National Invitation Tournament;

Whereas their victory was witnessed by a record crowd at the University of Wyoming Arena-Auditorium;

Whereas the outstanding play of forward Hanna Zavecz earned her the award of the Women's National Invitation Tournament Most Valuable Player;

Whereas the University of Wyoming Cowgirls Head Coach Joe Legerski led the Cowgirls basketball team to its most successful season in school history; and

Whereas the University of Wyoming students and faculty are dedicated to academic and athletic achievement, and serve as the standard of excellence, scholarship, and sportsmanship for the entire Nation: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) commends the University of Wyoming Cowgirls for their victory in the championship basketball game of the Women's National Invitation Tournament; and

(2) requests the Secretary of the Senate to transmit a copy of this resolution to the University of Wyoming Cowgirls basketball team Head Coach Joe Legerski and to the University of Wyoming President Thomas Buchanan for appropriate display.

SENATE RESOLUTION 152—HONORING THE LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENTS OF JACKIE ROBINSON

Mr. BUNNING (for himself, Mr. PRYOR, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. KERRY, Mr. OBAMA, and Mr. CARDIN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 152

Whereas Jackie Robinson was the first athlete in the history of the University of California at Los Angeles to letter in 4 sports in 1 year;

Whereas on April 15, 1947, Jackie Robinson became the first African-American to play for a major league baseball team;

Whereas Jackie Robinson, who began his career in the Negro Leagues, was named Rookie of the Year in 1947 and led the Brooklyn Dodgers to 6 National League pennants in 10 years and a World Series championship;

Whereas Jackie Robinson's inspiring career earned him recognition as the first African-American to win a batting title, to lead the league in stolen bases, to play in an All-Star game, to play in the World Series, and to win a Most Valuable Player award;

Whereas Jackie Robinson was elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1962, the first African-American to receive such an honor;

Whereas in March of 1984, President Ronald Reagan posthumously awarded Jackie Robinson the Presidential Medal of Freedom;

Whereas on October 29, 2003, Congress posthumously awarded Jackie Robinson the Congressional Gold Medal, the highest award Congress can bestow;

Whereas Major League Baseball renamed the Rookie of the Year Award the Jackie Robinson Award in his honor;

Whereas his legacy continues through the Jackie Robinson Foundation that has provided over $14,500,000 in scholarships to students in need;

Whereas Jackie Robinson's courage and dignity taught the Nation about the strength of the human spirit when confronted with seemingly immovable obstacles;

Whereas Jackie Robinson, in his career, demonstrated that how you play the game is more important than the final score;

Whereas Jackie Robinson's legacy helps make the American dream more accessible to all;

Whereas April 15, 2007, marks the 60th anniversary of Jackie Robinson's first game in Major League Baseball; and

Whereas on April 15, 2007, over 200 players, managers, and coaches wore Jackie Robinson's number, 42, which was retired throughout Major League Baseball in 1997, to honor his achievements: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the achievements and contributions of Jackie Robinson be honored and celebrated; that his dedication and sacrifice be recognized; and that his contributions to the Nation be remembered.

SENATE RESOLUTION 153—MAKING TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS TO THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON ETHICS

Mr. REID submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 153

Resolved, That (a) for matters before the Select Committee on Ethics involving the preliminary inquiry arising in connection with alleged communications by persons within the committee's jurisdiction with and concerning David C. Iglesias, then United States Attorney for the District of New Mexico, and subsequent action by the committee with respect to that matter, if any, the Senator from Colorado (Mr. Salazar) shall be replaced by the Senator from Ohio (Mr. Brown).

(b) The membership of the Select Committee on Ethics shall be unchanged with respect to all matters before that committee other than the matter referred to in subsection (a).

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 885. Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. HAGEL, Mr. BIDEN, Mr. CASEY, and Mr. WHITEHOUSE) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 843 proposed by Mr. ROCKEFELLER (for himself and Mr. BOND) to the bill S. 372, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2007 for the intelligence and intelligence-related activities of the United States Government, the Intelligence Community Management Account, and the Central Intelligence Agency Retirement and Disability System, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 886. Mr. WYDEN (for himself, Mr. BOND, and Mr. ROCKEFELLER) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 843 proposed by Mr. ROCKEFELLER (for himself and Mr. BOND) to the bill S. 372, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 887. Mr. BAYH submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 843 proposed by Mr. ROCKEFELLER (for himself and Mr. BOND) to the bill S. 372, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 885. Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. HAGEL, Mr. BIDEN, Mr. CASEY, and Mr. WHITEHOUSE) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 843 proposed by Mr. ROCKEFELLER (for himself and Mr. BOND) to the bill S. 372, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2007 for the intelligence and intelligence-related activities of the United States Government, the Intelligence Community Management Account, and the Central Intelligence Agency Retirement and Disability System, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title III, add the following:

SEC. 315. NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATE ON GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE.

(a) REQUIREMENT FOR NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), not later than 270 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director of National Intelligence shall submit to Congress a National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) on the anticipated geopolitical

effects of global climate change and the implications of such effects on the national security of the United States.

(2) NOTICE REGARDING SUBMITTAL.—If the Director of National Intelligence determines that the National Intelligence Estimate required by paragraph (1) cannot be submitted by the date specified in that paragraph, the Director shall notify Congress and provide—

(A) the reasons that the National Intelligence Estimate cannot be submitted by such date; and

(B) an anticipated date for the submittal of the National Intelligence Estimate.

(b) CONTENT.—The Director of National Intelligence shall prepare the National Intelligence Estimate required by this section using the mid-range projections of the fourth assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change—

(1) to assess the political, social, agricultural, and economic risks during the 30-year period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act posed by global climate change for countries or regions that are—

(A) of strategic economic or military importance to the United States and at risk of significant impact due to global climate change; or

(B) at significant risk of large-scale humanitarian suffering with cross-border implications as predicted on the basis of the assessments;

(2) to assess other risks posed by global climate change, including increased conflict over resources or between ethnic groups, within countries or transnationally, increased displacement or forced migrations of vulnerable populations due to inundation or other causes, increased food insecurity, and increased risks to human health from infectious disease;

(3) to assess the capabilities of the countries or regions described in subparagraph (A) or (B) of paragraph (1) to respond to adverse impacts caused by global climate change;

(4) to assess the security implications and opportunities for the United States economy of engaging, or failing to engage successfully, with other leading and emerging major contributors of greenhouse gas emissions in efforts to reduce emissions; and

(5) to make recommendations for further assessments of security consequences of global climate change that would improve national security planning.

(c) COORDINATION.—In preparing the National Intelligence Estimate under this section, the Director of National Intelligence shall consult with representatives of the scientific community, including atmospheric and climate studies, security studies, conflict studies, economic assessments, and environmental security studies, the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of State, the Administrator of the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration, the Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, the Secretary of Energy, and the Secretary of Agriculture, and, if appropriate, multilateral institutions and allies of the United States that have conducted significant research on global climate change.

(d) FORM.—The National Intelligence Estimate required by this section shall be submitted in unclassified form, to the extent consistent with the protection of intelligence sources and methods, and include unclassified key judgments of the National Intelligence Estimate. The National Intelligence Estimate may include a classified annex.

SA 886. Mr. WYDEN (for himself, Mr. BOND, and Mr. ROCKEFELLER) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 843 proposed by Mr. ROCKEFELLER (for himself and Mr. BOND) to the bill S. 372, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2007 for the intelligence and intelligence-related activities of the United States Government, the Intelligence Community Management Account, and the Central Intelligence Agency Retirement and Disability System, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of subtitle B of title IV, insert the following:

SEC. 426. AVAILABILITY OF THE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL REPORT ON CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY ACCOUNTABILITY REGARDING FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS OF THE REPORT OF THE JOINT INQUIRY INTO INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES BEFORE AND AFTER THE TERRORIST ATTACKS OF SEPTEMBER 11, 2001.

(a) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.—Not later than 30 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency shall make available to the public an unclassified version of the Executive Summary of the report of the Inspector General of the Central Intelligence Agency entitled Office of Inspector General Report on Central Intelligence Agency Accountability Regarding Findings and Conclusions of the Report of the Joint Inquiry into Intelligence Community Activities Before and After the Terrorist Attacks of September 11, 2001, issued in June 2005, that is declassified to the maximum extent possible, consistent with national security.

(b) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—The Director of the Central Intelligence Agency shall submit to Congress a classified annex to the declassified Executive Summary made available under subsection (a) that explains the reason that any redacted material in the Executive Summary was withheld from the public.

SA 887. Mr. BAYH submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 843 proposed by Mr. ROCKEFELLER (for himself and Mr. BOND) to the bill S. 372, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2007 for the intelligence and intelligence-related activities of the United States Government, the Intelligence Community Management Account, and the Central Intelligence Agency Retirement and Disability System, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title V, add the following:

SEC. 509. PROCUREMENT OF PREDATOR AND GLOBAL HAWK UNMANNED AERIAL VEHICLES AND RELATED SYSTEMS.

(a) REPORT REQUIRED.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense shall submit to Congress a report on the actions being taken by the Department of Defense to address shortfalls in the procurement of Predator Unmanned Aerial Vehicles and Global Hawk Unmanned Aerial Vehicles and associated orbits for military and intelligence mission requirements.

(b) ELEMENTS.—The report required by subsection (a) shall include the following:

(1) A description of any shortages in available Predator Unmanned Aerial Vehicles, Global Hawk Unmanned Aerial Vehicles, and associated orbits to meet requirements of United States military and intelligence forces in the field, including for activities in Iraq, Afghanistan, Colombia, East, South and Southeast Asia.

(2) A description of progress in developing next-generation stealth, medium-altitude unmanned aerial vehicles.

(3) A schedule for addressing such shortages.

(4) An assessment of whether or not the Department of Defense has requested all funds required to keep production lines for such unmanned aerial vehicles running at maximum capacity until such shortages are fully addressed, and, if not, a statement of the reasons why.

(5) A description of the actions required to fully address such shortages.

(6) An assessment of whether such shortages can be eliminated through the opening of additional production lines for Predator Unmanned Aerial Vehicles and Global Hawk Unmanned Aerial Vehicles, as applicable, or a sole-source producer delays the achievement of production and procurement schedules for such vehicles, and if so, recommendations for securing one or more additional producers of such vehicles.

(7) A statement of the anticipated overseas requirements for such unmanned aerial vehicles during the five-year period beginning on the date of the report, including an assessment of the extent to which long-endurance unmanned aerial vehicles, whether armed or for intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance purposes, are long-term and growing requirement for the Armed Forces.

(8) A statement as to whether domestic requirements for medium-altitude unmanned aerial vehicles will further delay meeting all overseas military and intelligence requirements.

(c) FORM.—The report required by subsection (a) shall be submitted in unclassified form, but may include a classified annex.

NOTICES OF HEARINGS/MEETINGS

PERMANENT SUBCOMMITTEE ON INVESTIGATIONS

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I would like to announce for the information of the Senate and the public that the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs will hold a hearing entitled ''Transit Benefits: How Some Federal Employees Are Taking Uncle Sam For A Ride.'' In 2006, the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, at Senator COLEMAN's request, initiated an investigation into possible abuses of the Federal Transit Benefit Program. Under this program, the Federal Government provides qualified Federal employees with benefits for use on public transportation systems in order to reduce air pollution and decrease traffic congestion. For instance, employees living in the Washington, D.C. area receive a paper card, called a Metrochek or Metro Smartrip, with a magnetically encoded value that can be used on Metrorail or exchanged for an equivalent value in train or bus tickets. The April 24th Subcommittee hearing will examine whether transit benefits are being misused, program rules are being violated, and agency oversight requires strengthening. Witnesses for the upcoming hearing will include the Government Accountability Office, the Department of Transportation (DOT), the DOT Inspector General, the Department of Defense (DOD), as well as the

DOD Inspector General. A final witness list will be available on Friday, April 20, 2007.

The Subcommittee hearing is scheduled for Tuesday, April 24, 2007, at 2:30 p.m. in Room 342 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building. For further information, please contact Elise J. Bean, of the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations.

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES—REVISED

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I would like to announce for the information of the Senate and the public that a hearing has been scheduled before the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

The hearing will be held on April 23, 2007 at 3 p.m. in room SD–366 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

The purpose of the hearing is to receive testimony on S. 1115, a bill to promote the efficient use of oil, natural gas, and electricity, reduce oil consumption, and heighten energy efficiency standards for consumer products and industrial equipment, and for other purposes.

Because of the limited time available for the hearing, witnesses may testify by invitation only. However, those wishing to submit written testimony for the hearing record should send two copies of their testimony to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, United States Senate, Washington, DC 20510–6150.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON WATER AND POWER

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I would like to announce for the information of the Senate and the public that a hearing has been scheduled before the Subcommittee on Water and Power of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. The hearing will be held on April 25, 2007, at 2:30 p.m. in room 366 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building in Washington, DC.

The purpose of the hearing is to receive testimony on the following bills: S. 175, to provide for a feasibility study of alternatives to augment the water supplies of the Central Oklahoma Master Conservancy District and cities served by the District; S. 324, to direct the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study of water resources in the State of New Mexico; S. 542, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct feasibility studies to address certain water shortages within the Snake, Boise, and Payette River systems in the State of Idaho, and for other purposes; S. 752, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to participate in the implementation of the Platte River Recovery Implementation Program for Endangered Species in the Central and Lower Platte River Basin and to modify the Pathfinder Dam and Reservoir; S. 1037, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to assist in the planning, design, and construction of the Tumalo Irrigation District Water Conservation Project in Deschutes County, Oregon; S. 1116 and H.R. 902, to facilitate the use for irrigation and other purposes of water produced in connection with development of energy resources; and H.R. 235, to allow for the renegotiation of the payment schedule of contracts between the Secretary of the Interior and the Redwood Valley County Water District, and for other purposes.

Because of the limited time available for the hearing, witnesses may testify by invitation only. However, those wishing to submit written testimony for the hearing record should send it to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, United States Senate, Washington, DC 20510–6150, or by email to Gina Weinstock@energy.senate.gov.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, April 17, 2007, at 9:30 a.m., in open session to receive testimony on whether the Army and Marine Corps are properly sized, organized, and equipped to respond to the most likely missions over the next two decades while retaining adequate capability to respond to all contingencies along the spectrum of combat.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be authorized to hold a hearing during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, April 17, 2007, at 10 a.m., in room 253 of the Russell Senate Office Building. The purpose of this hearing is to examine the role of the Federal Communications Commission in reviewing the XM-Sirius merger, and issues related to the effect of this proposed merger on competition and the public interest.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EMPLOYMENT AND WORKPLACE SAFETY

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Employment and Workplace Safety be authorized to hold a hearing on domestic violence in the workplace during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, April 17, 2007, at 10 a.m., in SD–628.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON READINESS AND MANAGEMENT SUPPORT

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the subcommittee on readiness and management support be authorized to meet, in closed session, during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, April 17, 2007, at 3 p.m., to receive a briefing on the current readiness of U.S. Ground Forces.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON SECURITIES, INSURANCE, AND INVESTMENT

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the subcommitte on securities, insurance, and investment be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on April 17, 2007, at 3 p.m., to conduct a hearing on ''subprime mortgage market turmoil: Examining the role of securitization.''

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Martin Sobel, a member of my staff, be granted floor privileges during this week's session of the Senate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that an intern on my staff, Maggie Haas, be granted the privilege of the floor for the remainder of this week.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Dr. Guy Clifton be granted the privilege of the floor for the remainder of the debate on S. 3.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMENDING THE UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING COWGIRLS

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 151, which was submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 151) commending the University of Wyoming Cowgirls for their championship victory in the Women's National Invitation Tournament.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 151) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 151

Whereas, on March 31, 2007, the University of Wyoming Cowgirls defeated the University of Wisconsin Badgers by a score of 72–56 in the championship basketball game of the Women's National Invitation Tournament;

Whereas their victory was witnessed by a record crowd at the University of Wyoming Arena-Auditorium;

Whereas the outstanding play of forward Hanna Zavecz earned her the award of the Women's National Invitation Tournament Most Valuable Player;

Whereas the University of Wyoming Cowgirls Head Coach Joe Legerski led the Cowgirls basketball team to its most successful season in school history; and

Whereas the University of Wyoming students and faculty are dedicated to academic and athletic achievement, and serve as the standard of excellence, scholarship, and sportsmanship for the entire Nation: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) commends the University of Wyoming Cowgirls for their victory in the championship basketball game of the Women's National Invitation Tournament; and

(2) requests the Secretary of the Senate to transmit a copy of this resolution to the University of Wyoming Cowgirls basketball team Head Coach Joe Legerski and to the University of Wyoming President Thomas Buchanan for appropriate display.

HONORING THE LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENTS OF JACKIE ROBINSON

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 152, which was submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 152) honoring the lifetime achievements of Jackie Robinson.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. BUNNING. Mr. President, I would like to take a moment to honor the legacy and achievements of Jackie Robinson.

On Sunday, over 200 Major League players, manager, and coaches took to baseball fields across the Nation wearing Jackie Robinson's No. 42, which was retired throughout Major League Baseball in 1997. Sixty years ago, on April 15, 1947, Jackie Robinson became the first African-American to play in a Major League Baseball game.

The first athlete to letter in four sports in 1 year at the University of California at Los Angeles, Jackie Robinson seemed destined to make a name for himself. He began his baseball career in the Negro Leagues, playing shortstop for the Kansas City Monarchs. In 1946, Jackie Robinson played for the Montreal Royals, leading the International League in batting average with a .349 average, and fielding percentage with a .985 percent. He began his major league career at the age of 28 playing first base for the Brooklyn Dodgers—the only position that was open.

That year, he was named Rookie of the Year. In 1948, he was moved to second base and went on to lead the Dodgers to six National League pennants in 10 years and a World Series championship. His inspiring career earned him recognition as the first African-American to win a batting title, lead the league in stolen bases, play in an All-Star game, play in the World Series, win a Most Valuable Player award, and be elected to baseball's Hall of Fame in 1962.

Off the baseball diamond, Jackie Robinson lived a life of achievement through his work in the civil rights movement. In the business world, he actively promoted Black enterprises in New York's Harlem neighborhood.

In March 1984, President Ronald Reagan posthumously awarded Jackie Robinson the Presidential Medal of Freedom. On October 29, 2003, Congress posthumously awarded Jackie Robinson the Congressional Gold Medal, the highest award Congress can bestow. His mission to expand opportunity for others continues today through the Jackie Robinson Foundation that has provided over $14.5 million in scholarships to students who might not otherwise be able to afford college tuition.

Jackie Robinson was a good friend of mine, and it is with great reverence that I introduce, today, a resolution with Senators MARK PRYOR and MITCH MCCONNELL to honor and celebrate his achievements, recognize his sacrifices, and remember his contributions to the Nation. His courage and dignity taught the Nation about the strength of the human spirit when confronted with seemingly immovable obstacles. We can best honor him by reflecting on the epigraph Robinson wrote for his own tombstone, ''The value of a life is measured by its impact on other lives.''

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 152) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 152

Whereas Jackie Robinson was the first athlete in the history of the University of California at Los Angeles to letter in 4 sports in 1 year;

Whereas on April 15, 1947, Jackie Robinson became the first African-American to play for a major league baseball team;

Whereas Jackie Robinson, who began his career in the Negro Leagues, was named Rookie of the Year in 1947 and led the Brooklyn Dodgers to 6 National League pennants in 10 years and a World Series championship;

Whereas Jackie Robinson's inspiring career earned him recognition as the first African-American to win a batting title, to lead the league in stolen bases, to play in an All-Star game, to play in the World Series, and to win a Most Valuable Player award;

Whereas Jackie Robinson was elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1962, the first African-American to receive such an honor;

Whereas in March of 1984, President Ronald Reagan posthumously awarded Jackie Robinson the Presidential Medal of Freedom;

Whereas on October 29, 2003, Congress posthumously awarded Jackie Robinson the Congressional Gold Medal, the highest award Congress can bestow;

Whereas Major League Baseball renamed the Rookie of the Year Award the Jackie Robinson Award in his honor;

Whereas his legacy continues through the Jackie Robinson Foundation that has provided over $14,500,000 in scholarships to students in need;

Whereas Jackie Robinson's courage and dignity taught the Nation about the strength of the human spirit when confronted with seemingly immovable obstacles;

Whereas Jackie Robinson, in his career, demonstrated that how you play the game is more important than the final score;

Whereas Jackie Robinson's legacy helps make the American dream more accessible to all;

Whereas April 15, 2007, marks the 60th anniversary of Jackie Robinson's first game in Major League Baseball; and

Whereas on April 15, 2007, over 200 players, managers, and coaches wore Jackie Robinson's number, 42, which was retired throughout Major League Baseball in 1997, to honor his achievements: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the achievements and contributions of Jackie Robinson be honored and celebrated; that his dedication and sacrifice be recognized; and that his contributions to the Nation be remembered.

MAKING TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS TO THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON ETHICS

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 153, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 153) making temporary appointments to the Select Committee on Ethics.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 153) was agreed to, as follows:

S. RES. 153

Resolved, That (a) for matters before the Select Committee on Ethics involving the preliminary inquiry arising in connection with alleged communications by persons within the committee's jurisdiction with and concerning David C. Iglesias, then United States Attorney for the District of New Mexico, and subsequent action by the committee with respect to that matter, if any, the Senator from Colorado (Mr. Salazar) shall be replaced by the Senator from Ohio (Mr. Brown).

(b) The membership of the Select Committee on Ethics shall be unchanged with respect to all matters before that committee other than the matter referred to in subsection (a).

NATIONAL MISSING PERSONS DAY

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate

proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 115, S. Res. 112.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 112) designating April 6, 2007, as ''National Missing Persons Day.''

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table; that any statements relating thereto be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 112) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 112

Whereas each year tens of thousands of people go missing in the United States;

Whereas, on any given day, there are as many as 100,000 active missing persons cases in the United States;

Whereas the Missing Persons File of the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) was implemented in 1975;

Whereas, in 2005, 109,531 persons were reported missing to law enforcement agencies nationwide, of whom 11,868 were between the ages of 18 and 20;

Whereas section 204 of the PROTECT Act, known as Suzanne's Law and passed by Congress on April 10, 2003, modifies section 3701(a) of the Crime Control Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 5779(a)), so that agencies must enter records into the NCIC database for all missing persons under the age of 21;

Whereas Kristen's Act (42 U.S.C. 14665), passed in 1999, has established grants for organizations to, among other things, track missing persons and provide informational services to families and the public;

Whereas, according to the NCIC, 48,639 missing persons were located in 2005, an improvement of 4.2 percent from the previous year;

Whereas many persons reported missing may be victims of Alzheimer's disease or other health-related issues, or may be victims of foul play;

Whereas, regardless of age or circumstances, all missing persons have families who need support and guidance to endure the days, months, or years they may spend searching for their missing loved ones; and

Whereas it is important to applaud the committed efforts of families, law enforcement agencies, and concerned citizens who work to locate missing persons and to prevent all forms of victimization: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates April 6, 2007, as ''National Missing Persons Day''; and

(2) encourages the people of the United States to—

(A) observe the day with appropriate programs and activities; and

(B) support worthy initiatives and increased efforts to locate missing persons.

ORDERS FOR WEDNESDAY, APRIL 18, 2007

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, lastly, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it stand adjourned until 8:30 a.m., Wednesday, April 18; that on Wednesday, following the prayer and the pledge, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the morning hour be deemed expired and the time for the two leaders reserved for their use later in the day; that there then be a period of morning business for 60 minutes, with Senators permitted to speak therein and with the time equally divided and controlled between the majority and the Republican leaders or their designees; that following the 60 minutes, the Senate resume the motion to proceed to S. 3, the prescription drug bill, and vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed; that prior to the vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to S. 378, the court security bill, there be 2 minutes of debate equally divided between Senators LEAHY and SPECTER or their designees.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 8:30 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, if there is no further business and if the Republican leader has nothing further, I now ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 7:25 p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, April 18, 2007, at 8:30 a.m.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING KATHLEEN KEMP, PH.D.

HON. JASON ALTMIRE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

Mr. ALTMIRE. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize the career of Kathleen Kemp, Ph.D., who is retiring this year after nearly 40 years of teaching political science, the past 28 years of which were spent at my alma mater, Florida State University.

Dr. Kemp is a skilled and popular instructor who has authored many publications and won numerous awards. In 1990, I was a student in her American Presidency class. I can say without reservation or exaggeration that Dr. Kemp changed my life.

On the last day of my last class at Florida State, Dr. Kemp pulled me aside to recommend that I consider volunteering for a local congressional campaign. I took her advice and worked for the campaign throughout that summer and into the fall of 1990. Following the election, the candidate, Congressman Pete Peterson, hired me to work on his Capitol Hill staff. This opportunity, which would never have arisen without Dr. Kemp's advice, started me on a road that would eventually lead to my election to Congress. More importantly, I met my future wife, Kelly, on that same campaign and we now have two beautiful daughters.

So, Madam Speaker, I can honestly say that Professor Kathleen Kemp greatly influenced my career and had a profound impact on my life. I have no doubt that countless other students she has instructed over the years can say the same.

I thank her and wish her all the best in her retirement.

RECOGNIZING DR. TIMOTHY BLOCK FOR HIS ROLE IN HEPATITIS TYPE B RESEARCH

HON. PATRICK J. MURPHY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

Mr. PATRICK J. MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Dr. Timothy Block for his efforts in the research of Hepatitis B. This truly remarkable individual has dedicated his life to expanding knowledge of and solutions to a disease that kills one million people each year.

Motivated to cure Hepatitis B by one afflicted area family with nowhere else to turn, Dr. Block established the Hepatitis B Foundation in 1991. Its mission: to discover a cure and to help patients with the disease. In 2003, Dr. Block and the Hepatitis B Foundation created the Institute for Hepatitis and Virus Research, a nonprofit organization that researches the disease in search of a breakthrough. As volunteer President of the organization, Dr. Block led the formation of the Pennsylvania Biotechnology Center of Bucks County, Pennsylvania's first Biotech center.

In addition to his work with Hepatitis B research, Dr. Block has initiated a Summer Research Internship Program. The program affords college students the opportunity to participate in research careers under the supervision of scientists. The Hepatitis B Foundation also hosts an annual convention called the "B Informed Patient Conference," at which people from around the country can share experiences and learn from experts.

Madam Speaker, Dr. Block has brought hope to millions of Hepatitis B patients and has spearheaded discovery research in the field. His zeal for helping other members of his community is unparalleled and the personal responsibility he has taken on for Hepatitis B patients throughout his career is commendable. I applaud his service to his community and to those affected by a deadly disease.

CIVICS CLASS VOICES CONCERNS ABOUT IRAQ

HON. NICK J. RAHALL II

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

Mr. RAHALL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak on behalf of the growing sentiment about the war in Iraq felt by not only the youth of my district, but by the youth of the Nation as well.

Recently, a senior Civics Class from Boone County in my district wrote to me expressing their concerns for the war and the effects this war has had on the homefront. These students represent a generation that will have to deal with the direct consequences of the actions we take today.

I'd like to read to you a portion of that letter.

> Our primary concern is the war in Iraq. We are in favor of fighting terrorism, but America went into Iraq under false pretenses. We now know that Iraq had nothing to do with the attack on 9/11. We believe that the reason we went to Iraq is to gain a stronghold on the oil fields. We are trading blood for oil. We have a strong feeling that American should have never invaded Iraq because our presence there is breeding more terrorism around the world. We are giving terrorists a common foe to retaliate against. We are incubating more hatred from other terrorists and now giving them a reason to unite.

I not only share the students' concerns about the war in Iraq, but I also share their concerns about the effect our involvement in the region has had here at home. The men and women of our military have gone above and beyond the call when it comes to serving their country in Iraq, but more is still being asked of them. While many of our troops are serving their third tour of duty, the President continues to move forward with his plan to send more troops into the region.

These students also point out that as this added strain on our military families continues, the strain on our domestic budget grows every day.

They go on to write, "Another of our concerns is the way our economy is being affected by the war. Just think of what $2.9 trillion dollars could have done for this Nation. Oil companies are making an annual profit of $39.5 billion dollars while many people in this Nation suffer in poverty. They are suffering because in today's society one cannot support a family on the minimum wage of $5.15 an hour. The money spent on the Iraq war has put a tremendous amount of pressure on the recipients of Social Security. Many older Americans have to choose between medication and food because they cannot afford both. Add to this the fact that thousand of Americans still do not have any health insurance."

I believe that no American should have to be burdened with such consequences. We must find a way to balance the cost of this war with the cost that families are continuing to pay here at home.

I applaud these young men for speaking up. They represent the voice of the majority of Americans who want us out of Iraq, and I want them to know that concerns have been heard. Rest assured, I will continue to do all that I can to make sure that their voices never go silent and that we continue to strive for the best course of action in Iraq and for our Nation here at home.

IN HONOR OF THE CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY OF THE GARDEN STATE SYMPHONIC BAND

HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the centennial anniversary of the Garden State Symphonic Band.

The Garden State Symphonic Band was founded in 1907 as the Goodwill Fife & Drum Corps. In 1920, the name was changed to the Goodwill Band, and they performed under this name until 1958, when it became the Bay City Band. It was not until 1967 that the Garden State Symphonic Band took its current title.

Modeled after the extraordinarily successful Sousa Band of the early 20th century, the Garden State Symphonic Band's primary goal is to remain a traditional American professional concert band while reaching as much of the community as possible. This organization is the oldest band of its nature in New Jersey and one of the only remaining in the entire mid-Atlantic region.

Currently, the band is under the direction of Christian Pedersen, Jr., of Fords, NJ, and is composed of an ensemble of musicians hailing from some of the most prestigious music conservatories in the Nation. Many band members have previously performed with well-known orchestras such as the New York Philharmonic and the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, while others have performed on Broadway with major musicals.

The Garden State Symphonic Band has played at numerous venues including the Garden State Arts Center and the Clinton Museum, in addition to several county and municipal parks. Each summer, the band provides 8–10 free outdoor performances entitled ''Concerts by the Bay'' at Bayview Park in Perth Amboy.

Madam Speaker, I sincerely hope that my colleagues will join me in celebrating the centennial anniversary of the Garden State Symphonic Band. Through its cultural and artistic contributions, the Garden State Symphonic Band has become an integral part of the New Jersey community.

SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF FINANCIAL LITERACY MONTH

SPEECH OF

HON. DAVID DREIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 16, 2007

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleagues Mr. HINOJOSA and the Mrs. BIGGERT, for introducing H. Res. 273, a resolution supporting the goals and ideals of Financial Literacy Month. As a member of the Financial and Economic Literacy Caucus and a cosponsor of this resolution, I am proud to support this measure.

In this 21st century economy, more Americans have access to financial services and products than ever before. With the click of a button, consumers can perform a variety of financial activities over the Internet, from paying bills to managing investments. Increased availability of credit allows more people to enjoy the benefits of easy access to capital and enhanced purchasing power. Today, half of all American households own stocks. This growing number of ''investor class'' Americans are participating in financial markets through retirement plans, investment vehicles or Internet trading accounts.

Yet, as this resolution recognizes, we must do more to ensure that American citizens not only have access to these important financial services, but are equipped with the knowledge to make critical financial decisions as they plan for the future. Whether it is buying a home, paying for college, starting a small business or planning for retirement, it is imperative that we help individuals develop a solid foundation in personal finance.

We must also continue efforts to ensure that individuals are equipped with the proper tools to make smart financial decisions from an early age. Reading, writing and math, the traditional cornerstones of our education system, need to be supplemented with a curriculum that will equip America's youth to meet the real-life demands of the 21st century. In the fast-paced and increasingly complex world in which we live, teaching our students about personal finance issues, from basic spending decisions to investing and saving for retirement, is critical. The efforts of organizations like Visa USA, Citigroup, the Credit Union National Association, the American Bankers Association and the Securities Industry Association have helped to bring financial literacy programs to our Nation's youth in classrooms, after-school programs and libraries. I am proud that in my own district, Bonita High School, the Boys and Girls Club of the Foothills and the Glendora Public Library have had the opportunity to benefit from these programs.

It is also important to note that efforts to enhance financial literacy should not just be confined to our own country. As we strive for expanded trade and investment with our global partners, the financial ups and downs in world markets have a greater impact on our local economies. Helping to spread financial and economic literacy to emerging markets is critically important to establishing stability in developing nations. For example, in 2004 Citigroup and the Citigroup Foundation provided more than $22 million in support of financial education programs in activities that reached millions of people in more than 40 countries. These activities included community development projects to support the expansion of thrift and credit-based cooperative groups in India and the development of a micro-finance industry in China.

Ultimately, expanding access to the financial system and knowledge of its workings provides individuals with greater choice when managing finances, building wealth and making investments. These activities in turn lead to increases in economic activity and growth that benefits our entire Nation. I urge my colleagues to recognize the importance of financial literacy and support this measure.

TRIBUTE TO NEW DIRECTIONS ON ITS 15TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. HENRY A. WAXMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

Mr. WAXMAN. Madam Speaker, I rise to congratulate New Directions, a remarkable program located in the congressional district I represent, on celebrating its 15th year.

New Directions is a superb veterans' service organization located on the West Los Angeles Veterans Affairs property. Started by Toni Reinis and John Keaveney 15 years ago in a small rented house, it has grown to encompass four facilities totaling 223 long-term residential treatment beds for homeless veterans and their dependents.

New Directions has become a national model for the successful treatment of veterans battling co-occurring disorders—mental illness and substance abuse. Over the past 15 years, New Directions has been responsible for assisting over 8,000 homeless veterans and their families in getting back on their feet and reintegrated into our community.

New Directions provides a comprehensive network of therapeutic services to assist veterans. Veterans living at New Directions are given job training and placement assistance, parenting and money management classes, legal and financial assistance, remedial education and resources for alumni. Residents leave New Directions with a job, housing, a savings account, computer skills, renewed self-confidence and the support of mentors and peers. Under Toni and John's guidance, veterans undergo astounding, life-altering transformations.

As veterans enter the building, the first thing they see is a plaque on the outside of the building that refers to New Directions as ''The Last House on the Block.'' Veterans arrive often feeling they have bottomed out and are without hope of overcoming their challenges. New Directions offers them another chance to turn their lives around.

Los Angeles has the largest population of homeless veterans in the Nation. An estimated 24,000 veterans live on the streets of Los Angeles. Many of them suffer from co-occurring disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder—PTSD—as well as chronic medical problems. New Directions welcomes these veterans and offers them a safe environment to address their challenges.

I want to thank and acknowledge Toni and John for the tremendous contributions they have made to veterans these past 15 years. Their dedication and commitment are inspirational. They have helped rebuild countless lives and for that we owe them a debt of gratitude.

I ask my colleagues to join me in sending our highest praise and thanks to Toni Reinis and John Keaveney on celebrating the first 15 years of New Directions.

INTRODUCTION OF THE TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION AND MANUFACTURING STIMULATION ACT OF 2007

HON. RALPH M. HALL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

Mr. HALL. Madam Speaker, I rise today as an original co-sponsor of the Technology Innovation and Manufacturing Stimulation Act of 2007. This bill provides a three-year authorization for the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). NIST is one of three agencies targeted by the President's American Competitiveness Initiative (ACI). The ACI aims to double the federal investment in physical science research over the next 10 years. This investment will ensure that American remains technologically competitive in the complex global marketplace.

NIST plays a unique role in that its scientists and engineers have a 100-year plus history of working directly with American industries to address their needs for measurement methods, tools, data, and technology. These are the building blocks that allow industry to grow and prosper. To cite just a few examples, NIST's labs develop chemical, biochemical, and chemical engineering measurements, data, models, and reference standards, provide measurement science for the electronics and electrical industries, and research and develop test methods and standards to improve the usability, reliability and security of computers and computer networks for work and home.

The Technology Innovation and Manufacturing Stimulation Act of 2007 supports the President's ACI by authorizing NIST's labs at a rate that would double the budget over the next 10 years. The bill also supports the competitiveness of American's small and medium-sized manufacturers by authorizing the Manufacturing Extension Partnership Program. Finally, the bill ensures that new research findings will find their way quickly to the marketplace by authorizing the Technology Innovation Program to provide grants to accelerate the development of high-risk technologies.

I thank Mr. EHLERS and Mr. GINGREY for their extensive input in developing this bill and my Democratic colleagues for incorporating our priorities into this bipartisan legislation. I look forward to working on this bill with all of my colleagues on the Science and Technology Committee.

HONORING THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS, EDEN AREA

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

Ms. LEE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the Eden Area chapter of the League of Women Voters (LWVEA). Throughout its extraordinary history, LWVEA has been known for promoting respect for individuals, valuing diversity, and empowering communities through civic engagement. This year LWVEA celebrates 50 years of service through encouraging the informed and active participation of individuals in government.

The League of Women Voters was first organized on February 14, 1920 in an effort to unite organizations who believed in the League's principles. The goal of this collaborative effort was to develop and codify legislation and public policy that protected future advocacy groups and promoted voter education throughout the electorate.

The League prevailed in implementing legislation that addressed labor, social security and social justice concerns pertaining to woman's rights. Specifically, the League urged legislators to enact provisions for Federal aid for child care and maternal programs. In the 1930's, the League advocated successfully for the enactment of the Social Security and Food and Drug Acts. The League played an important rule in transmuting hundreds of federal jobs from the Spoils System to the Civil Service designation. Credit is owed to the League for establishing the United Nations pursuant to World War II. Later, the League was recognized by the United Nations as being a nongovernmental organization.

The Eden Area group, like the national organization, is a nonpartisan political organization whose mission is to build citizen participation in the democratic process. The League of Women Voters, Eden Area group strives to educate policymakers and the general public on important issues in the public interest at all levels of government. LWVEA is committed to studying community issues in an unbiased manner, and achieving positive solutions to public policy issues through education and conflict management.

The Eden Area Chapter has made immeasurable strides in furthering the nation's democratic objectives. Some recent and notable achievements of the Eden Area Chapter's work include sponsoring an Alameda County community forum on open government; writing letters and newspaper articles in support of state legislation on campaign finance reform; and promoting universal health care for all Californians. The LWVEA also has televised and moderated candidate forums for city, county and state candidates; provided translation services and ballot measure pros and cons; and conducted elections for homeowner associations and other community groups.

Today the members and supporters of the League of Women Voters, Eden Area have come together to celebrate not only their 50 year anniversary, but also their permanent and positive impact on our community. On this very special day, I join all of them in thanking and saluting the League of Women Voters Eden Area Chapter for their profound contributions to California's 9th Congressional District, our country and our world.

A TRIBUTE TO SOL LEWITT

HON. JOE COURTNEY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

Mr. COURTNEY. Madam Speaker, it is an honor and privilege to celebrate the life of Sol LeWitt, one of America's greatest artists and a resident of Connecticut's Second District. Sol died last week on Sunday, April 8, 2007.

Sol lived a distinguished and accomplished life. After earning his Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Syracuse University, and bravely serving in the Korean War, Sol spent much of his early life studying art at the New York City School of Visual Arts and working at the Museum of Modern Art. While in New York, Sol began what would later become a flourishing and influential career as an artist.

Sol is best known for his work with drawing and sculpting two and three-dimensional works. His exhibitions have been shown all over the world in the most prestigious of museums, including the New York Museum of Modern Art, Chicago Museum of Contemporary Art, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford, Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, Gemeentemuseum in The Hague, and the Krunsthalle in Switzerland. He is frequently referred to as one of the country's most prolific artists and as someone who has helped shape the modern art movement.

Given all of Sol's significant life accomplishments, he was an exceptionally humble man who was loved by those around him. His wife Carol was especially devoted, and is an exceptionally caring and compassionate individual.

I rise today to salute the life and accomplishments of Sol LeWitt and join Members in praying for his family. He will be missed by all.

HONORING THE LIFE OF ERNEST GALLO

SPEECH OF

HON. DORIS O. MATSUI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 16, 2007

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I am proud that the House of Representatives is considering H. Con. Res. 88, a resolution honoring the life of Ernest Gallo. I am an original cosponsor of this resolution and a long-time admirer of Ernest Gallo, who sadly passed away on March 6.

Ernest Gallo was a pioneer in the field of winemaking and a generous philanthropist. He was also a friend to me and my late husband, Congressman Robert Matsui. His story is remarkable and exemplifies the American dream. Born to Italian immigrants, Ernest and his brother Julio, took just $5,900 in savings and a winemaking pamphlet from the Modesto Public Library, and from this modest start built the world's second-largest winery. He foresaw the potential for the California wine industry and relied upon smart ideas and hard work to build an incredibly successful business that today serves as an industry model. Today, the Gallo Winery is an important driver of northern California's regional economy, providing good jobs for 4,600 families.

But Ernest's lifetime contribution to California and the Nation went beyond his business achievements. As he became more successful, Ernest gave back to the community where he grew up. Ernest Gallo's personal generosity is demonstrated by such endeavors as the Gallo Center for the Arts in Modesto and the Ernest Gallo Clinic and Research Center at the University of California, San Francisco. These important institutions stand as a reminder of Ernest Gallo's life and his spirit.

I hope all of my colleagues will join me in supporting this resolution and honoring the life and memory of Ernest Gallo.

NATIONAL BREAST AND CERVICAL CANCER EARLY DETECTION PROGRAM REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2007

SPEECH OF

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 27, 2007

Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program Reauthorization Act.

Increasing access to cancer screening for women at risk is an essential part of preventing deaths from breast and cervical cancers. However, unfortunately, women with fewer resources and women of color, who are disproportionately uninsured or underinsured, are significantly less likely to have access to preventative screenings such as mammograms and Pap tests.

I am proud to be a cosponsor of H.R. 1132, which reauthorizes the National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program, NBCCEDP, to improve access to screening and diagnostic services for breast and cervical cancers among underserved women. It also authorizes increased funding for this lifesaving program.

Since it was created in 1991, NBCCEDP has provided breast and cervical cancer screening services to more than 2.9 million uninsured and underinsured women. It has diagnosed more than 29,000 breast cancers, 94,000 precursor cervical lesions, and 1,800 cervical cancers. H.R. 1132 renews our commitment to saving women's lives through screening and early detection of breast and cervical cancers.

Ensuring that all women have access to these vital health services must be a priority. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this bill.

IN HONOR OF THE GRADUATES OF TEANECK'S 21ST CITIZEN POLICE ACADEMY

HON. SCOTT GARRETT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Madam Speaker, I rise today to share with my colleagues the exemplary community policing program conducted by the Township of Teaneck and to congratulate the 41 citizens who will graduate next month from Teaneck's 21st Citizen Police Academy.

The program gives citizens the opportunity to experience first-hand the work and techniques of the Teaneck Police Department. For eleven weeks, citizens participate in classroom activities, field trips to a prison and a medical examiner's office, and hands-on exercises. Students can gain a strong understanding and appreciation for the work that the police do every day to keep our communities safe. Students can also gain the skills necessary to help be eyes and ears in our communities, helping the police keep those neighborhoods safe.

I commend the Police Department for taking the initiative to organize this program. Particularly in our post-9/11 world, we know that an active and alert citizenry is one of our best defenses against terrorist and criminal behavior.

I also commend the 41 citizens who have taken time from their busy personal and professional lives to participate in this program: Sal Aliano, Kimberly Anderson, Shonita Badger, Alan Barsamian, James Bennett, Jon-Michael Bernal, Tiffany Blandford, Michael Bonanno, Giuseppe Casalinuovo, Angela Cespedes, Alba Coello, Mario Coello, Marva Coleman, Nancy Elsayed, David Fisher, Kevin Frederick, John Hohnadel, Tiara Jonson, Cynthia Johnson, Beverly Joseph, Chris Kowalczyk, Gladis Lizardi, Tara Lizardi, Gina Lampley, Celia Maldonado, Usman Malik, Jahmilah Mansfield, Tara McVey, Mireilly Meiss, Travara Morton, Sharde Mott, Avani Patel, Yoselin Perez, Flor Ramirez, Alba Ramos, Omer Savasci, Michael Schmitt, Andre Sousa, Jenene Taylor, Stacey Ann Wilson, and Leslie Srolovits.

TRIBUTE TO MARGARET NICHOLAS

HON. TIM RYAN

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Madam Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Margaret Nicholas, a member of the Hungarian Reformed Federation of America, Branch #227 in Warren, OH. Mrs. Nicholas was named a Fraternal Most Valuable Participant for the week of October 2, 2006. These Fraternal MVP's embody a spirit of generosity, dedicating their time to the betterment of their communities through their charitable endeavors.

The HRFA was founded 110 years ago, with the mission to preserve, promote, and support the cultural, religious, and linguistic traditions of Hungarians in America. Mrs. Nicholas has long been active in the Warren branch of the HRFA, currently serving as the Branch Manager.

Over the years, Mrs. Nicholas has been involved in many charitable activities, among them assembling care packages for troops serving overseas, which she has done since the days of the Vietnam War. Over the past two years, she has helped deliver over 4,000 cookies to the VA hospital in Brecksville, OH for the annual Join Hands Day. She is deeply involved in her church, helping to cook sausages to raise money for missions, organizing a vacation bible school, as well as serving as both a deacon and an elder.

I would like to commend Mrs. Nicholas on her outstanding devotion the improvement of the lives of people, not only in her community but across the country and around the world.

FREEDOM FOR LÁZARO RODRIGUEZ CAPOTE

HON. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak about Lázaro Miguel Rodriguez Capote, a political prisoner in totalitarian Cuba.

Mr. Rodríguez Capote is a member of the Cuban Pro Human Rights Party and a peaceful pro-democracy activist in totalitarian Cuba. As an opponent of the tyrannical regime in Havana, he has worked for basic human rights for the people of Cuba despite constant harassment and repression because he believes the Cuban people are entitled to basic human rights and democracy; in other words, freedom from tyranny.

On February 24, 1996, three U.S. citizens and a resident of Florida were assassinated when two civilian Brothers to the Rescue aircraft, on a humanitarian mission, were destroyed in international airspace by Cuban MiGs on the direct order of the Cuban dictator. The downing of the Brothers to the Rescue airplanes over international waters by the tyranny left an indelible impression on the consciences of Cuban pro-democracy activists and in countless millions throughout the world.

Mr. Rodríguez Capote was one of the many human rights activists in totalitarian Cuba who sought to commemorate the tragic deaths of these men but who was prohibited from demonstrating by the tyranny. Although Mr. Rodríguez Capote was threatened by state security thugs prior to his participation in peaceful demonstrations, he refused to allow his voice to be silenced. Consequently, he was wrongfully arrested on February 22, 2002 on trumped-up charges of "espionage and enemy propaganda".

Mr. Rodríguez Capote was summarily incarcerated and to this day languishes in grotesque subhuman conditions without having even been tried for a single crime. He is being held indefinitely in a totalitarian dungeon, suffering abhorrent conditions because he refuses to accept the reality inflicted upon Cuba by the tyranny. Since his incarceration he has held several hunger strikes to attract attention to the plight of Cuban political prisoners,

Mr. Rodríguez Capote is one of the many heroes of the peaceful Cuban democratic movement who are locked in the dungeons of the dictatorship for their beliefs. These men and women are symbols of freedom and democracy, who will always be remembered when freedom reigns again in Cuba.

Madam Speaker, let me be very clear, the brutal repression practiced by the tyranny in Havana is incompatible with the democratic values and the international law of our hemisphere. Mr. Rodríguez Capote is suffering in a dungeon because he believes in freedom, democracy and human rights. My Colleagues, we must demand the immediate and unconditional release of Lázaro Miguel Rodríguez Capote and every prisoner of conscience in totalitarian Cuba.

COMMEMORATING THE 85TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF THE AMERICAN HELLENIC EDUCATIONAL PROGRESSIVE ASSOCIATION

SPEECH OF

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 16, 2007

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Con. Res. 71, legislation that I introduced, which commemorates the 85th Anniversary of the American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association.

As a co-founder and co-chair of the Congressional Caucus on Hellenic Issues, I have had a close working relationship with AHEPA.

The Nation's largest and oldest association of American citizens of Greek heritage and Philhellenes, AHEPA was founded on July 26, 1922, in Atlanta, Georgia, by eight visionary Greek immigrants to combat bigotry and discrimination and help Greek immigrants assimilate into American society.

Today, its mission is to promote the ancient Greek ideals of education, philanthropy, civic responsibility, and family and individual excellence through community service and volunteerism.

Over its history, AHEPA has achieved remarkable accomplishments. It has fostered American patriotism, sheltered the elderly, educated our youth, promoted Hellenic heritage, and advanced rapproachment in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Additionally, AHEPA's members exemplify the American Dream. With their strong work ethic, Greek-Americans have risen to become leaders in their respective professions, from government to business to the arts.

Currently headed by Supreme President Gus James, II, AHEPA has been a vehicle through which this advancement has occurred in our society.

I want to thank Chairman WAXMAN and Ranking Member DAVIS for their support of this bill and for moving it through the Oversight and Government Reform Committee. I also want to acknowledge my fellow Caucus Co-Chair, Representative BILIRAKIS, for joining me in introducing this bill.

TRIBUTE TO ZACH JOHNSON'S 2007 MASTERS TOURNAMENT VICTORY

HON. DAVID LOEBSACK

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

Mr. LOEBSACK. Madam Speaker, today, my colleagues and I from the Iowa delegation are introducing a resolution congratulating Zach Johnson on his 2007 Masters Tournament victory. Zach Johnson is the first Iowan to win the Masters, and is only the second native born Iowan to win a major golf championship. As many Iowans will recall, Jack Fleck won the 1955 U.S. Open Championship at Olympic Club in San Francisco. Zach has joined the ranks of golfs greatest champions, including Byron Nelson, Sam Snead, Ben Hogan, Arnold Palmer, Gary Player, Jack Nicklaus, Tiger Woods, Phil Mickelson, and many others.

I'm particularly proud of Zach's accomplishments because he is a true Iowan, and from the 2nd District, which I represent. He was born in Iowa City and raised in Cedar Rapids.

Zach was a member of the Regis High School golf team in Cedar Rapids. His talent and dedication helped lead the team to an Iowa 4A State Golf Championship in 1992. He also played on his Drake University golf team in Des Moines, there he helped lead the team to three NCAA regional meets and two Missouri Valley championships.

Zach continued to impress in his early professional career. He won his first PGA Tour event at the 2004 Bell South Classic and qualified for the 2006 U.S. Ryder Cup team representing the U.S. as one of 12 golfers in Kildare, Ireland.

On Sunday April 8, 2007, Zach Johnson showed great skill, patience and will. He withstood the challenge of the weather and of the course, and won the prestigious 2007 Masters Tournament. All of Iowa is proud of our hometown success story.

HONORING GIL COHEN FOR LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT IN THE VISUAL ARTS

HON. PATRICK J. MURPHY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

Mr. PATRICK J. MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor an extraordinary Eighth District resident. Mr. Gil Cohen has recently received the Bucks County Arts Award for his devotion and talent as an artist. An exceptional aviation artist, Mr. Cohen is a member of many local art groups.

As a young boy in Philadelphia, Mr. Cohen became an expert in identifying the various World War II planes flying overhead. He combined this knowledge with a love of history and a gift for painting, first as an artist with the United States Army in West Germany and later as a freelance artist. One of his greatest accomplishments is a series of oil paintings depicting the Eighth Air Force during World War II.

Mr. Cohen has received a number of awards for his work, and he has exhibited his paintings at the National Military Park system, the Kennedy Center and the Pentagon. He is a member of the Air Force Art Program, the New York Society of Illustrators, and the American Society of Aviation Artists. He is also a past Vice President and Chairman of the Exhibition Committee of the American Society of Aviation Artists. He is a Coast Guard Illustrator and has served as a member of the Central Bucks Chamber of Commerce Byers Bucks Fever Art Exhibition committee.

Madam Speaker, Mr. Cohen has proven himself to be both an accomplished artist and an upstanding citizen. His past service to the United States of America as an Army and Coast Guard illustrator demonstrates his commitment to his country, as does the work he still does in his community. Madam Speaker, such an exemplary model for society is seldom found, and I rise today to honor Mr. Cohen for his service and commend him for his talent.

IN HONOR OF JOHN JOSEPH HAMMILL

HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor a true servant of New Jersey and the States, who devoted his life to the safety and well being of his neighbors and community. John Joseph Hammill, a veteran of the United States Navy, Highland Park Police Department and the Middlesex County Prosecutor's Office, passed away on December 6, 2006 at the age of 59.

Born on July 23, 1947 in Jersey City, Mr. Hammill moved to Carteret, New Jersey as a teenager. After graduating from Carteret High School, Mr. Hammill enlisted in the United States Navy and served in a military hospital in Yokohama, Japan until 1969.

When Mr. Hammill returned home, he joined the Highland Park Police Department, dutifully protecting his community for 8 years and attaining the rank of Detective, First Grade. Demonstrating exceptional knowledge and passion for traffic safety, Mr. Hammill transferred to the Middlesex County Prosecutor's Office in 1977, where he served as a detective in the Fatal Accident Unit until his retirement from law enforcement in 1994.

Mr. Hammill's relentless commitment to public service brought him out of a brief retirement to the Damon House Drug Rehabilitation Center in New Brunswick. Through hard work and dedication he ascended quickly through the organization to the role of Assistant Director, where he served in this capacity until retiring in 2004.

While devoting his professional career to serving the public, Mr. Hammill was equally unselfish with his personal time, working to better his community through organizations such as the New Jersey State Policeman's Benevolent Association, Mothers Against Drunk Driving, the New Jersey Coalition Against Impaired Driving, the Middlesex County Alcohol Association and as an AARP defensive driving instructor.

Madam Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me today in honoring the life of Mr. John Joseph Hammill. A caring family man, Mr. Hammill served his community and country with pride and honor. His life's work served as an inspiration to us all, and he will be deeply missed.

LIEUTENANT TODD JASON BRYANT POST OFFICE

SPEECH OF

HON. DAVID DREIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 16, 2007

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as a proud cosponsor of H.R. 988, the Lieutenant Todd Jason Bryant Post Office Building Designation Act. Todd Bryant, a First Lieutenant in the United States Army, was killed in action on October 31, 2003 when his Humvee encountered an explosive device on the road between Fallujah and Baghdad. He was 23 years old. He is a recipient of the National Defense Service Ribbon, the Purple Heart, the Iraqi Freedom Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal and the Bronze Star.

Bryant, a 2002 graduate of West Point, was a member of Company C, 1st Battalion and 34th Armor Regiment of the 1st Infantry Division at Fort Riley, Kansas. Todd Bryant was deployed to Iraq in September 2003, a few days after he married his wife Jenifer.

Todd was born at the Long Beach Naval Hospital. Although he grew up in Riverside, he attended La Canada High School, located in La Canada-Flintridge, California, one of the cities I am privileged to represent. While at La Canada High, he participated in the band and played for the Spartans football team. Todd came from a military family. His parents, Larry and Linda, prior to both working at Jet Propulsion Laboratory in La Canada-Flintridge, both served as Captains in the U.S. Air Force. His older sister Tiffany is a fellow West Point graduate and his older brother Timothy is a U.S. Marine. Although Todd excelled at being a solider, he also had other interests. He volunteered as a Congressional intern in Congressman KEN CALVERT's office and he spent a summer participating in Service America at West Hills Elementary School in Bremerton, Washington in 2001. Learning more about Todd's interests and actions, one can not come away without noting the extraordinary impact he had on his friends, family and community. Today, his friends and family are still reminiscing about his humor, his love of In-N-Out burgers and his charisma.

Mr. Speaker, without question, Congress and the American people will continue to honor and remember the men and women who gave the ultimate sacrifice in this war. We hope this small act of memorializing Lieutenant Todd Jason Bryant at the Rubidoux post office honors his memory and serves as a reminder to those in the community of the remarkable heroism of Todd and his family.

TRIBUTE TO J. LLOYD ''BUD'' JACOBS, JR.

HON. HENRY A. WAXMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

Mr. WAXMAN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize J. Lloyd ''Bud'' Jacobs, Jr., a remarkable educator who is retiring from the Los

Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) after 38 years of service.

Bud Jacobs, who earned a Bachelor of Arts degree at the University of California, Berkeley and a Master of Arts degree from the University of California, Los Angeles, began his career with LAUSD as an English teacher at Fremont High School. He later worked as an instructional advisor for Regional Administrative Region C-LAUSD and an as assistant principal at Bret Harte Intermediate School, John Muir Middle School, and Venice High School.

From 1992–2000 Bud Jacobs was principal of Venice High School, which Newsweek Magazine rated as one of the top 100 high schools in America. Venice High School also received presidential recognition for 2 National Science Bowl championships. Since 2000, he has served as director of instructional support services for LAUSD's high school programs.

Bud Jacobs has been honored as an outstanding administrator by the Association of California School Administrators and the California Council for the Social Studies.

In addition to his career with LAUSD, Bud Jacobs served as a fellow with the Institute for Learning at the University of Pittsburgh and with the Harvard Principals' Center. He has been a trustee for the Los Angeles Educational Alliance Reform Now (LEARN) and president of UCLA's School of Education Alumni Support Group (EUCLAN).

Bud Jacobs has earned the profound respect and affection of students, teachers and administrators within LAUSD. The Los Angeles community owes him a debt of gratitude for his dedication to our students and tireless commitment to educational excellence. I congratulate him on his extraordinary contributions and wish him good health and happiness as he embarks on this new chapter in his life.

SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF FINANCIAL LITERACY MONTH

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in complete support of the Financial Literacy Month Resolution which addresses the public's lack of knowledge of basic financial principles and aims to lessen our Nation's already enormous consumer debt.

According to recent studies, many young Americans seem to be lacking personal financial management skills. The facts indicate that for nearly a decade now, high school seniors have possessed an insufficient knowledge of personal finance. Attempting to address this gap in knowledge and to prevent future financial blunders, 16 states are requiring basic financial education in their high schools. I strongly believe that, as a result of such efforts, many young citizens will become financially responsible. This will not only enlighten their personal lives, but ultimately combat our growing consumer debt.

Along with America's youth, many adults are also seemingly incapable of properly managing their finances. It is my understanding that, three years ago, a Retirement Confidence Survey found that 42 percent of workers surveyed had not calculated how much money they will need for retirement; and additionally, 37 percent of the workers said that they were not saving for retirement. From these statistics and with the current status of Social Security, I feel that it would be beneficial for many Americans to be educated on financial opportunities; including, but not limited to, qualified cash and deferred arrangements. Thus, we must promote nation-wide financial literacy programs to help citizens seize such opportunities.

In closing, our Nation's expanding consumer balance and the economic fears of many Americans can both be assuaged through H.R. 273. I am delighted that many of my fellow members are already in favor of this resolution, and I encourage my other colleagues to follow suit.

SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF FINANCIAL LITERACY MONTH

SPEECH OF

HON. RUBÉN HINOJOSA

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 16, 2007

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Speaker, I submit the following letters regarding H. Res. 273, Supporting the Goals and Ideals of Financial Literacy Month.

FREDDIE MAC,
McLean, VA, April 16, 2007.

Hon. RUBÉN HINOJOSA,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN HINOJOSA: On behalf of Freddie Mac, I am writing to express our support for the bi-partisan Congressional resolution (H.R. 273) supporting April as ''Financial Literacy Month,'' cosponsored by 115 Members of the House of Representatives.

As a secondary mortgage market entity, Freddie Mac has made home possible for one in six home buyers and more than four million renters in America. We greatly understand the important role financial literacy plays in obtaining and maintaining good credit. Credit records affect everything from renting an apartment to buying a home, paying for a college education to purchasing a car. Poor credit histories limit the ability of many consumers to attain financial security, particularly those in under-served communities—including low-income consumers, minorities and immigrants. Without good credit, it's difficult to save money, become a homeowner, and accumulate wealth.

In response to the need to increase financial literacy and awareness, Freddie Mac developed the CreditSmart®, and CreditSmart® Español consumer education curricula. CreditSmart is designed to help consumers understand, build, and maintain good credit. Since its launch in 2000, the CreditSmart program has reached in excess of one million people through its outreach network of Community Based organizations, conventions, initiatives and web access. (www.freddiemac.com/creditsmart)

CreditSmart is used in numerous communities across America and is taught to consumers by college instructors, nonprofit counseling agency staff, consumer and community group staff, police officers, employers, lenders, real estate professionals and mortgage brokers. Just two months ago, Freddie Mac launched CreditSmart Asian a new three-part series of multilingual guidebooks focused on helping Asian Americans become more informed consumers. This program will be available in Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, and English.

Freddie Mac has also been a leader in sponsoring a successful consumer awareness campaign to help consumers avoid predatory lending practices. Don't Borrow Trouble®, is a national award-winning campaign that combines public education and counseling services to help homeowners avoid lending practices that strip away their home's equity. Pioneered in Boston by Mayor Thomas M. Menino and the Massachusetts Community & Banking Council (MCBC), Freddie Mac has expanded the campaign to communities nationwide to almost 50 cities and states throughout the country. These campaigns have helped inform more than 100,000 consumers across the U.S.

Freddie Mac commends you for your bringing this resolution to the House of Representatives to continue to draw awareness to the need for financial literacy and we are grateful for your leadership of the Financial Literacy Caucus.

Sincerely,

KIRSTEN JOHNSON-OBEY,
Director, Congressional Relations.

STATEMENT BY FORUM CEO DONALD L. EVANS ON FINANCIAL LITERACY RESOLUTION

WASHINGTON, DC.—Financial Services Forum CEO Donald L. Evans issued the following statement on H. Res. 273, a resolution supporting Financial Literacy Month:

''Financial assets—stock, bonds, mutual finds, and insurance products—are powerful tools for building wealth and providing for a secure future. With a record number of Americans approaching retirement, financial literacy is more important than ever. Rep. Ruben Hinojosa and Rep. Judy Biggert are bringing appropriate focus to the goal of providing a better financial education to all Americans. We appreciate their efforts to raise awareness of financial literacy and fully support their efforts.''

Last April, the Financial Services Forum released a survey finding that two in five (42 percent) of Americans say they know only some, very little, or not much about how to effectively manage their long-term personal finances and retirement security. The poll also found that 60 percent of young people (between the ages of 18 and 34) say they do not have the knowledge they need to effectively manage their personal finances and retirement security.

The Financial Services Forum has also issued a report detailing the significant commitment of Forum member firms to financial literacy programs.

A copy of that report and the survey are available on our web site at www.financialservicesforum.org.

AMERICA'S COMMUNITY BANKERS,
April 11, 2007.

Hon. RUBÉN HINOJOSA,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

Hon. JUDY BIGGERT,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVES HINOJOSA AND BIGGERT: On behalf of America's Community Bankers (ACB) and its over 1000 member institutions, I am writing to express our strong support for H. Res. 273, a Resolution to support the goals and ideals of Financial Literacy Month. ACB commends you both for your ongoing leadership and commitment to increasing awareness of financial literacy in the United States, and we are also pleased that a similar Resolution, S. Res. 126, has been approved by the United States Senate.

The American financial services system often presents a maze of decisions, and ACB has always made financial literacy a top priority to help consumers choose wisely. ACB's members are dedicated to strengthening America's communities by meeting the financial needs of consumers fairly and efficiently. As the responsibility for individuals to manage their own finances increases, so does our responsibility to provide individuals from every economic background with the tools they need to navigate their financial environment. ACB is committed to ensuring that all Americans have fair and equitable access to credit, and that consumers have the necessary skills to make wise financial decisions.

The goals expressed in H. Res. 273 recognize many of ACB's core principles, and we look forward to continuing to work with both of you, along with the House Financial and Economic Literacy Caucus, to make financial literacy a priority of the 110th Congress.

Sincerely,

ROBERT R. DAVIS,
Executive Vice President and Managing Director, Government Relations.

CONSUMER BANKERS ASSOCIATION,
Arlington, VA.

Re H. Res. 273

Hon. RUBÉN HINOJOSA,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.
Hon. JUDY BIGGERT,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVES HINOJOSA AND BIGGERT: The membership of the Consumer Bankers Association has taken a leadership role in providing financial education, offering instruction in every field of personal finance, including home ownership, foreclosure prevention, credit card usage, basic budgeting and a host of other topics relevant to the needs of our customers. CBA has found that such efforts have helped produce knowledgeable consumers with the financial skills needed for the responsible use of the products and services available today from our member banks.

It is because of the intensive and extensive efforts to educate their customers that our membership welcomes your efforts to recognize the importance of financial literacy by promoting Financial Literacy Month through H. Res. 273. We believe the Resolution is a welcome part of the campaign so that everyone is provided the tools to navigate the sometimes complex waters of today's economy.

We congratulate you for highlighting the commitment to financial literacy. CBA pledges our full support to promote the goals of Financial Literacy Month and offers our assistance to the Congress and our communities in creating a better-educated population of financial services consumers.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you feel we can be of further assistance in your endeavors to promote financial education.

MARCIA Z. SULLIVAN,
Vice President and Director, Government Relations.

WASHINGTON, Apr. 4 2007.—The National Association of Affordable Housing Lenders (NAAHL) strongly supports the bipartisan congressional resolution (H. Res. 273) designating April as ''Financial Literacy Month,'' to increase awareness about the importance of financial education in the United States and the serious consequences that can result from a lack of understanding about personal finances.

''NAAHL represents America's leaders in moving private capital to those in need,'' said NAAHL President and CEO Judy Kennedy. ''Our members have helped lead efforts to increase financial education nationwide, especially for low- and moderate-income persons.''

''For example, NAAHL members ShoreBank and NeighborWorks America, in partnership with the federal banking regulators, have pioneered programs and approaches which have resulted in greater financial literacy in underserved communities,'' Kennedy said.

''We commend Reps. Ruben Hinojosa (D–Texas) and Judy Biggert (R–Ill.) for introducing this resolution that supports the goals and ideals of Financial Literacy Month.''

The resolution has more than 100 cosponsors in the House of Representatives. A similar resolution, S. Res. 126, has been approved by the Senate.

Hon. RUBÉN HINOJOSA,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE HINOJOSA: The Texas Credit Union League is pleased to support House Resolution 273. As you know, the Texas Credit Union League through our Foundation supports financial literacy in a big way. Project NEFE—a statewide collaborative initiative to bring the accredited High School Financial Planning Program along with comprehensive training to schools across Texas—is one of the primary missions of our Foundation. All material and training is offered free of charge.

The NEFE curriculum meets the learning objectives and standards approved by the Texas Education Agency and State Board of Education to meet the requirement. Credit unions are all about people helping people, and there is no greater way to demonstrate that commitment than credit unions working with teachers and providing the volunteer efforts to train our children in financial matters. We have been extremely pleased and excited on how our Foundation, Texas Cooperative Extension and NEFE have worked together to deliver this free education to our younger generation.

On behalf of the seven million credit union members concerned with the issue of financial literacy, we applaud you and your many cosponsors. We look forward to joining our voice with yours in the cause of financial literacy.

Sincerely,

DICK ENSWEILER,
CEO/President, Texas Credit Union League.

HONORING AMERICAN LEGION POST 364 AND AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY UNIT 364

HON. TOM DAVIS

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the officers and members of American Legion Post 364, American Legion Auxiliary Unit 364, and all national members of the American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary.

The American Legion is a community-service organization, made up of patriotic, mutual-help, war-time veterans. The American Legion Auxiliary is a women's patriotic service organization, created to assist the American Legion. Through community service programs, both of these fine institutions have made a great impact on our community and to the veterans living in our region.

This year, Mr. Jerry Howard will serve as the American Legion Department of Virginia commander. A 22 year veteran of the U.S. Air Force, Jerry has been a member of the American Legion for 23 years. He has previously served as Post 364 commander, 16th District commander and Department of Virginia vice commander.

Ms. Marcia Wheatley will serve as the American Legion Auxiliary Department of Virginia president. A 12 year member of the American Legion Auxiliary, Marcia has served as Unit 364 president and 16th District president.

Together, Jerry and Marcia will represent Virginia at state and national veteran events where they will promote programs that benefit veterans, troops, and children. Also, they will travel here, to Washington DC, to meet with members of Congress to discuss legislation needed to provide for the health and well being of troops and veterans.

Other recent officer selections include Virginia Department Historian Barbara Barnes, Auxiliary National Security Chairman Dianne Cabot, Post 364 Commander William Moriarity and Unit 364 President Raye Ferrington. These individuals bring a stellar record of accomplishment to these institutions, and the American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary will benefit greatly from their experience.

Madam Speaker, in closing, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the men and women who serve the American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary. Their tireless efforts on behalf of the community, state and nation deserve our highest praise. I commend and congratulate all of these officers on their selection to these positions, and wish them further success as they continue to work for our Nation's veterans.

HONORING DALE BROWN

HON. RON LEWIS

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

Mr. LEWIS of Kentucky. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Warren County School District Superintendent Dale Brown for winning the Kentucky School Board Association's 2007 F.L. Dupree Outstanding Superintendent Award.

Mr. Brown was named superintendent of the Warren County School System in 2000. The school district has flourished under his stewardship throughout the past 7 years. Among his many accomplishments, Brown is particularly noted for maintaining the school system's budget while overseeing an ambitious $4 million technology overhaul that has outfitted every classroom with an ACTIV board.

Superintendent Brown has also won widespread praise for his efforts to increase energy conservation; creating an energy education program and overseeing the Commonwealth's first energy efficient school in Alvaton, KY. These initiatives have saved the school district over $2 million in energy costs over the last three years, demonstrating a remarkable local commitment to our nation's quest to promote energy independence.

More than 23 different native languages are spoken by Warren County School District students. Mr. Brown has created a new comprehensive language program for limited

English proficient students uniquely tailored to their individual needs.

It is my great privilege to recognize Mr. Dale Brown today before the entire U.S. House of Representatives for his excellent work in public education. His dedication to the Warren County School District is felt by students, teachers, and administrators alike. He is an outstanding citizen worthy of our collective honor and appreciation.

THE VIRGINIA TECH SHOOTINGS

HON. JAMES R. LANGEVIN

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

Mr. LANGEVIN. Madam Speaker, it is with profound sorrow that I rise today to express my deepest sympathy to everyone in the Virginia Tech community, and to all of their shocked and grieving loved ones. I know I also join millions around the nation who are at a loss to fully comprehend yesterday's shootings on the Virginia Tech campus that took 33 lives, including the shooter. I also pray for the quick and full recovery of all those who were injured.

I am also profoundly saddened to learn that Daniel O'Neil, of Lincoln, RI, was a victim of yesterday's shootings. I join his family and the people of Rhode Island in mourning this great loss.

Madam Speaker, every life that was lost yesterday was taken too early. Every life taken had a history, a family and dreams for the future. In the coming days, these lives will be identified, and we will hear many terrible stories about what happened in those buildings. We will also hear about heroic acts in the face of unimaginable terror. As a nation, we must find solace in each other and reach out to those that need us the most.

As long as I have been in public service, I have tried to answer the question, ''how can we make our country safer than it is right now?'' Unfortunately, yesterday's events showed us all how much work needs to be done. While many questions remain, we do know that yesterday marked the deadliest mass shooting in U.S. history. I believe it is our job in Congress to make sure an incident like this never happens again. As we await the findings of the investigation, we must look to our laws and security procedures to make sure that they are protecting our citizens. I also hope we can learn from this tragedy will spur a national discussion on how we can reduce gun violence.

Today, let us reflect on the lives we have so senselessly and tragically lost. May we keep them and their loved ones in our thoughts and prayers, and may their memory live on forever.

SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF FINANCIAL LITERACY MONTH

SPEECH OF

HON. LORETTA SANCHEZ

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 16, 2007

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Res. 273—Supporting the goals and ideals of Financial Literacy Month.

Have you seen the headlines recently? Only yesterday, it was reported that mortgage defaults are at an all time high in California. According to one report, 46,760 borrowers defaulted between January and March. That's an increase of 23.1 percent relative to the previous quarter, and 148 percent compared with the same period a year ago.

In another story, I read that foreclosures of homes in California were 11,033 in the first quarter. That's an 81.5 percent increase over last quarter.

I'm concerned about the effect that this is having on families in my home state. I'm also concerned about the effect that this is having on the economy of the nation as a whole.

While it is impossible to say that this crisis could have been avoided, we can certainly do more to shield consumers from its worst effects. One of those ways is to promote greater financial literacy.

This bill, H. Res. 273, is an important tool for increasing awareness, and points the way forward toward creating greater financial literacy in our communities.

The potential benefits of greater financial literacy are almost incalculable. We can be sure that greater awareness and understanding of finances will lead to higher savings rates. It will allow consumers to gain access to less expensive and less risky loans. And it will protect people from getting into a precarious financial situation without their understanding the consequences.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, and for us to join together to not only promote the goals of financial literacy, but also, to make them a reality.

TRIBUTE TO THE FILM SCHOOL OF SAN ANTONIO

HON. CIRO D. RODRIGUEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Madam Speaker, I rise today to celebrate and recognize the accomplishments of The Film School of San Antonio, a magnet program on the campus of Harlandale High School in the Harlandale Independent School District of San Antonio, Texas.

Utilizing a rigorous, sequential and customized curriculum, the Film School of San Antonio provides first hand experience in the collaborative arts of filmmaking, screenwriting, animation and drama. Additionally, the film school prepares students for job opportunities, scholarships and college admissions. With a strong foundation in media, students also compete in national contests and film festivals.

The Film School of San Antonio and its students have earned a wealth of awards and accolades. In 2005, the program received an Emmy nomination for their film ''La Corrida,'' a documentary on the plight of illegal immigrants in ''No Mans Land'' just north of the U.S./Mexican border. In 2006, the program's student produced film Mocha, made history when it won a non-student category Emmy Award. This is the first high school to be able to claim this achievement in Texas. Most recently, the school was invited by the Sundance Institute to attend the internationally recognized Sundance Film Festival to meet and network with Producers and Directors.

The famous actor and filmmaker Orson Welles once said that, ''A film is never really good unless the camera is an eye in the head of a poet.'' The students at the Film School of San Antonio are poets that through film find their expression. Through their engagement with the program and the assistance of their dedicated teachers, the students at the Film School of San Antonio are able to give their poetic visions a reality.

I extend my most sincere congratulations to the program director George F. Ozuna; the school instructors: Pete Barcenez, Dagoberto Patlán, Daniel Garcia and Sharon Shuler; the school's students: Briana Baiz, Mercedes Casarez, Krysten Casias, Samuel Garcia, Michael Levine, Felix Perez and Raul Servin; and their families. Their work is inspiring. I am proud of their success and hope that film continues to bring them much personal satisfaction.

VAN JUNIOR SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL,
Van, WV, February 22, 2007.

Congressman NICK RAHALL,
Rayburn House Office Building,
Washington, DC.

CONGRESSMAN RAHALL: We are the Senior Civics class of Van Jr/Sr High School in Boone County, West Virginia. We watched President Bush's State of the Union Address and the Democratic Response. We are writing to you to discuss our concerns within the government today. Our Civics class consists of all male students, who (if the draft is enabled) would be sent to fight for a cause we don't understand.

Our primary concern is the war in Iraq. We are in favor of fighting terrorism, but America went into Iraq under false pretenses. We now know that Iraq had nothing to do with the attack on 9/11. We believe that the reason we went to Iraq is to gain a stronghold on the oil fields. We are trading blood for oil. We have strong feeling that America should have never invaded Iraq because our presence there is breeding more terrorism around the world. We are giving terrorists a common foe to retaliate against. We are incubating more hatred from other terrorists and now giving them a reason to unite hence the statement, ''The enemy of my enemy is my ally''.

We highly oppose the sending of 21,000 more soldiers to Iraq. Instead, we must start bringing soldiers home, because who is going to protect us while our soldiers are fighting overseas? Some soldiers are serving their third tour of duty against their will, compliments of the Backdoor Draft. America should have never gone further than Afghanistan. We have forgotten about Osama Bin Laden in our rush to topple Saddam Hussein.

All we are doing right now is debating while our soldiers are loosing their lives. Let us quit talking and do something! Young lives and futures depend on your actions. Please take into consideration the lives you can save instead of destroy.

Another of our concerns is the way our economy is being affected by the war. Just think of what 2.9 trillion dollars could have done for this nation. Then look at this figure, oil companies are making an annual profit of 39.5 billion dollars while many people in this nation are suffering in poverty. They are suffering because in today's society one cannot support a family on the minimum wage of $5.15 an hour. Only three percent of Americans today are financially well off. The outsourcing of good paying American jobs is causing our unemployment rate to rise. If this trend continues, poverty will become more common and our society will become even more unstable.

The money spent on the Iraq war has put a tremendous amount of pressure on the recipients of Social Security. Many older Americans have to choose between medication and food because they cannot afford both. Add to this the fact that thousands of Americans still do not have any health insurance.

America has become greedy and corrupt. When did America stop caring about the common people? The Civics Class of Van High School wants the voice of the common man to be heard in Washington, D.C. We are the future of this great nation and our representatives must consider this while debating the course our country will take, not only in Iraq, but also at home.

Sincerely,

The Senior Civics Class of Van Jr.-Sr. High School: Justin Gent, Christopher Boulet, Robert Burnett, Joshua Cook, Jason Hoosier, Matthew Kuhn, Terry Legg, Gregory O'Dell, Jonathan Simms, Robert Valle, Scott White, Kasey Whitman.

RECOGNIZING JONATHON OTTO FOR HIS EFFORTS IN THE AFTERMATH OF HURRICANE KATRINA

HON. PATRICK J. MURPHY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

Mr. PATRICK J. MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commend Mr. Jonathon Otto for his efforts in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Mr. Otto has raised money for and helped rebuild the Mississippi town of Bay St. Louis, which was decimated in Hurricane Katrina. Mr. Otto has been nominated for the Bucks County Chamber of Commerce's 2007 Ambassador Award.

Mr. Otto's career with Penn Valley Contractors, Inc. as a construction superintendent and estimator, along with his passion for helping others, made him the perfect candidate to spearhead fundraising efforts in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina for the Bucks/Mont Katrina Relief Project.

Madam Speaker, Mr. Otto has truly risen to the challenge. He raised more than $2 million and personally oversaw reconstruction efforts. He stepped up and coordinated the collection of materials, volunteers, and transportation, supervising the construction of a brand-new daycare center in Bay St. Louis.

Beyond the Katrina Relief Project, Mr. Otto has served the community in a variety of ways, including acting as Treasure and Director of the Phillips Mill Community Association, trustee of the Newtown Friends School, treasurer and clerk of the Finance Committee, and director of the Heritage Conservancy.

Madam Speaker, Mr. Otto is an inspiration for us all. When a community was in trouble, he jumped in and began rebuilding. On behalf of the residents of the Eighth District, of Bay St. Louis and of all Americans, I congratulate Mr. Otto on his commendable efforts with the Katrina Relief Project. In a stunning display of good will and humanity, he has reminded us of the important things in life and the value of community.

HONORING THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE METROPOLITAN YOUTH SYMPHONY OF ARIZONA WAYNE ROEDERER, MUSICAL DIRECTOR

HON. HARRY E. MITCHELL

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

Mr. MITCHELL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the 25th anniversary of the Metropolitan Youth Symphony of Arizona. This is a remarkable milestone for any organization, but especially for a volunteer-run, nonprofit one. As a long-time supporter of the arts, I must take this occasion to commend them on a job well done, and commend them for undertaking this ambitious endeavor.

Let me tell you a little bit about MYS. In the spring of 1982, a group of interested parents and music educators from the East Valley began exploring the potential for developing a youth orchestra. Their goal was to provide a challenging program of excellence in orchestral music for your school musicians through the ninth grade. The first Metropolitan Youth Symphony season was launched that same year as more than 150 youngsters participated in the September auditions. The gala premiere concert, on November 10, 1982, featured two string orchestras and one full symphony orchestra.

The growth of Metropolitan Youth Symphony has been impressive. Now in its 25th season, the 267 members of MYS, under the direction of Wayne Roederer, musical director/principal conductor; Lew Felton, associate conductor; and Amy Bennett, Division III conductor, are divided into three string orchestras and one full symphonic orchestra. Members attend weekly rehearsals at Westwood High School and perform in at least four formal concerts each season. Over the years, MYS orchestras have been invited to perform in a variety of locations including Phoenix Symphony Hall, the Mesa Amphitheatre, Fiesta Mall, Disneyland and Washington, DC. On June 13, 1993, members of Division I, the full symphony orchestra, received the honor of performing at New York City's famed Carnegie Hall. The gala 25th anniversary concert will be performed at the Ikeda Auditorium of the Mesa Arts Center at 7 p.m. on April 28, 2007, with alumni performing with Division I.

In addition to orchestra performance opportunities, MYS sponsors wind sectionals, a recital series, Division I weekend retreat in Prescott, a scholarship competition and the MYS Fiddlers.

The mission of the Metropolitan Youth Symphony has always been to educate young instrumental musicians through the ninth grade in the art of orchestral performance through the use of the world's finest orchestral music to develop character, discipline, leadership, cultural awareness, and a strong commitment to excellence. This enables MYS to contribute to the East Valley's rich cultural heritage and create a higher level of appreciation for the performing arts.

This occasion marks not only the 25th anniversary of a vibrant organization, but the retirement of Musical Director and Principal Conductor Wayne Roederer. Without him, this anniversary would not have been reached, and hundreds of young musicians would have missed out on the experience of performing with similarly motivated individuals. I say thank you and well done.

TRIBUTE TO THE LADY HORNETS BASKETBALL TEAM OF HARRIS-STOWE STATE UNIVERSITY

HON. WM. LACY CLAY

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

Mr. CLAY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the Lady Hornets Basketball Team of Harris-Stowe State University for their crowning achievement on March 3, 2007 when they became the first-ever Lady Hornets team to clench the American Midwest Conference—AMC—title.

To win this historic title the team, led by Head Coach Christopher Lewis, soundly defeated the Columbia College Cougars by a score of 78–58 on the Cougars' home court in Columbia, Mo. To put the score in perspective and to appreciate the tenacity of the squad, a brief recap of the victory might be appreciated.

Trailing by six points early in the first half, the Lady Hornets worked a 40 percent shooting effort into a halftime advantage of 36–29. They opened the second half with one of their patented runs, extending their lead to 13. They continued to increase their field-goal percentage to 51 percent and their three-point success to 43 percent. Senior guard Laniya Stevens led the Hornets with 23 points and junior guard Chanel Ross added a double-double with 21 points and 10 steals. Both Stevens and Ross received First Team All-Conference honors, while Kanisha Pettis received an All-Conference honorable mention. Stevens received another honor when her number, 20, was retired by the school.

With their victory—their sixth consecutive win—the Lady Hornets moved on to play in the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics Tournament or the NAIA, also a first for the team.

Madam Speaker, I am honored to recognize the Lady Hornets Basketball Team of Harris-Stowe State University—Jamira Easley, Dionn Jackson, Chareka Terry, Dominique Allen, K'Vonn Brittingham, Tawanda Barns, Briranda Griffin, Kanisha Pettis, Erica Anderson, Chanel Ross, Carmon Weaver, Laniya Stevens, Kimberly Lang, Valarie Mason, Amy Williams, Stephanie Roberts, Tamara Black, Shelia Walker and Marvis Jackson—for becoming the first team to earn the American Midwest Conference title. From a 73-game losing streak a few years ago to champions today, the Lady Hornets have become a shining example of what commitment, perseverance and hard work can accomplish. They are a force to be reckoned with and the pride of the school and the entire St. Louis community. In their honor I ask my congressional colleagues to join me in honoring the team, their coach, Christopher Lewis, Athletic Director Richard Fanning, University President Dr. Henry Givens, Jr., and the entire university. With such continued dedication and hard work, a national title could be in the Hornets' nest in the near future.

IN RECOGNITION OF JAMES W. MURRAY

HON. BRAD ELLSWORTH

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

Mr. ELLSWORTH. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the outstanding achievements of one of my constituents, James W. Murray of Oakland City, IN. For the past 33 years, Murray has served as president of Oakland City University. During his remarkable tenure at OCU, the school has undergone massive and exciting improvements.

When Murray arrived on campus, the school had only 324 students. Today the total enrollment exceeds 2,300, and OCU has become the second largest employer in Gibson County, IN. President Murray also oversaw OCU gaining full accreditation and university status. The school's main campus has undergone extensive facility expansion during his tenure, and as an advocate for fiscal responsibility, I congratulate President Murray for executing these projects debt-free.

Murray also deserves commendation for his distinguished service as an officer in the United States Marine Corps. He served in both Korea and Vietnam and received three Purple Hearts and a Bronze Star.

President Murray will retire on May 31, and I am proud to honor his exceptional career. His contributions in service to our country and commitment to education deserve recognition.

TRIBUTE TO JOAN COLEMAN AND ANTHONY PIZZA

HON. MARCY KAPTUR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

Ms. KAPTUR. Madam Speaker, I am proud to recognize two long-time advocates in our community, Joan Coleman and Anthony Pizza. Both will be honored at the inaugural "Stand Up for Victims" event on April 25, 2007, sponsored by Advocates for Victims and Justice, Inc. in Toledo, Ohio. The organization was developed by Mr. Pizza and Mrs. Coleman to assist crime victims and provide educational and prevention programs to the community. Advocates for Victims and Justice, Inc. also assists older adult victims of crime as well as victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.

Joan Coleman was the first Executive Director of the Toledo/Lucas County Victim Witness Assistance Program, initiated in 1990 by then Lucas County Prosecutor Anthony Pizza. The Prosecutor believed that the victims of crime and their families suffered needlessly through inadequate attention from the court system itself and deserved special attention as they navigated that system. Under Joan Coleman's able tutelage, the Victims Witness Assistance Program has grown to a staff of seventeen with offices throughout Lucas County.

A graduate of the University of Toledo with a degree in Education/Social Work, Joan put her experience as a community activist to work in establishing and growing the Victim Witness Assistance Program into a premiere service providing outreach for Spanish-speaking victims; assistance to victims of juvenile offenders in Juvenile Court; a crisis response team for short-term assistance to victims of domestic violence throughout the county, a three-part intervention in the local schools to educate schoolchildren about the effects of crime on victims, offenders, and the community known as the Victims Forum; Kids' Space for children of female victims of violent crime who could not appear in court without this free child watch service; Suburban Courts' Services to provide support and advocacy for victims in the Maumee and Sylvania court systems; and Victims Forum Peacemakers, a school-based program which teaches children the skills to combat bullying.

In an effort to fully address the challenge of funding for all of these services, Joan sought the establishment of a non-profit foundation. Advocates for Victims and Justice, Inc. was incorporated in 1994 to help retain and expand victims' services to meet the ever-increasing needs of the community. Private donations remain a vital source of funding for the programs which Joan worked so tirelessly and passionately to establish.

Those honoring her describe Joan best as they "gratefully thank and honor the woman whose vision, energy, commitment and passion for victims of violent crime and their families has given many thousands of people a sense of acceptance and hope." More than just an administrator, Joan Coleman has accompanied thousands of victims into the courtroom remaining by their side. It is not unusual for victims and their families to remain in contact with the Victim Witness Assistance Program long after their proceedings have been finalized. This fact is the most telling tribute to this remarkable woman.

Anthony G. Pizza, was elected Lucas County Prosecutor in 1976 and served continuously until his retirement in 1996. In this twenty-year period, Tony "endeared himself to the citizens of Lucas County as a man with both a huge heart and a passionate conviction that crime has no place in our community."

Born in Toledo in 1921, Tony graduated from St. Charles grade school and Libbey High School, where he played varsity football and was class salutatorian. He attended Kenyon College and graduated from the University of Toledo College of Law in 1950. He and his wife Madlynn, married now 63 years, together raised four children and have six grandchildren and four great grandchildren.

Tony actually began his career in the Prosecutor's Office in 1951, where he served as an assistant prosecutor. Thus it can be said that Tony devoted his entire career as an advocate for justice on behalf of the citizens of our community. In all, Tony Pizza served our community for 45 years in the office of the Lucas County Prosecutor, an impressive tenure during which he often used innovative methods to fight crime. During all those years, he never let difficult situations or personal tragedy drag him down and his "sunny disposition, leadership, and dedication to our community" inspired us all.

Tony Pizza also understood the ability of his office to address non-criminal needs and causes. As one example, he successfully stopped the State of Michigan from building a hazardous waste dump which would pollute the waterways of Northwest Ohio by filing suit in the U.S. District Court.

Though retired as Prosecutor for a decade, Tony still practices law. His family remains paramount and he has earned the privilege of spending warm winters in Florida. The recognition offered him in the tribute describes this incredible man among men as "a most deserving attorney and Prosecutor, as well as a uniquely blessed and courageous human being. 'Lest we forget!' is the testimony inscribed on the Toledo Police Memorial. It also perfectly describes Anthony G. Pizza, mentor and friend to all of us privileged enough to know him."

It is wonderful that the Advocates for Victims and Justice, Inc. has chosen to honor these two amazing people while they are able to enjoy the recognition and know how much they mean to the people of our community. I offer my personal congratulations to both Joan Coleman and Tony Pizza as they receive this honor, and my own heartfelt thank you to each for courageous and selfless service.

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON THE BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2008

SPEECH OF

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 29, 2007

Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota. Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong support of H. Con. Res. 99, the 2008 House Budget Resolution, and I congratulate Chairman SPRATT for advancing the priorities of American families.

This budget moves our country in a new direction. First, it is fiscally responsible. In contrast to the 6 years of high budget deficits under the former majority, this proposal provides for a surplus in 2012 by strictly adhering to the pay-as-you-go principle adopted in the first days of the 110th Congress. It also protects the integrity of taxpayer dollars by instituting initiatives to crack down on wasteful or fraudulent spending. It is critical that we do not burden our children and grandchildren with crippling debt which threatens the competitiveness of this Nation.

H. Con. Res. 99 provides for the top priority of the Federal Government—which is to keep our Nation safe and to keep our promises to the brave men and women that serve in the Armed Forces. This bill increases funding for veterans' health care and services by 14 percent, provides more homeland security funding than the Bush administration requested, and funds the 9/11 Commission recommendations.

The Democratic budget resolution also makes critical investments in our future by doubling funding for the National Science Foundation and making significant increases in math and science education. This budget recognizes that one of the most efficient and effective investments we can make is in our children's education. It increases funding for No Child Left Behind, special education, Head Start, and student aid programs—all of which have been neglected or reduced over the past 6 years. Studies have shown that by recognizing the needs of children today, we both save taxpayer dollars in the long run, and ensure the availability of highly skilled workers in the future.

Last November Americans made clear that access to health care is a top priority for families and should be for the Congress. This

budget rejects the draconian cuts to Medicare and Medicaid proposed by the Bush administration and provides for an expansion of the State Children's Health Insurance Program to insure millions more children.

This budget recognizes that those who need tax relief in this country are not corporations and the very wealthiest. This proposal includes relief from the Alternative Minimum Tax for millions of middle-income taxpayers and extends other middle-income tax cuts like the child tax credit, marriage penalty relief and State and local deductions.

The budget resolution is a statement of priorities. Chairman SPRATT has proposed a common-sense, fiscally responsible budget that puts families first and grows our economy. I am proud to support H. Con. Res. 99 and urge all my colleagues to join me.

I also congratulate the Progressive Caucus and the Congressional Black Caucus for the budget ideas they put forward. I have supported both of these amendments today largely because of the increased attention to diplomacy, peace, and investment in the global community. These issues must continue to be a part of the appropriations debate.

RECOGNIZING THE BOY SCOUTS OF TROOP 648 FOR ACHIEVING THE RANK OF EAGLE SCOUT

HON. JAMES P. MORAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Joseph Cameron Morgan, Evan Carlin O'Rourke, Christopher Anthony Piemonte, William E. Pierce, and Joshua Paul St. Louis of Alexandria, Virginia, for achieving the rank of Eagle Scout in the Boy Scouts of America. As members of Troop 648 in the Chain Bridge District of the National Capital Area Council, these Scouts have exemplified the finest qualities of leadership and citizenship in earning Boy Scouts' most prestigious award.

At Troop 648, these Scouts have provided leadership in a variety of positions. They have led as Senior Patrol Leaders, Assistant Senior Patrol Leaders, and as Troop Representatives to the Order of the Arrow, Scouting's national honor society. They have also served as Junior Assistant Scoutmasters to Troop 648 supervising and supporting the other Boy Scouts.

Together and collectively, these Scouts have trekked through the mountains of Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania, explored underground caves, sailed the Chesapeake Bay and gone on numerous camping trips. They have earned dozens of merit badges and many service awards, including the President's Volunteer Service Award (Gold) for providing over 250 hours of service to the community in a twelve month period. They have earned numerous environmental awards including the World Conservation Award and the William T. Hornaday Award. These young men are truly exemplary Scouts.

For their Eagle Scout Leadership Service Projects, these young men have organized and managed dozens of volunteers. They have led conservation projects, trail construction and park restoration involving hundreds of hours of work. Our communities are truly a better place to live because of their efforts.

Madam Speaker and fellow members of Congress, I ask you to join me in commending these present and future leaders for their accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for achieving the distinction of Eagle Scout.

A TRIBUTE ON THE OCCASION OF THE DEDICATION OF THE DENNIS MALONEY COMMUNITY JUSTICE CENTER

HON. GREG WALDEN

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

Mr. WALDEN of Oregon. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a dear friend and an exceptional community leader who tragically passed away in February of this year, Mr. Dennis "Denny" Maloney. Today Denny's friends, family and colleagues gather in Deschutes County, Oregon to celebrate his life with the dedication of the new "Dennis Maloney Community Justice Center." This is a fitting tribute to a man who gave so generously of his time and his talents throughout a distinguished career in service to others.

My colleagues, Denny Maloney was born on March 20, 1951 in Green Bay, Wisconsin, to Patrick and Carol Maloney. Denny graduated with honors from the University of Wisconsin, where he studied humanities. It was in Minnesota where Denny would acknowledge his most significant achievement occurred. It is there that he met and married his lovely wife, Nancy. Together, they raised five outstanding daughters, Tracy, Shannon, Caitlin, Kelly and Molly. Those who knew Denny knew not only a man with a strong sense of civic commitment, but a father and husband with tremendous devotion and commitment to his family.

Madam Speaker, those of us in Oregon, especially communities in central Oregon, are so fortunate that Denny's upbringing and education instilled in him the drive and desire to make the world a better place. He led by example, and remarkable results followed. Denny was a longtime advocate for troubled youth and was a nationally recognized expert and innovator on the subject of juvenile rehabilitation. Madam Speaker, Denny didn't believe in giving up on someone. He saw the inherent good in humanity and in the people he met, and he devoted his life to giving people a second chance. Denny worked to ensure that troubled youth received mentoring and counseling, while demonstrating the significant value of being an upstanding member of society and a real contributor within one's community. Simply put, Denny Maloney positively changed the lives of many of his fellow citizens.

During his lifetime, Denny amassed over 30 years of experience in the field of community corrections. For 16 years, he served as the Director of the Deschutes County Department of Community Justice in my home state of Oregon. There, he initiated a variety of juvenile and adult corrections programs that are globally renowned.

He wrote extensively about the methods he developed and the positive impact of his programs is evident not only across our nation but in the international community as well. Nearly 30 states restructured their entire juvenile justice systems based on Denny's presentation on restorative justice. Additionally, the U.S. Department of State has distributed information based on Denny's juvenile justice research to over 250 countries and his methods are being used worldwide as a foundation for justice system reform.

Madam Speaker, during his phenomenal career of contributions, Denny Maloney generously shared his experience and his expertise with others. The work that he did improved the lives of countless people across our country, and I'm grateful to have known him.

While his services and accomplishments speak volumes, perhaps most importantly, Denny Maloney inspired all who knew him to do more to help those in need and to improve the quality of life for all citizens. He always wore an infectious smile, and he encouraged us to keep a positive attitude in our work and throughout our daily lives. He was a good friend and trusted counselor to me and to many others. We will all miss his wisdom, wit, enthusiasm and ability, and we will never forget the mark he left in our communities and in our hearts.

TRIBUTE TO MR. FRANK BUCKLES

HON. SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

Mrs. CAPITO. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and celebrate the long life and continuing achievements of Mr. Frank Buckles. One of four known surviving veterans of the WWI, Frank recently celebrated his 106th birthday.

Frank was born in Missouri in 1901 and was only 16 when the United States entered the First World War. Frank's age, however, did not prevent him from serving his country. After being turned away by the Navy and Marines, he convinced an Army recruiter he was old enough to enlist.

Frank served in England and France during the war; first as a car and ambulance driver and later as an escort for returning German POWs. After the war, he returned to America and worked for the White Star Line Steamship Company and the Banker's Trust Company.

In 1941 Frank became entangled in the Second World War. The Japanese Army invaded while Frank was working in the Philippines and he spent three years as a prisoner in Japanese war camps.

These remarkable experiences could easily fill two full lives, but for Frank it was only the first half. He came home from the war and settled down to start a family, moving to West Virginia in 1954 and managing Gap View Farm.

Frank has been there ever since. At 106, he is still active on his 330 acre cattle farm.

Madam Speaker, in a time when America faces a grave external threat, we can find comfort and strength in our Nation's history. During the 106 years since Frank Buckles' birth, the United States has grown into the greatest Nation on earth. The service, determination, patriotism and love that Frank has shown throughout his life represents the very best of this great country. West Virginians are honored to call Frank one of our own.

TRIBUTE TO THE UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING WOMENS BASKETBALL TEAM

HON. BARBARA CUBIN

OF WYOMING

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

Mrs. CUBIN. Madam Speaker, I am proud to rise today to offer my congratulations to the University of Wyoming womens basketball team. On March 31st, the team handily defeated the University of Wisconsin to win the Womens National Invitational Tournament for the first time in school history.

As the Representative of the great State of Wyoming, it is my pleasure to join my fellow citizens as our state beams with pride for these 14 very accomplished young women and their coach, Joe Legerski.

Madam Speaker, millions of people across America call themselves basketball players, but only the truly elite will ever have the satisfaction and delight of calling themselves national champions. Members of the Wyoming Cowgirl basketball team are now living the dream of every young girl who has ever laced up her high tops and joined her local hoops team.

But the road to the WNIT Championship wasn't easy. In the semi-finals, the Cowgirls were pitted against the defending WNIT champs, Kansas State University. In front of a boisterous home crowd, the Cowgirls won a triple-overtime thriller, earning a ticket to the first post-season championship game in the program's history.

Three days later, over 15,000 fans arrived at Laramie's famous Arena-Auditorium to watch the Cowgirls roll to a 72–56 victory over the Wisconsin Badgers. Their victory came in front of the largest-ever crowd of Cowgirl basketball fans, a testament to the State's overwhelming support and pride for these women.

I urge my colleagues to join me in congratulating Amy Bolerjack, her sister Jodi Bolerjack, Mallory Cline, Elisabeth Dissen, Annie Gorenstein, Angiah Harris, Gemma Koehler, Megan McGuffey, Megan Mordecai, Justyna Podziemska, Dominique Sisk, Rebecca Vanderjagt, Aubrey Vandiver, and tournament MVP Hanna Zavecz.

These Cowgirls have proven they know how to get 'er done. They are living a dream come true, and they will have memories to last a lifetime.

INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTION ON UKRAINE POLITICAL CRISIS

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise to introduce a concurrent resolution which addresses the current political crisis in Ukraine, a country of strategic importance to the United States. My resolution urges all sides to the ongoing impasse to act responsibly and use dialogue to resolve the crisis and ensure a free and democratic system in Ukraine based on the rule of law. I am pleased that Rep. KAPTUR, a co-chair of the Ukrainian American Caucus, has joined me as original cosponsor.

Ukraine's current political conflict is the result of the ongoing power struggle that President Victor Yushchenko and Prime Minister Victor Yanukovich have now been engaged in since Yanukovich became Prime Minister last August. This power struggle, rooted in hastily conceived constitutional reforms, threatens to undermine Ukraine's hard-fought and substantial democratic gains, especially those won since the 2004 Orange Revolution.

Exactly 2 weeks ago today, President Yushchenko issued a decree dissolving parliament, asserting that the Prime Minister was attempting to monopolize power, and called for new parliamentary elections for May 27. Parliament has refused to disband and questions the legality of the presidential decree. Ukraine's Constitutional Court is to rule on the legality of the decree and both sides have agreed to abide by the Court's decision. Unfortunately, some of the Court's judges have already complained of threats and pressure, especially from Yanukovich's supporters. Clearly, this is unacceptable and steps have been taken to protect the judges.

Madam Speaker, it is important to note that Ukraine has made real democratic gains since the Orange Revolution. A year ago, as President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, I had the privilege of leading the OSCE-led International Election Observation Mission to Ukraine's parliamentary elections and the pleasure and profound satisfaction of pronouncing them free and fair. Also, in contrast to the first 13 years of its independence, Ukraine in now designated by Freedom House as a "free" country, and not merely "partly free." Nevertheless, despite the progress, there have been missed opportunities and some of the promises of that historic revolution have gone unfulfilled.

Democratic institutions and the rule of law in Ukraine are still emerging and fragile and lacking in their ability to safeguard democratic gains, and it is this weakness that has made it possible for this power struggle to ripen into a full-blown political crisis. First and foremost, my resolution calls for the crisis to be resolved in a manner that adheres to the rule of law consistent with Ukraine's democratic values and national security, in keeping with its OSCE commitments. It is also essential that the dispute is resolved in a peaceful manner. I am encouraged that demonstrations in Kyiv have been peaceful and that all sides to the dispute appear to recognize that any kind of violent conflict would have very negative consequences for Ukraine.

Madam Speaker, prolonged instability is clearly not in Ukraine's interests and that nation's political leaders need to find a transparent way out of the current impasse that all parties will abide by. I hope that responsible dialogue consistent with the rule of law leads to a positive outcome for the Ukrainian people and the democratic path they have chosen.

As this resolution underscores, Congress has been a staunch supporter of the development of democracy and respect for human rights and the rule of law in Ukraine since the restoration of that nation's independence in 1991. The consolidation of democracy and the rule of law in Ukraine will further strengthen that country's independence and sovereignty, enhancing Ukraine's aspirations for full integration with the West. I urge my colleagues to support this timely resolution as a demonstration of Congress' interest, concern, and support for the Ukrainian people.

HONORING RIVERDALE'S LADY WARRIORS ON THEIR CHAMPIONSHIP BASKETBALL SEASON

HON. BART GORDON

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

Mr. GORDON of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 2006–2007 Riverda1e High School Lady Warriors and their championship basketball season. The Lady Warriors are from my home town of Murfreesboro, Tennessee, and I am proud of them for this tremendous accomplishment.

I know these ladies put forth intense determination and perseverance as they captured the first girls basketball championship for a Murfreesboro team in 83 years and the first ever for Riverdale High School.

The Lady Warriors were dominant throughout their season. Their final win over Memphis Northside was the team's 17th straight victory.

I commend Riverdale High School principal Tom Nolan, Lady Warriors head coach Michael Burt and assistant coaches Brianne Dodgen, Tisha Hayes, Jamey Arnold and Cuyler Lanier.

I extend my congratulations to the 2006–2007 AAA State Champion Lady Warriors: Anne Marie Lanning, Alex Bivens, Jessica Whitens, Nikki Talley, Shellina Burgess, Morgann Swoape, Clarke Davis, Hillary Grider, Payton Dickinson, Candace Spurlock, Rachel Orman, Natalie Lanning and Manager Jackie Donovan.

HONORING DR. PATRICK MAXWELL

HON. MARSHA BLACKBURN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam Speaker, it is a privilege to rise today to honor G. Patrick Maxwell, M.D., FACS and thank him for his contributions to the practice of plastic surgery and his service to others. Dr. Maxwell's talents as a pioneering plastic surgeon are world renowned.

Dr. Maxwell received both his undergraduate and M.D. from Vanderbilt University and completed residencies in general surgery and plastic surgery at the Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, Maryland. Dr. Maxwell has published over 100 scientific articles, and lectured and performed live surgical demonstrations in over 20 countries world-wide.

In 2005, Dr. Maxwell was awarded the Presidential Award from the American Society of Plastic Surgeons. This award acknowledged his "excellence as an educator and innovator bringing art and science to a new level for the specialty." Additionally Maxwell has received virtually every accolade awarded to an American plastic surgeon. These awards include the Robert H. Ivy Society Award, the James Barrett Brown Award and Maxwell is a three time recipient of the Walter Scott Brown Award. Dr. Maxwell continues to be an innovator in his field and has ten U.S. patents for medical devices. Dr. Maxwell has been instrumental in revolutionizing developments in reconstruction for survivors of breast cancer.

Maxwell's contributions are not limited to the field of plastic surgery. In addition, Maxwell is

the co-founder of the Tennesse-Kentucky chapter of Operation Smile, past president of the Nashville Chapter of the American Cancer Society, a founder and board member of the Aspen Center for Integrative Medicine and co-founder and Executive EVP Diversified Specialty Institute.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking Dr. Maxwell for his extraordinary contributions to plastic surgery and for the profoundly positive impact he has on our community.

TRIBUTE TO PHILIP G. KIKO

HON. F. JAMES SENSENBRENNER, JR.

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Madam Speaker, it is with mixed feelings that I rise before you today to say a few words about one of my longest serving and closest staff, Philip G. Kiko. Phil was one of the first people I hired on my personal staff in 1979, when I was a freshman Member of Congress, and in the years since, he has become a close friend and confidant.

During my tenure on the House Committee on the Judiciary, a Committee upon which I have served throughout my tenure in this body and chaired from 2001 to 2006, Phil served the country and Committee ably by pushing through several pieces of legislation that, in my opinion, have made this country a better place. Just look at the reauthorization of the Voting Rights Act of 1982, a historic event that reaffirmed the promise of voting equality to millions of Americans. And then, as General Counsel and Chief of Staff to the Committee on the Judiciary last year, Phil led staff negotiations that led to near unanimous House and Senate passage of the Fannie Lou Hamer, Rosa Parks, and Coretta Scott King Voting Rights Act Reauthorization and Amendments Act. His unique capacity to bridge partisan divisions to advance the promise of equality our Constitution provides to all of America's citizens best illustrates his unrivaled abilities as a consensus-builder and negotiator.

Moreover, the skills Phil demonstrated during consideration and passage of this legislation were applied to advance other legislation whose titles are as familiar as they are historic. Phil was a driving staff force behind congressional passage of the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006, which has been hailed by child safety and law enforcement groups as the most comprehensive federal child protection legislation in a generation.

And who can forget the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 which demonstrated fundamental vulnerabilities in America's law enforcement and intelligence communities. Phil played a central staff role in consideration and passage of the USA PATRIOT and USA PATRIOT Improvement and Reauthorization Act, laws that have provided America's law enforcement and intelligence agencies with the tools necessary to detect, disrupt and deter terrorist attacks before they occur on American soil. Phil has also played pivotal roles in congressional passage of the Bankruptcy Abuse Prevention and Consumer Protection Act, the Class Action Fairness Act, REAL ID Act, and other legislation that will distinguish his years of service to the Committee as among the most productive and meaningful in our Nation's history.

Madam Speaker, most Americans have probably never heard of Phil Kiko, but they have heard of the aforementioned bills he has worked on, and they have certainly been affected by them in some way, shape or form. Phil's tenacity and passion for working on ideals that he believed to be right and just often pushed him and those he worked with, to spend many a late night in the Capitol—but the benefits of his dedication went ultimately to Americans like you and me.

It is never easy to say goodbye, especially to one who has been by my side for decades. But I also know that there comes a time when we must all simply move on. That time has come for Phil Kiko, and so I stand before you, and the rest of my colleagues, and I ask you all to join me in wishing Phil all the best, as he takes his next step.

On behalf of the Committee on the Judiciary, the House of Representatives, and myself, I thank you Phil, for all your service to this Nation, and congratulate you on a job well done.

HONORING THOMAS HEBEL FOR LIFETIME BUSINESS ACHIEVEMENTS

HON. PATRICK J. MURPHY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

Mr. PATRICK J. MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise today to congratulate Mr. Thomas Hebel on his recent nomination for the Bucks County Chamber of Commerce Lifetime Achievement Award in the area of Business Achievement. His success as the owner of Bucks Country Gardens and dedication to his community set him apart as an outstanding individual, and it is my pleasure to join in the recognition of his extraordinary career.

The great honor of this Lifetime Achievement Award is not one easily attained. The award takes into account both Mr. Hebel's remarkable success within his business venture and his commitment to his community. Mr. Hebel has been an exemplary model in both of these areas.

An accomplished landscaper, Mr. Hebel graduated from the Pennsylvania State University with a degree in landscaping, and was hired as a landscape designer at Tom Royer's Nursery and Greenhouses. He worked his way up to partner, and upon Mr. Royer's retirement, purchased the business, becoming the sole owner. He renamed the business Bucks Country Gardens, and in just thirteen years, the business grew from five employees to sixty-five employees.

Mr. Hebel and his staff donate time to volunteer in the community. His efforts include serving as President of the Bucks Beautiful program, the company's annual beautification of a Bucks County organization, working on the Bucks County Designer House and serving on various committees for the Pennsylvania State University.

Madam Speaker, Mr. Hebel embodies the true American spirit. He has risen from designer to business owner but never lost his passion for gardening or for helping his community. He has dedicated himself to his career and his community and I commend him today for his outstanding service.

HONORING VASKEN HOGOPIAN, PH.D.

HON. JASON ALTMIRE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

Mr. ALTMIRE. Madam Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Vasken Hagopian, Ph.D., who is retiring after more than 40 years of teaching, the past 37 years of which were spent at my alma mater, Florida State University.

Professor Hagopian is recognized as a world-renowned expert in high energy physics. His research has involved the use of high energy particle accelerators to study the properties of fundamental particles, such as the proton and the neutron.

I first crossed paths with Professor Hagopian as an astronomy student at Florida State in 1986. I later worked with him during my time as a legislative assistant for former Congressman Pete Peterson of Florida in the mid-1990's.

Over the years, students often asked him why it is important to study astronomy and related fields. Professor Hagopian would famously reply, "You never know, one of you might end up in Congress one day and have to vote on science budgets and space exploration." Like most things he taught his students, he was, in the long run, proven right.

I wish Professor Hagopian well as he pursues new challenges and moves into the next phase of his extraordinary life.

HONORING CHIEF LUTHER J. TAYLOR OF THE SOUTH BEND FIRE DEPARTMENT

HON. JOE DONNELLY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

Mr. DONNELLY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to an outstanding citizen of South Bend, IN, Luther J. Taylor, who has devoted his life to the protection of his community. For the past 34 years he has served as a firefighter for the South Bend Fire Department, 21 of those as Fire Chief.

Chief Taylor's career as a firefighter started in 1972. At that time he never intended to build a career but rather to move on to another profession after a few years. Yet, his feelings of duty to his community and enjoyment for his job led him to a long and illustrious career. Today the South Bend community honors this career.

First appointed Fire Chief by Mayor Roger Parent in 1985, Taylor's adept management style and creative ideas led him to be reappointed under the two succeeding mayors. In his 21 years as Fire Chief he has greatly increased the professionalism, efficiency and lifesaving capacity of the South Bend Fire Department. Through Chief Taylor's leadership, the South Bend Fire Department has become one of the top fire departments in Indiana.

From 1992 to 1993 Chief Taylor served as the President of the Indiana Fire Chiefs Association. This association strives to increase the professionalism and success of fire departments throughout Indiana. He has served on numerous other boards across the State of Indiana each benefiting greatly from his expertise.

In 2005 Chief Luther Taylor was awarded the Sagamore of the Wabash, the highest honor bestowed by governors of Indiana, by Governor Joe Kernan. This award is given only to those who make major contributions to the lives of Hoosiers.

So today, on behalf of the citizens of South Bend, I thank Luther Taylor for his years of dedication to the safety and security of our community. As he retires from almost 35 years on the South Bend Fire Department, I pay special tribute to one of the finest fire chiefs to ever serve Indiana. His service will always be remembered for numerous lives that were saved as a result of his efforts and the changes that each citizen can see as a result of his leadership.

TRIBUTE TO THE CITY OF LENEXA, KANSAS, ON ITS 100TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. DENNIS MOORE

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

Mr. MOORE of Kansas. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to have this opportunity today to recognize the 100th anniversary of my community of residence, the city of Lenexa, Kansas, one of the leading communities in the Third Congressional District of Kansas. Lenexa officially became a city on May 8, 1907, and the community is coming together for an eight-day celebration from May 5–12 of this year.

Lenexa was platted in 1869 by French-born civil engineer, Octave Chanute, who, in addition to designing the original Hannibal Bridge over the Missouri River in Kansas City, also served as a mentor to the Wright Brothers in their quest for flight. Lenexa was named for Na Nex Se, a highly respected, hard-working Shawnee Indian woman, the daughter-in-law of Chief Black Hoof. Thirty-eight years later, on May 8, 1907, Lenexa was incorporated as a City of the Third Class in Kansas.

In Lenexa's earliest days, people from various backgrounds and cultures came together to form this great city. With a population of approximately 300, the young city boasted a healthful location, graded schools, three churches, suburban train service, excellent telephone service, and an electric railway station.

Today, Lenexa, which has grown to a population of 46,000 residents and enjoys a healthy business base, is considered a city of choice for a variety of high tech and bioscience companies. The city also is looked to as a leader in local government initiatives such as watershed management and public safety.

Lenexa, which is known as the City of Festivals for the numerous festivals and events it hosts each year, will hold a week-long community celebration (May 5–12, 2007) to mark the occasion of its 100th anniversary.

Madam Speaker, Lenexa cherishes its rich history, heritage and culture, and with this celebration marking the city's 100th anniversary, Lenexa honors its past while looking forward to the future. I join with my neighbors, friends and constituents in Lenexa in honoring this important milestone.

INTRODUCING THE ENHANCED OPTIONS FOR RURAL HEALTH CARE ACT

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

Mr. PAUL. Madam Speaker, I raise to introduce the Enhanced Options for Rural Health Care Act. This legislation allows critical access hospitals to use beds designated for critical access use, but currently not being used for that purpose, for assisted living services financed by private payments.

This bill will help improve the financial status of small rural hospitals and extend the health care options available to people living in rural areas without increasing federal expenditures. Currently, fear that rural hospitals will lose critical access status if beds designated for critical access are used for another purpose is causing rural hospitals to allow beds not needed for a critical access purpose to remain unused. This deprives rural hospitals of a much-needed revenue stream and deprives residents of rural areas of access to needed health care services.

My colleagues may be interested to know that the idea for this bill comes from Marcella Henke, an administrator of Jackson County Hospital, a critical access hospital in my congressional district. Ms. Henke conceived of this idea as a way to meet the increasing demand for assisted living services in rural areas and provide hospitals with a profitable way to use beds not being used for critical access purposes. I urge my colleagues to embrace this practical way of strengthening rural health care without increasing federal expenditures by cosponsoring the Enhanced Options for Rural Health Care Act.

EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR A NATIONAL FOSTER PARENTS DAY

HON. DANNY K. DAVIS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I rise today in honor of National Foster Parents Day. Foster parents are vital to the development of today's children and tomorrow's leaders. As former President John Fitzgerald Kennedy once proclaimed, "Children are the world's most valuable resource and its best hope for the future." Foster care parents dedicate their lives to care for the less fortunate children, with little compensation or recognition. They perform this noble task under very difficult circumstances with love and care. Recognizing these efforts is important.

There are 523,000 children in foster care in the United States today. Congress has made a number of improvements to foster care laws over the last decade; improvements that have helped support our children and families. It is good to recognize these advances, but we should take a moment to consider how we can improve the system further.

There are currently over 2½ million children being cared for by family members nationally. However, unless these relatives have waivers from the Department of Health and Human Services, they are not eligible for foster care maintenance payments. Withholding financial support from family providers greatly ignores the needs of these children and families. Almost 19 percent of kinship care providers live in poverty, and 30 percent to 40 percent of children in foster care have chronic medical problems. It is unrealistic to expect these providers to afford appropriate care for these vulnerable children simply because they are family. This is a very personal problem to me. The 7th Congressional District in Illinois—my Congressional District—has the highest percentage of children being raised by grandparents in the nation. Two other Chicago districts follow close behind. It also upsets me greatly that the limitations in our system have a disproportionate effect on minority children and families, who tend to opt for guardianship rather than adoption.

So, I join my colleagues in supporting a day to recognize foster parents and their tremendous contribution to society.

VAISAKHI DAY CELEBRATED AROUND THE WORLD

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

Mr. TOWNS. Madam Speaker, on April 13 and 14, the Sikhs community celebrated Vaisakhi Day with events in Washington, New York, London, Canada, Australia, and wherever Sikhs live. It was a very proud day for them. The Washington, DC, event was led by Dr. Paramjit Singh Ajrawat, a well-known Sikh activist and supporter of a free Khalistan.

Large numbers of Sikhs showed up in these locations to celebrate the day. They called for freedom for the Sikh nation. They raised slogans in support of Khalistan, the Sikh homeland. Freedom is the birthright of all peoples and nations.

When America became independent, Punjab was already independent. Dr. Gunnit Singh Aulakh, president of the Council of Khalistan, has called on Sikhs to celebrate Vaisakhi Day by rededicating themselves to achieving the freedom that is their birthright.

Madam Speaker, we should put this Congress on record with a resolution in support of self-determination for Khalistan and throughout the subcontinent. Why is India opposed to a free and fair vote on the matter, in the democratic way? We should end our aid and trade with India until I the basic rights of all are allowed to be enjoyed, the way that democratic countries behave.

VAISAKHI DAY CELEBRATED WITH PARADES, EVENTS

WASHINGTON, DC, Apr. 14, 2007.—Vaisakhi Day, the 308th anniversary of the creation and consecration of the Khalsa Panth by Guru Gobind Singh, is being celebrated with parades and events in Washington, London, New York, Canada, England, Australia, and around the world.

The Washington parade occurs on April 14 under the leadership of Dr. Paramjit Singh

Ajrawat with the cooperation of the local Sikh Gurdwaras. Later in April, the annual Sikh Day Parade in New York will be held.

Guru Gobind baptized the first five baptized Sikhs, known as the Panj Piaras, on Vaisakhi Day in 1699, then asked them to baptize him. He declared, ''In grieb Sikhin ko deon Patshahi (''I give sovereignty to the humble Sikhs'') Just two years after his departure from this earthly plane in 1708, the Sikhs established their own independent state in Punjab.

At the time that America became independent, Punjab was an independent country already. It was independent from 1710 to 1716 and again from 1765 to 1849, when the British conquered South Asia. Today Sikhs struggle to regain the sovereignty that Guru Gobind Singh bestowed upon them over 300 years ago.

Vaisakhi Day is the anniversary of the founding of the Khalsa. On Vaisakhi Day in 1699, Guru Gobind Singh baptized the Sikhs and required them to keep the five Ks. He made the Sikhs into saints and soldiers. That memory is celebrated on Vaisakhi Day each year.

''I send Vaisakhi Day greetings to all Sikhs and I urge all Sikhs to take this occasion to fulfill Guru Gobind Singh's vision by working to liberate our homeland, Khalistan, from Indian oppression,'' said Dr. Gurmit Singh Aulakh, President of the Council of Khalistan, which leads the struggle to achieve independence for Khalistan. Khalistan declared itself independent on October 7, 1987. Over 250,000 Sikhs have been killed since the Indian government attacked the Golden Temple in Amritsar in June 1984. More than 52,000 are being held as political prisoners, some for over 20 years.

''Vaisakhi Day should be a time to renew our commitment to freedom for our Sikh brothers and sisters in Punjab, Khalistan so they can live in prosperity, dignity, and security. Only a free Khalistan can end the repression of the Sikh Nation,'' Dr. Aulakh said. ''Always remember our heritage: Raj Kare Ga Khalsa; Khalsa Bagi Van Badshah. Freedom for Khalistan is closer than ever. Now is the time to claim it''

SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF FINANCIAL LITERACY MONTH

SPEECH OF

HON. SILVESTRE REYES

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 16, 2007

Mr. REYES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 273, a resolution supporting the goals and ideals of Financial Literacy Month.

According to the JumpStart Coalition for Personal Financial Literacy, the average high school graduate does not possess basic personal financial management skills. These young people are unable to balance a checkbook, and most have little knowledge of basic practices such as earning, spending, saving and investing.

This lack of awareness has serious consequences for young people. Without a fundamental understanding of finance charges and accumulating interest, young people become prone to credit card abuse, which often results in overspending and long-term debt. As they take on greater and greater financial responsibilities, these men and women are similarly unprepared to finance higher education, handle a mortgage, and save for retirement. The implications of this behavior extend beyond personal welfare. Consumer debt in the U.S. reached $2.4 trillion in 2006, $825 billion of which comes from credit card debts.

Financial literacy should be a fundamental part of every young American's education. The ability to manage one's finances is essential to building wealth and leading a prosperous economic life. On the other hand, those who lack the ability to manage money face lifelong obstacles to fulfilling their human potential and creating a solid economic foundation for their families.

I thank my distinguished colleagues, Congressman HINOJOSA and Congresswoman BIGGERT, for their work leading the House Financial Literacy Caucus, and I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

HONORING CHRISTELLA GRESS ON RECEIVING THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD AUXILIARY COMMODORE GREANOFF INSPIRATIONAL LEADERSHIP AWARD

HON. LOUISE McINTOSH SLAUGHTER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to honor Ms. Christella (Chris) Gress from Grand Island, New York, who today received the first annual Commodore Greanoff Inspirational Leadership Award from the United States Coast Guard.

The Commodore Greanoff Inspirational Leadership Award recognizes the most distinguished United States Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla Commander, and parallels existing Coast Guard leadership awards for officers, chief petty officers, and civilians. The United States Coast Guard Auxiliary, established by Congress in 1939, has more than 27,000 members who are engaged in missions that involve boat safety education, search and rescue, and homeland security operations.

Ms. Gress is the Immediate Past Flotilla Commander of Flotilla 35, District 9 Eastern Auxiliary Region. As Commander of her Flotilla, Ms. Gress dedicated over 800 hours of her time to advance the mission and goals of the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary. Her commitment to the Auxiliary becomes even more impressive when one learns that she is holding multiple college teaching-jobs and working on a doctoral dissertation.

Ms. Gress is described as tireless and a natural motivator, and is credited with developing a strong sense of collective identity within her Flotilla. Ms. Gress hosted team exercises and fellowship events that welcomed new members and increased activity among experienced members. Under her leadership, Flotilla membership participation expanded in programs including vessel examinations, operations, and public education. In addition, Ms. Gress was the driving force behind an award-winning Flotilla newsletter.

Madam Speaker, Ms. Gress has earned the respect and high admiration of her community and the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary. I am proud to recognize her as the first recipient of the Commodore Greanoff Inspirational Leadership Award.

TRIBUTE TO THE LAWRENCE, KANSAS, COMMUNITY NURSERY SCHOOL

HON. DENNIS MOORE

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

Mr. MOORE of Kansas. Madam Speaker, the Lawrence, Kansas, Community Nursery School [LCNS] was founded in 1948 after a group of mothers attended a conference on preschool play offered by the University of Kansas Extension School and sponsored by the Lawrence League for the Practice of Democracy. They founded the school on three main principles—that the school must be: a parent cooperative; integrated, both racially and religiously; and low-cost. Today LCNS is the second oldest operating parent cooperative preschool in the Nation, and those principles remain at the corner of the school.

On April 17, 1948 the school opened with its first class of 10 mothers and 14 children. Financial support for the school came from the Lawrence League for the Practice of Democracy and the Oread Meeting of Friends. The tuition was set at $1.00 per week. In 1951 the Kansas State Board of Health licensed the school, and in July of 1952 the school was incorporated under Kansas State Law as the Lawrence Community Nursery School. The school received its permanent license to operate in 1961.

The school was housed in various churches and schools for its first 6 years. After at least eight different locations, in the spring of 1955 the members of the advisory board, the board, and the general membership voted to start a 3-year building fund campaign chaired by Dr. Helen Gilles, a well known local pediatrician, to raise money to buy a permanent home for the nursery school.

The campaign was a huge success. With support of local businesses, members of the cooperative, and the community at large, they were able to raise over $2,000 in their building fund by May 1956, more than 2 years ahead of schedule. In March 1956, Dr. Gilles presented the idea of buying the Wesleyan Methodist Church at the comer of 7th and Alabama Streets. In August 1956, they put a down payment on the church. In September 1956, the board voted to paint the school ''barn red with white trim.'' This is how the building remains today, and it has become a permanent fixture in the Old West Lawrence neighborhood and the greater community as a whole.

Several months of renovations and sharing the school with the church followed. Although the site was used by the school in the fall of 1956, the church remained. In the summer of 1957 the church moved out, and the Little Red Schoolhouse was the home of the Lawrence Community Nursery School. Madam Speaker, I join with the LCNS community and with all Lawrencians in celebrating the completion of the 50th school year at their permanent home at 645 Alabama Street.

INTRODUCING THE CHILD HEALTH CARE AFFORDABILITY ACT

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

Mr. PAUL. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to help working Americans provide for their children's health care needs by introducing the Child Health Care Affordability Act. The Child Health Care Affordability Act provides parents with a tax credit of up to $500 for health care expenses of dependent children. Parents caring for a child with a disability, tenninal disease, cancer, or any other health condition requiring specialized care would receive a tax credit of up to $3,000 to help cover their child's health care expenses.

The tax credit would be available to all citizens, regardless of whether or not they itemize their deductions. The credit applies against both income and payroll tax liability. The tax credits provided in this bill will be especially helpful to those Americans whose employers cannot afford to provide health insurance for their employees. These workers must struggle to meet the medical bills of themselves and their families. This burden is especially heavy on parents whose children have a medical condition; such as cancer or a physical disability that requires long-term or specialized health care.

As an OB–GYN who has had the privilege of delivering more than four thousand babies, I know how important it is that parents have the resources to provide adequate health care for their children. The inability of many working Americans to provide health care for their children is rooted in one of the great inequities of the tax code—Congress' failure to allow individuals the same ability to deduct health care costs that it grants to businesses. As a direct result of Congress' refusal to provide individuals with health care related tax credits, parents whose employers do not provide health insurance have to struggle to provide health care for their children. Many of these parents work in low-income jobs; oftentimes, their only recourse for health care is the local emergency room.

Sometimes parents are forced to delay seeking care for their children until minor health concerns that could have been easily treated become serious problems requiring expensive treatment! If these parents had access to the type of tax credits provided in the Child Health Care Affordability Act, they would be better able to provide care for their children, and our Nation's already overcrowded emergency rooms would be relieved of the burden of having to provide routine care for people who otherwise cannot afford it.

According to research on the effects of this bill done by my staff and legislative counsel, the benefit of these tax credits would begin to be felt by joint filers with incomes slightly above $18,000 dollars per year, or single income filers with incomes slightly above $15,000 dollars per year. Clearly, this bill will be of the most benefit to low-income Americans balancing the demands of taxation with the needs of their children.

Under the Child Health Care Affordability Act, a struggling single mother with an asthmatic child would at last be able to provide for her child's needs, while a working-class family will not have to worry about how they will pay the bills if one of their children requires lengthy hospitalization or some other form of specialized care.

Madam Speaker, this Congress has a moral responsibility to provide tax relief so that loncome parents struggling to care for a sick child can better meet their child's medical expenses. Some may say that we cannot enact the Child Health Care Affordability Act because it would cause the government to lose revenue. But, who is more deserving of this money, Congress or the working parents of a sick child?

The Child Health Care Affordability Act takes a major step toward helping working Americans meet their health care needs by providing them with generous health care related tax cuts and tax credits. I urge my colleagues to support the pro-family, pro-health care tax cuts contained in the Child Health Care Affordability Act.

RECOGNIZING THE CHICAGO 2016 OLYMPIC BID

HON. DANNY K. DAVIS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize that, on April 14, 2007, the city of Chicago was selected as the United States' candidate for the 2016 Summer Olympics. The Chicago Olympic bid represents a choice by the United States Olympic Committee to share the hometown qualities of this great American city and state with the world's athletes, guests, and over 3.6 billion people who take part in the Olympics via global television broadcast. If Chicago is selected by the International Olympic Committee, the 2016 Games will be the first Summer Olympics held in the Americas since the 1996 Atlanta Games.

Chicago's passion for sports, record of hosting international events, and cultural heritage make it a fitting host for these momentous games. Already a professional sports powerhouse, Chicago is arguably one of the most sport-oriented cities in the United States. Indeed, Chicagoans are famous for their enthusiastic support of their home teams, be it the Chicago Bears, Blackhawks, Cubs, Bulls, or the World Series Champion White Sox. Chicago boasts one of the largest marathon events worldwide as well—the Chicago Marathon.

Chicago also enjoys a long history of hosting historic world gatherings, including the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition, the 1933 Century of Progress Exposition, the 1959 Pan American Games, as well as matches for the 1994 FIFA World Cup soccer tournament. Although Chicago was to host the 1904 Summer Olympics, this honor ultimately went to St. Louis to coincide with the St. Louis World's Fair.

In addition, Chicago's world-class architecture, renowned skyline, multi-cultural, historical, and pop-cultural contributions are expected to weigh heavily as positive attractions in the Olympic bid considerations. The international community will be dazzled by Chicago's view from atop the Sears Tower, they will be serenaded by the deep passion of our Blues music, and they will savor our restaurants, which are second to none.

The 2016 Chicago Olympic bid offers America the chance to demonstrate not only the most amazing level of competition the world has to offer, but also to showcase the values that make America and the Olympic movement so significant, such as fair play, friendship, hope, and inspiration. The world will have the opportunity to learn surprising and amazing things about Chicago. By way of the 2016 Summer Olympics, Chicago will become the world's second home.

COUNCIL OF KHALISTAN SENDS VAISAKHI GREETINGS TO SIKH NATION

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

Mr. TOWNS. Madam Speaker, April 13 is a very important day in the Sikh community. It is called Vaisakhi Day, the anniversary of the consecration or the Khalsa Panth in 1699 by Guru Gobind Singh. It is celebrated in Sikh families around the world. There is a parade here in DC and later one in New York. I rise today to offer Vaisakhi Day greetings to the Sikh community.

Recently, the Council of Khalistan issued Vaisakhi greetings to the Sikh Nation. In the letter, Dr. Gurmit Singh Aulakh, President of the Council of Khalistan urges the Sikh nation to work for the liberation of Khalistan, the Sikh homeland that declared its independence from India on October 7, 1987. The Indian govemment has subjected the Sikhs and other minorities, such as Christians, Muslims, and others, to major atrocities. Over a quarter of a million Sikhs have been murdered by the government since 1984. More than 90,000 Kashmiri Muslims, over 300,000 Christians in Nagaland, and lens of thousands of other minorities have lost their lives at the hands of the regime and its operatives. The Movement Against State Repression reports that more than 52,000 Sikhs are being held as political prisoners without charge or trial, as well as tens of thousands of other minorities.

Freedom is the birthright of all peoples and nations, and Dr. Aulakh points out that Guru Gobind Singh conferred sovereignty on the Sikh Nation. That birthright has been suppressed.

Dr. Aulakh also pointed out the ongoing activities in support of Khalistan in Punjab and elsewhere. On behalf of the Sikh nation, Dr. Awatar Singh Sekhon recently submitted a memorandum on the oppression of the Sikhs and the need for independence to the United Nations Human rights Commission in Geneva. Former Member of Parliament Atinder Pal Singh ran in the recent Punjab elections on a platform supporting Khalistan. He also organized a seminar on Khalistan. Sikh leaders were arrested on two separate occasions just for making speeches in support of Khalistan and raising the Khalistani flag. Jagjit Singh, President of Dal Khalsa, was quoted in the Deccan Herald as saying that "the Indian goverument can never suppress the movement. Sikh aspirations can only be met when they have a separate state." Yet India prefers to continue its repression, stationing half a million troops in Punjab alone.

Only independence will allow the Sikhs and the other oppressed minorities to live in freedom, prosperity, security, and dignity, which is their birthright. It is clear that as long as they remain under India's rule, they cannot get just and fair treatment. The atrocities will continue. This is unacceptable, Madam Speaker.

We should be on record in support of self-determination for Khalistan and throughout the subcontinent. We should also stop our aid and trade with India until it learns to respect the human rights of all people. This is in accord with American principles and these are practical steps we can take to bring real freedom to South Asia.

[April 4, 2007]

VAISAKHI DAY MESSAGE TO THE SIKH NATION

DEAR KHALSA JI: WAHEGURU JI KA KHALSA, WAHEGURU JI KI FATEH!

On April 13, the Sikh Nation will celebrate Vaisakhi Day, observing the 308th anniversary of the day Guru Gobind Singh established the Khalsa Panth. I would like to take this opportunity to wish you and your family and friends and all Sikhs a Happy Vaisakhi Day. As you know, Vaisakhi Day is the anniversary of the founding of the Khalsa. On Vaisakhi Day in 1699, Guru Gobind Singh baptized the Sikhs and required them to keep the five Ks. He made the Sikhs into saints and soldiers, giving the blessing ''In grieb Sikhin ko deon Patshani'' (''I give sovereignty to the humble Sikhs.'') Just two years after his departure from this earthly plane in 1708, the Sikhs established their own independent state in Punjab. Today we struggle to regain the sovereignty that Guru Gobind Singh bestowed upon us over 300 years ago.

We must remind ourselves of our heritage by raising slogans of ''Khalistan Zindabad'' and beginning a Shantmai Morcha to liberate our homeland, Khalistan. Every morning and evening we recite, ''Raj Kare Ga Khalsa.'' Now is the time to act on it. Do we mean what we say every morning and evening?

Last week, Dr. Awatar Singh Sekhon, Managing Editor of the International Journal of Sikh Affairs, representing the Council of Khalistan, presented a memorandum on Sikh sovereignty and the release of the Sikh political and non-political prisoners in India to the United Nations Human Rights Commission in Geneva. The memorandum discussed the Human Rights Violations, persecution, torture, genocide of Sikhs since 1984 as well as the current situation in Punjab, Khalistan. The ongoing effort to reclaim the freedom that is our birthright took another step forward with this delivery.

The Sikhs in Punjab have suffered enormous repression at the hands of the Indian regime in the last 23 years. The Indian government has murdered over 250,000 Sikhs since 1984. In addition, over 50,000 Sikh youth were picked up from their houses, tortured, murdered in police Custody, then secretly cremated as ''unidentified bodies.'' Their remains were never even given to their families! Over 52,000 Sikhs sit in Indian jails as political prisoners without charge or trial, according to a report by the Movement Against State Repression (MASR.) Some of them have been in illegal custody for over 20 years! Repression and genocide of this magnitude at the hands of the Indian government is unparallelled in the late part of the 20th century. India should be ashamed of the genocide it has committed against Sikhs, Christians, Muslims, and other minorities.

Recently, Chief Minister Badal backed off his promise to repeal Section 5 of the Punjab Termination of Agreement Act, the section that allowed the free transfer of Punjab's river water to Haryana and Rajasthan to continue. This promise was essential to getting him elected. Although he is the leader of the Akali Dal, Badal has again shown that he is under the control of the Hindutva movement. It is time for the Sikh leadership to stop kowtowing to the Indian government and start protecting the interests of the Sikh Nation. He should immediately sever his alliance with the BJP. As every Sikh knows, the BJP is determined to destroy the Sikh religion and the Sikh Nation.

Dr. K.S. Aulakh (no relation) recently resigned as Vice Chancellor of Punjab Agricultural University after Mr. Badal ordered him to open the University gate, which had been closed because of robberies and a murder, something that he could not do. Dr. G.S. Kalkat, former Vice chancellor of PAU and chairman of the Punjab Farmers Commission, described this resignation as unfortunate and said there should be no political interference in the workings of the University could not be tolerated. Dr. Darshan Singh, former Dean of Postgraduate Studies at PAU; Dr. D.R. Bhumbla, former Vice Chancellor of Haryana Agricultura University; Prof. Pritpal Singh Kapur, former pro-Vice Chancellor of Guru Nanak Dev University; Dr. Darsban Singh, former Dean of Postgraduate Studies at PAU; and Lt. Col. Chanan Singh Dhillon, retired President of the Indian Ex-Services League; among others, were also critical of Badal's political interference. Dr. K.S. Aulakh was appointed by Mr. Badal several years ago when Badal was Chief Minister before, so this was an unusually courageous act on his part and he is to be saluted for it. Mr. Badal is Chief Minister of Punjab. Why doesn't he even want to protect the students, faculty, and staff at PAU from robberies and murders?

Jathedar Joginder Singh Vedanti is another who is under Indian government control. A couple of years ago, he was quoted as saying, ''We don't want separate territory.'' Apparently, Vedanti would rather maintain the oppression and the atrocities against the Sikh Nation than enjoy the glow of freedom, as promised to us at the time of independence. Has he forgotten our heritage of freedom? How can the spiritual leader of the Sikh religion deny the Sikh Nation's legitimate aspiration for freedom and sovereignty? Is he not stung by the words of one of his predecessors, former AkalTakht Jathedar Professor Darshan Singh, who said, ''If a Sikh is not a Khalistani, he is not a Sikh''? Is Akal Takht occupied by a person who does not believe in Sikh values and Sikh aspirations?

Sikhs can never forgive or forget the Indian government's military attack on the Golden Temple and 125 other Gurdwaras throughout Punjab. Over 20,000 Sikhs were murdered in those attacks as Operation Bluestar, including Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, General Shabeg Singh, Bhai Amrik Singh, and over 100 Sikh religious students ages 8–13 who were taken out into the courtyard and shot. These attacks accelerated the Sikh independence movement and deepened the desire for independence in the hearts of Sikhs, a fire that burns brightly in the hearts of the Sikh Nation to this day. Sant Bhindranwale said that the attack on the Golden Temple would ''lay the foundation stone of Khalistan'' and he was right.

Khalsa Ji, at this time of Vaisakhi, the whole Khalsa Panth must be energized to reestablish a sovereign, independent Khalsa Raj by freeing our homeland, Khalistan. It is time for Sikhs to look back at our history of persecution and suffering over the past two decades. The Hindu government of India, whether run by the Congress Party of by the BJP, wants minorities either subservient to Hinduism or completely wiped out. In spite of the fact that the religions believe completely opposite things, Hindus desire to engulf Sikhism just as they did with Jainism and Buddhism in India. They think that Buddhism is part of Hinduism because Siddhartha Gautama, the Buddha, was born in India. Similarly, Guru Nanak was born Hindu, so they proclaim Sikhism to be part of Hinduism. Yet Guru Nanak said that he was ''neither Hindu nor Muslim.'' Jesus was born Jewish. Does that mean that Christianity is merely part of Judaism?

On this auspicious occasion celebrating the birth of the Khalsa Panth, we must bring back our Khalsa spirit. We must remember our heritage and tradition of ''Khalsa Bagi Yan Badshah'' by committing ourselves to freeing our homeland, Punjab, Khalistan, from Indian Occupation. We need a new Sikh political party which has a dedication to the interests of the Sikh Nation as its sole objective, to establish Khalsa Raj by liberating Khalistan, severing all political ties with India.

The Indian government wants to break the will of the Sikh Nation and enslave them forever, making Sikhism a part of Hinduism. This can only be stopped if we free Punjab from Delhi's control and reestablish a sovereign, independent country, as declared on October 7, 1987. We must recommit ourselves to freeing our homeland, Punjab, Khalistan. Raise slogans of ''Khalsa Bagi Yan Badshah,'' ''Raj Kare Ga Khalsa,'' ''Khalistan Zindabad,'' and ''India out of Khalistan.'' Use this vaisakhi to launch a Shantmai Morcha to liberate Khalistan. In spite of India's best efforts, they cannot arrest all of us. Their jails are overflowing as it is. We must keep the pressure on every day to force India to withdraw from our homeland and allow the glow of freedom in Khalistan.

The flame of freedom still burns brightly in Punjab in spite of the Indian government's brutal repression. Perhaps this is why India is afraid to hold a free and fair vote on the subject of independence. The essence of democracy is the right to self-determination. The time to achieve our independence is now. Always remember our heritage: Raj Kare Ga Khalsa; Khalsa Bagi Yan Badshah. Freedom for Khalistan is closer than ever. We must rededicate ourselves to achieving it.

Pantha Da Sewadar,

DR. GURMIT SINGH AULAKH

President, Council of Khalistan.

INTRODUCTION OF A RESOLUTION CONDEMNING IN THE STRONGEST TERMS THE RECENT TERRORISTS ATTACKS THAT OCCURRED IN CASABLANCA, MOROCCO AND IN ALGIERS, ALGERIA

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce a resolution condemning in the strongest terms the recent terrorist attacks in Morocco and Algeria.

Often times we forget that we are not the only country or people affected by the scourge of international terrorism. Radical extremists have affected and disrupted the lives of many of our friends and allies all over the world. Daily, we see images and hear stories of blatant, unprovoked, vicious attacks on innocent

men, women and children. Our enemy is not limited to fighting on a military battlefield. Our enemy does not discern its victims on the basis of race, religion or nationality.

The most recent examples of this complete disregard for human life are the attacks occurring this last week in Morocco and Algeria. Not only did the attacks result in several deaths and injuries, but whole communities were devastated and thrown into extreme chaos.

The people and governments of Morocco and Algeria must know that we stand behind them and that America does not condone any act of terrorism, killing several people and devastating communities by the chaos and havoc wreaked by them.

I am pleased my colleague and friend, Representative MICHAEL ROGERS from Michigan, has joined me as an original cosponsor of this resolution. I strongly urge our colleagues to support it and urge its swift consideration.

FARM RISK MANAGEMENT ACT

HON. TERRY EVERETT

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

Mr. EVERETT. Madam Speaker, I introduced legislation today, along with my Alabama colleagues Reps. SPENCER BACHUS, JO BONNER, BUD CRAMER, and MIKE ROGERS, to enable America's farmers to better manage the risk to their livelihoods in times of severe weather and skyrocketing energy costs. The Farm Risk Management Act (FARM Act) would create risk management accounts, using both USDA and individual farmer contributions, to reduce the financial impact of disasters on the agriculture community. The FARM Act would allow farmers to insure their income by creating a whole-farm risk management program based on total revenues from all their farming activities. This is a departure from the current crop insurance program, which provides coverage based on a specific commodity. The new risk management account goes beyond the scope of current crop insurance by allowing farmers to withdraw funds from their accounts to help offset any unforeseen farm expense including high energy or fertilizer costs. With my new proposal, a farmer would deposit money into the new risk management account. The U.S. Department of Agriculture would then match the farmer's contribution in this tax-deferred, interest-bearing account, rather than subsidizing a portion of the crop insurance premium for the farmer as is done presently. As a result, farmers would effectively be self-insured.

More and more, we are seeing farmers lose their farms due to the unfortunate combination of increasingly harsh weather, rising operational costs and a Federal crop insurance program that is too expensive to help many cover their losses. Recent Farm Bill hearings and subsequent meetings I have had with farmers in the Southeast have led me to the conclusion that current crop insurance programs are not working. The present system is too expensive, leaving many farmers exposed to uncontrollable risks. It also allows room for fraud which only serves to drive up program costs for everyone.

There is an urgent need for significant crop insurance reform that will offer hard-working farmers the tools they need to manage the unique risks involved in agricultural production. This approach of individual risk management accounts could address many of the problems associated with the current crop insurance system and save the Federal government money by alleviating the future need for ad hoc disaster assistance. Most importantly, it will give farmers struggling against natural forces beyond their control greater flexibility to make a living while performing the vital task of putting food on America's table.

HONORING THE LIFE AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF JACKIE ROBINSON

HON. DANNY K. DAVIS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and groundbreaking accomplishments of Jackie Robinson, on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of integrated Major League Baseball. Sixty years ago this month, Jackie Robinson overcame institutionalized opposition to become the first African-American Major League Baseball player. He proved himself to be among the best that have ever played the game. He was a member of six World Series teams and earned six consecutive All-Star Game nominations. In 1962 Jackie Robinson was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame.

In addition to his multiple sports accomplishments, Jackie Robinson accomplished great things in his personal life. He was a key figure in the establishment a growth of Freedom Bank. He also served with honor and distinction as a second lieutenant in the United States Army from 1942–1944. In 1984, he was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom. It gives me great pride to have served during the 108th Congress when we awarded Jackie Robinson the Congressional Gold Medal.

Throughout his life Jackie Robinson stood up against inequality, served as a great role model for all American citizens, and proved that anything is possible. I recall one story that exemplified his commitment to justice, when he faced court-martial charges for insubordination resulting from his refusal to obey an order to move to the back of a segregated military bus in Texas. I salute Jackie Robinson and commend him on his life of accomplishment.

INTRODUCTION OF THE TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION AND MANUFACTURING STIMULATION ACT OF 2007

HON. VERNON J. EHLERS

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

Mr. EHLERS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce with my colleagues ''The Technology Innovation and Manufacturing Competitiveness Act.'' I introduced legislation in both the 108th and 109th Congresses focused on strengthening U.S. manufacturing, and both times it was passed by the House. I am pleased that this bill contains many of the same provisions as well as others, since the global competitiveness of U.S. manufacturing remains a pressing issue.

The President's American Competitiveness Initiative (ACI), started in 2006, launched a three-pronged approach to competitiveness by strengthening research at the National Science Foundation, Office of Science at the Department of Energy, and the laboratories and construction of the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). This bill addresses the last of these agencies by fully supporting the ACI requested improvements, as well as reauthorizing programs at NIST crucial to our global competitiveness.

Although manufacturing has experienced tremendous technological gains over the last few years, international competition has exacted a terrible toll on our nation's manufacturers. In particular, our small and medium-sized firms are under tremendous pressure to become more efficient, to modernize, and to cut their prices. There is no evidence that these pressures are likely to go away.

This bill will help address long-term problems facing our nation's manufacturers by broadening and strengthening manufacturing extension services and creating a new program to revive manufacturing innovation through collaborative research and development.

Specifically, this bill will address the competitiveness needs of our Nation by:

Reauthorizing the critical programs at the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), a federal research laboratory dedicated to ensuring U.S. leadership in technology-based standards and industries; creating a new collaborative research and development program for manufacturing technology; creating a fellowship program at NIST to develop U.S. manufacturing research expertise; reauthorizing and creating a new grant program within the Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) program so that the MEP Centers can extend their expertise to a range of problems beyond their current scope of activities; and establishing the Technology Innovation Program and Advisory Board to help bring more innovative technologies to market.

I want to thank Chairman GORDON and Ranking Member HALL for working in a bipartisan manner to introduce this bill, which addresses such an important topic to our nation. I appreciate the efforts of the majority to consider the input of the minority members of the Science and Technology Committee.

Madam Speaker, it is incredibly important to our future for this nation to remain competitive today. Congress must provide a coherent federal response to the changes that are underway in manufacturing, and to support the technological innovation that is fundamental to retaining our manufacturing strength. This bill provides a mechanism for that crucial response and I look forward to working with my colleagues on this issue in the 110th Congress.

INTRODUCTION OF THE LIBRARIAN INCENTIVE TO BOOST RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION IN AREAS OF NEED (LIBRARIAN) ACT OF 2007

HON. XAVIER BECERRA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

Mr. BECERRA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce bipartisan legislation, the Librarian Incentive to Boost Recruitment and Retention in Areas of Need (LIBRARIAN) Act of 2007, with Representatives VERNON EHLERS (MI–3), RAÚL GRIJALVA (AZ–07), and JOHN SHIMKUS (IL–19). Senators JACK REED (RI) and THAD COCHRAN (MS) will also be introducing a companion measure today in the Senate. The LIBRARIAN Act of 2007, which is endorsed by the American Library Association, will offer much needed help to recruit and retain librarians in schools and public libraries located in low-income areas. We accomplish this by establishing a loan forgiveness program for college students who obtain a master's degree in library science and latter commit to serve as librarians in disadvantaged communities.

The introduction of the LIBRARIAN Act is timely since today we celebrate National Library Workers Day. Our Nation's public and school libraries and the people who keep them open are national treasures. Every day, these libraries provide an invaluable public good to our communities. Together they offer crucial access to education, skills training and unique information. These services are particularly important in low-income communities where resources are often scarce.

Unfortunately, libraries are losing their most valuable asset: librarians. According to a 2002 School Library Journal survey, 30 states and the District of Columbia reported either a severe or extremely severe librarian shortage. The librarian shortage is attributed to two principal factors. First, an alarming number of librarians have reached the age of retirement and the number is expected to increase dramatically in the next decade. The American Library Association, the oldest and largest library association in the world, projects that between 60 to 65 percent of currently practicing librarians will retire by the year 2020. The United States Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that more than three out of five librarians are aged 45 years or older—many of these librarians will become eligible to retire in the next 10 years.

The second factor causing the librarian shortage is that libraries are now in direct competition with highly salaried private sectors needing workers with librarian skills such as those in multimedia technology, database administration and systems analysis. Today it is not uncommon to encounter a librarian earning less than $29,000 annually, despite the fact that the position is highly specialized and requires a master's degree in library science. Not surprisingly, librarians are increasingly leaving their profession and using their invaluable education and experience in other more lucrative employment arenas.

Sadly, low-income community libraries will suffer most from the coming librarian shortage. While well-funded suburban libraries can afford to recruit and retain librarians, low-income area libraries lack the resources to attract well qualified staff. Moreover, most librarians look to relocate to highly desirable areas creating an even greater difficulty for low-income area libraries to attract qualified candidates to fill job openings.

Earlier this year, I received first-hand confirmation that if the LIBRARIAN Act passed we could attract more students to the profession. A young student in my district who had learned about the LIBRARIAN Act wrote to me stating that she would now consider a career as a librarian and gladly work in a low-income community. Previously, this student had not entertained the idea of becoming a librarian.

There is strong precedent in law for canceling student loans under the Federal Perkins Loan program. Several categories of professionals who service low-income areas currently receive such a benefit. Teachers working in special education, Head Start and educationally disadvantaged schools under the Title I Program, special education and Head Start, as well as members of the armed services, law enforcement officers, Peace Corps volunteers, medical technicians and nurses can qualify for forgiveness of their Federal Perkins student loans.

Specifically, the LIBRARIAN Act allows Federal Perkins loan cancellation for full-time librarians with a master's degree in library sciences who are employed in: a public library that serves a geographic area that contains one or more schools eligible for educationally disadvantaged school funding under Title I; or an elementary or secondary school library that is eligible for educationally disadvantaged school funding under Title 1.

Librarians working full-time in these areas would qualify for up to 100 percent Federal Perkins loan forgiveness depending on their years of service as a librarian in the disadvantaged schools or public libraries. Specifically, they would qualify for: 15 percent loan forgiveness for each of the first and second years of such service; 20 percent loan forgiveness for each of the third and fourth years of such service; and 30 percent loan forgiveness for the fifth year of such service.

Since loan forgiveness would apply to the years of services that are completed after the enactment of this Act, students entering a library sciences program and librarians with outstanding Federal Perkins loans stand to benefit. In the end, the susceptible communities that are detrimentally affected by a librarian shortage stand to benefit the most from this bill.

Madam Speaker, it is time to take steps towards alleviating this shortage of librarians in America. The loan forgiveness provisions of the LIBRARIAN Act will be a valuable tool in attracting some of our brightest and best students to become tomorrow's educators in the communities where they are most needed. I urge my colleagues to join us in supporting the passage of this important legislation.

HONORING THE LIFE OF ERNEST GALLO

SPEECH OF

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 16, 2007

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, this week the House voted to honor Mr. Ernest Gallo, a pioneer and innovator in winemaking and exceptional example of the American entrepreneurial spirit. Born on March 18, 1909 near Modesto, California, Ernest Gallo grew up working with his brother, Julio, in a vineyard owned by their immigrant father. With less than $6,000 and a pamphlet from the Modesto Public Library, the brothers founded E & J Gallo Winery in 1933. From these humble beginnings, Ernest and his brother built a wine empire, bringing a love of wine to the U.S. customer and permanently establishing California as the epicenter of America's wine industry. Today, E & J Gallo Winery produces approximately 900 million bottles annually, selling them under 40 different labels and distributing to 90 different countries. Throughout the years, Gallo received honors for his achievements in winemaking by a host of organizations ranging from the American Society of Enologists Merit Award for outstanding leadership in the wine industry to the Gold Vine Award from the Brotherhood of the Knights of the Vine wine fraternity and the 1983 Distinguished Service Award from The Wine Spectator. In recent years, Gallo Winery has continued this trend of excellence, being named Winery of the Year in 1996 and 1998 by the San Francisco International Wine Competition and being named "Wine of the Century" at the Los Angeles County Fair wine competition. These honors are owed in no small part to the passion and innovation of Ernest Gallo. In his passing, we have lost an American legend and a dear friend.

TRIBUTE TO SHAWNEE MISSION UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH

HON. DENNIS MOORE

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

Mr. MOORE of Kansas. Madam Speaker, the Shawnee Mission Unitarian Universalist Church has been an important presence in the City of Overland Park and Johnson County, Kansas, since 1967.

In 1970 the Church, sited on historical grounds that date to the 1871 Breyfogle Farm, the 1913 Mathey Farm, and the 1948 Burgdorfer Farm, purchased the house and barn, vintage 1913, from a previous church congregation. This site will be the location of the Church's 40th anniversary celebration, following its worship service on May 20, 2007.

The Church has provided liberal religious services and education for adults and children, has sponsored forums with knowledgeable speakers on public issues, has initiated a pathfinding Coming of Age program for youth in the denomination, and has presented a nationally-recognized World Religion Series. Additionally, the Church has promoted democracy by serving as a voting site in the community and has encouraged members to support many local, national, and international charitable efforts including SafeHome, Johnson County Interfaith Hospitality Network, Habitat for Humanity, Crosslines, American Indian Center, Million Voices for Darfur, UNICEF, and many others.

Through the years the Church has been a good neighbor to the surrounding residential area through its maintenance of buildings and

grounds, including the front garden which has been recognized as a Certified Wildlife Habitat by the National Wildlife Federation. The Church also is a member in good standing of the Unitarian Universalist Association [UUA], the international umbrella group of UU congregations and has been certified as a Welcoming Congregation by UUA.

Madam Speaker, the members of the Shawnee Mission Unitarian Universalist Church are celebrating the past and present successes of their church community and are planning for the future of their church community. I am pleased to join with, Johnson County, the City of Overland Park and with men and women of goodwill throughout the Kansas City metropolitan area in recognizing and congratulating the Shawnee Mission Unitarian Universalist Church upon its 40th anniversary as a vibrant member of the metropolitan area's interfaith communities.

IN MEMORY OF DR. GURCHARAN SINGH, HUMANITARIAN AND FREEDOM ACTIVIST

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

Mr. TOWNS. Madam Speaker, I was distressed to learn that Dr. Gurcharan Singh, a Sikh scholar from Long Island, was killed March 31 in a hit-and-run traffic accident. Professor Singh was on his way to the Gurdwara (the Sikh place of worship) at the time. The driver has not yet been found.

Professor Singh was a professor at Marymount Manhattan College and a leader In the Sikh community in New York. He was a father and grandfather. According to WNBC–TV, he was "a counselor to New York's Sikh community and a philanthropist devoted to bringing people of different faiths and nationalities together." He was also an activist in support of Sikh freedom, serving as an advisor to the Council of Khalistan, which leads the effort to free the Sikh homeland, Khalistan, from Indian occupation. In that capacity, he would accompany the Council's President, Dr. Gurmit Singh Aulakh, when he would go to the U.N. Human Rights Commission.

Prior to teaching at Marymount, Dr. Singh had been a professor at Columbia University. He taught political science and international studies.

The Council of Khalistan issued a press release about Dr. Singh's passing. It was also reported on WNBC Channel 4 in New York, on Yahoo News, on several Sikh and South Asian news outlets, and around the Internet.

On behalf of all my colleagues, I wish to extend the sympathies of the U.S. Congress to Dr. Singh's family, friends, and students. I'm sure that everyone joins me in this. I know that he will leave a void that will be very difficult to fill.

Madam Speaker, the best tribute we could pay to Dr. Singh is to continue his work, as Dr. Aulakh points out. This Congress can help by stopping aid to India and trade with that country until all people there enjoy human rights and by going on record in support of self-determination for Dr. Singh's Sikh Nation and for the Nagas, Kashmiris, and all the people seeking freedom in India. Self-determination is the essence of democracy.

PLAINVIEW SCHOLAR, LEADER MOURNED AFTER HIT-AND-RUN DEATH

GURCHARAN SINGH, 77, TAUGHT AT COLUMBIA, MARYMOUNT MANHATTAN COLLEGE

PLAINVIEW, N.Y.—A family and a community were mourning Saturday night the death of beloved professor and role model killed by a hit-and-run driver on Long Island, NewsChannel 4's Aimee Nuzzo reported.

Gurcharan Singh, 77, a scholar and a professor, was also a counselor to New York's Sikh community and a philanthropist devoted to bringing people of different faiths and nationalities together, according to family and friends.

''He is the gem of our community,'' said friend Paul Kandhari. ''If there was a family problem, he'll be there. If the father and son have a problem, he'll be there.''

The Plainview father of three and grandfather was struck and killed by a hit-and-run driver while walking from his home to church Friday night.

Dr. Singh was crossing Old Country Road in Plainview just after 8 p.m. headed for the Sikh temple, when a red or maroon car traveling westbound ran a red light, struck him and kept going, police told Nuzzo.

Singh was airlifted to Nassau University Medical Center with multiple fractures and head trauma, but he did not survive.

''My father was a very selfless man who served his community and society with all his heart, and we'd really love any assistance in finding the individual who did this,'' said Surinder Singh, the victim's son.

Anyone with information about the mishap was asked to call Nassau County Crime Stoppers at 1–800–244–TIPS.

Once a professor at Columbia University, Singh taught political science and international studies at Marymount Manhattan College for more than three decades and continued to teach part-time, Nuzzo said.

A statement from Marymount Manhattan College said the ''community is deeply saddened by the news of Professor Singh's death. He served as a devoted teacher at the college for many years, and his loss will be felt by all of our faculty, staff, students and alumni. Our thoughts are with his family during this difficult time.'' Dr. Singh's friends said they have no doubt the selfless humanitarian would have forgiven the hit-and-run driver who took his life. They said they hoped that would help whoever is responsible to come forward.

[Council of Khalistan Press Release]

DR. GURCHARAN SINGH, ADVISOR TO COUNCIL OF KHALISTAN, KILLED IN HIT-AND-RUN TRAFFIC ACCIDENT

LEADING SIKH SCHOLAR, TEACHER, HUMANITARIAN

WASHINGTON, DC, Apr. 4, 2007—Dr. Gurmit Singh Aulakh, President of the Council of Khalistan, today expressed ''deepest sympathies'' to the family and friends of Professor Gurcharan Singh, a leading Sikh scholar and a teacher at Marymount Manhattan College. Professor Gurcharan Singh was killed by a hit-and-run driver about 8:00 p.m. on the evening of March 31 as he was heading to the Gurdwara.

''Professor Gurcharan Singh leaves a vacuum that will be hard to fill, not only within the Sikh community and Nassau County, but for his family, friends, students, and the many whose lives he touched,'' said Dr. Aulakh, ''He will be greatly missed. I am proud that he was my friend.''

''Only God gives life and takes life. As human beings, we are helpless. 'Ghale Aawe Nanka Sadhe Uthin Jai.' We can only mourn his loss but the best tribute to Dr. Gurcharan Singh will be to continue his mission which he worked for, that is serving humanity and working hard to liberate Khalistan from Indian occupation. Only in a free Khalistan will the Sikh religion flourish and the Sikh Nation prosper.''

Professor Gurcharan Singh was well known as a humanitarian on Long Island. ''My father was a very selfless man who served his community and society with all his heart,'' said his son Surinder Singh, He served as a counselor to the New York Sikh community and was a philanthropist.

Professor Gurcharan Singh was also a strong supporter of Khalistan, the independent Sikh homeland that declared its independence from India on October 7, 1987. In that effort, he served as an advisor to the President of the Council of Khalistan, which leads the peaceful, democratic, nonviolent effort to liberate Khalistan. He accompanied Dr. Aulakh whenever he went to talk to the United Nations Human Rights Commission.

His death was reported on WNBC–TV New York and on its website; on Indo-Asian News Service; on Sikh media outlets; on a variety of websites; and on other media outlets.

''Professor Gurcharan Singh's passing is a loss to the Sikh Nation, to the people of Long Island and America, to his family and friends, and to friends of freedom,'' said Dr. Aulakh. ''May God bless this departed soul.''

FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITIES FOR RESEARCH IN ASTRONOMY

HON. GABRIELLE GIFFORDS

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

Ms. GIFFORDS. Madam Speaker, this month marks the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Association of Universities for Research in Astronomy AURA. In 1957, seven universities banded together to form a new type of consortium that would establish a national astronomical observatory available to all astronomers on a merit basis. This new consortium, AURA, sought access to the clearest skies and best observing sites available. They established their headquarters in Tucson, AZ, and over the ensuing years built the Kitt Peak National Observatory and a sister observatory in Chile known as the Cerro Tololo Inter-American Observatory.

The establishment of AURA took place in an environment in which the National Science Foundation was only 5 years old and the establishment of a space agency was still to come. AURA saw the need for the astronomical community to organize itself, to work toward common goals, and to create scientific opportunities for all. AURA and other public observatories helped advance the field of U.S. astronomy.

From these beginnings, AURA has extended our view of the universe and ourselves with its visionary planning for what is now the Hubble Space Telescope, which AURA operates from its Space Telescope Science Institute in Baltimore. It also paved the way for the giant ground based telescopes known as the International Gemini Observatory, in Hawaii and Chile.

AURA has helped astronomy move to a central position in national and international scientific research with increasingly strong ties to many other areas of the physical sciences and the fundamental questions that they address.

For example, on the largest scales in the field of cosmology, astrophysics and particle physics increasingly view the universe as the ultimate ''high-energy laboratory'', which may be the only way to address questions about the fundamental nature of matter and space itself. Observations made at AURA observatories both on the ground and in space have revealed the existence of both dark matter and dark energy. At the other extreme of scale, astrobiology is synthesizing research in astronomy, biology, and chemistry and is emerging as a field in itself. Again, observations at AURA's observatories are beginning a quest to search for the presence of life and ultimately understand its origins both within our solar system and in our galaxy.

Looking to the near future and the advent of the James Webb Space Telescope and a Giant Segmented Mirror Telescope, we hope to see the light from the first stars in the Universe, to catch galaxies as they are first assembling, investigate the nature of dark matter and dark energy, understand how black holes are formed, and take a census of extrasolar planets with masses extending from that of Jupiter down to masses comparable to that of the Earth. With the Advanced Technology Solar Telescope, we hope to observe the Sun at the smallest scales possible and understand the fundamental workings of our closest star. These questions are not just at the forefront of astronomical research, but are ones that have captured the public's interest and imagination.

Madam Speaker, I ask all of my colleagues to join me in commending AURA for its accomplishments over the past fifty years. From a humble idea born in Tucson, AZ, to the outer reaches of the universe, AURA has made a major contribution to U.S. science and to our cultural heritage.

HONORING THE MOST REVEREND JOHN MICHAEL D'ARCY, BISHOP OF THE DIOCESE OF FORT WAYNE-SOUTH BEND

HON. JOE DONNELLY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

Mr. DONNELLY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to express my congratulations to the Most Reverend John Michael D'Arcy, Bishop of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, who is celebrating the 50th anniversary of his ordination to the Priesthood. In the past 50 years countless individuals, both Catholic and not, have experienced the wisdom and love of Bishop D'Arcy and each of them can be grateful for having known him.

Bishop D'Arcy, the son of Irish immigrants, was born on August 18, 1932. He recalls feeling called to the priesthood at a very young age, hoping to follow in the footsteps of his childhood priests. Immediately following high school he entered Saint John's Seminary in Brighton, Massachusetts. For the next 8 years Bishop D'Arcy developed his spiritual knowledge and prepared to serve his community.

After Seminary, Bishop D'Arcy studied in Rome at the Angelicum where he received his doctorate in spiritual theology in 1968. He returned to St. John's Seminary where he served as spiritual director and professor until 1985, guiding many young men in their journey to the priesthood. As a result of his years of faith and service, John D'Arcy was ordained auxiliary bishop in his native Boston in 1975.

Bishop D'Arcy was appointed the eighth Bishop of Fort Wayne-South Bend on the 26th of February, 1985. During his tenure, he has focused extensively on enlarging the Catholic community in faith and numbers. His focus on education has led to the expansion of Catholic education across the diocese. With the creation of the South Bend Chancery and other church offices Bishop D'Arcy gave many more people access to Catholic services.

So, today I rise to pay tribute to Bishop John D'Arcy for his years of dedication to the people of Indiana. His 50 years of selfless service will always be remembered by those whose lives are better because of his kindness and compassion. May God grant Bishop D'Arcy many more years of strength and courage. His service to the people of Indiana has truly been a blessing.

INTRODUCTION OF H.R. 1868, THE TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION AND MANUFACTURING STIMULATION ACT OF 2007

HON. PHIL GINGREY

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

Mr. GINGREY. Madam Speaker, I rise today as an original co-sponsor of the Technology Innovation and Manufacturing Stimulation Act of 2007. I join my colleagues from the Science and Technology Committee, Mr. WU, Mr. GORDON, Mr. HALL and Mr. EHLERS, in introducing this important bill that will ensure our Nation's technological competitiveness for decades to come.

The President's American Competitiveness Initiative (ACI) provides a foundation to keep our country competitive in the ever-expanding global marketplace. The Technology Innovation and Manufacturing Stimulation Act plays an important role in fulfilling this initiative by reauthorizing the National Institute of Standards and Technology, or NIST. NIST labs serve almost every Federal agency and U.S. industry by providing reliable and dependable standards, measurements, and certification services.

As Congress looks to the future of the technology industry in this country, NIST research will prove to be indispensable in the maturation of cutting-edge basic research in becoming successful commercial products. Emerging fields such as nanotechnology and bioengineering are dependent on scientifically-based industrial measurements and standards to see that advanced laboratory research can make that leap into practical industrial applications. I recently visited some of NIST's laboratories and was amazed by the fascinating and vital work its scientists perform.

H.R. 1868 includes 3-year authorization levels for NIST's laboratories which are consistent with the ACI's goal to double the nation's investment in physical science research by 2017. The Technology Innovation and Manufacturing Stimulation Act also authorizes the Manufacturing Extension Partnership program-a cost-sharing program that provides technical and business assistance to small and medium-sized manufacturers. This assistance has a proven track record in the manufacturing industry to help companies remain competitive in the global marketplace by improving productivity and efficiency. In addition, this legislation authorizes the Technology Innovation Program that provides grants that encourage the development of high-risk, innovative technologies that will provide widespread economic benefits to companies across the United States.

I thank Chairman WU for incorporating our priorities for NIST into this comprehensive authorization bill and I look forward to working with my Science Committee colleagues to ensure quick action on this important bill.

Daily Digest

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S4551–S4622

Measures Introduced: Nineteen bills and four resolutions were introduced, as follows: S. 14, 1120–1137, and S. Res. 150–153. **Pages S4599–S4600**

Measures Passed:

Commending University of Wyoming Cowgirls: Senate agreed to S. Res. 151, commending the University of Wyoming Cowgirls for their championship victory in the Women's National Invitation Tournament. **Page S4620**

Honoring Jackie Robinson: Senate agreed to S. Res. 152, honoring the lifetime achievements of Jackie Robinson. **Page S4620**

Select Committee on Ethics Temporary Appointments: Senate agreed to S. Res. 153, making temporary appointments to the Select Committee on Ethics. **Page S4620**

National Missing Persons Day: Senate agreed to S. Res. 112, designating April 6, 2007, as "National Missing Persons Day". **Pages S4620–21**

Intelligence Authorization Act: Senate continued consideration of S. 372, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2007 for the intelligence and intelligence-related activities of the United States Government, the Intelligence Community Management Account, and the Central Intelligence Agency Retirement and Disability System, taking action on the following amendments proposed thereto: **Pages S4559–87**

Adopted:

Rockefeller (for Bingaman) Modified Amendment No. 846, to require the Director of Science and Technology of the Office of the Director of National Intelligence to develop 15-year projections and assessments of the needs of the intelligence community to ensure a robust federal scientific and engineering workforce and the means to recruit such a workforce. **Pages S4560, S4561**

Rockefeller (for Bond) Amendment No. 858, to improve the notification of Congress regarding intelligence activities of the United States Government. **Pages S4560, S4561**

Rockefeller (for Bond) Modified Amendment No. 860, to modify the requirements for the report on any clandestine prison or detention facility for individuals captured in the global war on terrorism. **Page S4560**

Rockefeller (for Bond/Rockefeller) Modified Amendment No. 861, to clarify the national security mission of the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency. **Pages S4560, S4561**

Rockefeller (for Bond/Rockefeller) Amendment No. 862, to change the name of the National Space Intelligence Center to the National Space Intelligence Office. **Pages S4560, S4561–62**

Rockefeller (for Bond/Rockefeller) Amendment No. 863, to modify the requirements related to the Director and Deputy Director of the Central Intelligence Agency. **Pages S4560, S4562**

Rockefeller (for Bond/Rockefeller) Modified Amendment No. 872, to modify requirements for the content of the report on compliance with the Detainee Treatment Act of 2005. **Pages S4560, S4562**

Pending:

Rockefeller/Bond Amendment No. 843, in the nature of a substitute. **Page S4559**

Collins Amendment No. 847 (to Amendment No. 843), to reaffirm the constitutional and statutory protections accorded sealed domestic mail. **Page S4559**

Cornyn Amendment No. 849 (to Amendment No. 843), to amend chapter 113B of title 18, United States Code, to prohibit the recruitment of persons to participate in terrorism, to provide remedies for immigration litigation, and to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to modify the requirements related to judicial review of visa revocation and to modify the requirements related to detention and removal of aliens ordered removed. **Page S4560**

Kyl Amendment No. 866 (to Amendment No. 849), to protect classified information. **Page S4562**

During consideration of this measure today, Senate also took the following action:

Senate vitiated the adoption of the following amendments:

Rockefeller (for Bond) Amendment No. 856, to strike the requirement for a study on the disclosure of additional intelligence information.

Pages S4560, S4561, S4565

Rockefeller (for Bond) Amendment No. 859, to strike the pilot program on disclosure of records under the Privacy Act relating to certain intelligence activities. **Pages S4560, S4561, S4565**

Pursuant to the order of April 17, 2007, the motion to proceed to the motion to reconsider the vote by which cloture was not invoked on April 16, 2007 was agreed to. **Page S4565**

Pursuant to the order of April 17, 2007, the motion to reconsider the vote by which cloture was not invoked on April 16, 2007 was agreed to. **Page S4565**

By 50 yeas to 45 nays (Vote No. 131), three-fifths of those Senators duly chosen and sworn, not having voted in the affirmative, Senate upon reconsideration rejected the motion to close further debate on the bill. **Page S4580**

Medicare Prescription Drug Price Negotiation Act and Court Security Improvement Act—Agreement: A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that at 9:30 a.m., on Wednesday, April 18, 2007, Senate resume consideration of the motion to proceed to consideration of S. 3, to amend part D of title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for fair prescription drug prices for Medicare beneficiaries, and vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed thereon; provided further that, prior to the vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to S. 378, to amend title 18, United States Code, to protect judges, prosecutors, witnesses, victims, and their family members; that there be 2 minutes of debate equally divided between Senators Leahy and Specter or their designees. **Page S4622**

Messages from the House: **Page S4593**

Measures Referred: **Pages S4593–94**

Petitions and Memorials: **Pages S4596–99**

Executive Communications: **Pages S4594–96**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages S4600–02**

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: **Pages S4602–18**

Additional Statements: **Pages S4592–93**

Amendments Submitted: **Pages S4618–19**

Notices of Hearings/Meetings: **Pages S4619–20**

Authorities for Committees to Meet: **Page S4620**

Privileges of the Floor: **Page S4620**

Record Votes: One record vote was taken today. (Total—131) **Page S4580**

Adjournment: Senate convened at 10 a.m., and adjourned at 7:25 p.m., until 8:30 a.m. on Wednesday, April 18, 2007. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Acting Majority Leader in today's Record on page S4622.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

COMBATING AUTISM

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education and Related Agencies held a hearing to examine the status of autism and autism research, receiving testimony from Julie L. Gerberding, Director, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and Thomas R. Insel, Director, National Institute of Mental Health, National Institutes of Health, both of the Department of Health and Human Services; Judith E. Favell, Celeste Foundation, Mount Dora, Florida; Robert C. Wright and Bradley Whitford, both of Autism Speaks, New York, New York; Marguerite Kirst Colston, Autism Society of America, Bethesda, Maryland; and Josh Cobbs, Sioux City, Iowa.

Hearing recessed subject to the call.

COMBAT READINESS

Committee on Armed Services: Committee concluded a hearing to examine whether the Army and Marine Corps are properly sized, organized, and equipped to respond to the most likely missions over the next two decades while retaining adequate capability to respond to all contingencies along the spectrum of combat, after receiving testimony from Andrew F. Krepinevich, Jr., Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, and Lawrence J. Korb, Center for American Progress, both of Washington, D.C.; General Barry R. McCaffrey (Ret.) USA, BR McCaffrey Associates LLC, Arlington, Virginia; and Major General Robert H. Scales, Jr. (Ret.) USA, Colgen, Inc., Dayton, Maryland.

BUDGET: DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION

Committee on Armed Services: Committee met in closed session to receive a briefing to examine the current readiness of United States ground forces in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2008 and the Future Years Defense Program, from Lieutenant General James J. Lovelace, Jr., USA, Deputy Chief of Staff, G–3/5/7, Headquarters, Department of the Army, and Lieutenant General Richard F. Natonski, USMC, Deputy Commandant for Plans, Policies, and Operations, Headquarters,

United States Marine Corps, both of the Department of Defense.

MORTGAGE MARKET SECURITIZATION

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs: Subcommittee on Securities, Insurance and Investment concluded a hearing to examine the role of securitization relating to subprime mortgage market turmoil, including the mechanics of the nonprime mortgage securitization process, the impact of recent increases in defaults and delinquencies on the nonprime securitization market, characteristics of the securitization process that present challenges in mitigating potential foreclosures, and factors taken into consideration in the securitization process when assessing credit risk for mortgage-backed securities and monitoring assigned ratings, after receiving testimony from Gyan Sinha, Bear, Stearns and Co. Inc, David Sherr, Lehman Brothers Inc., Susan Barnes, Standard and Poor's Ratings Services, and Warren Kornfeld, Moody's Investors Service, all of New York, New York; Kurt Eggert, Chapman University School of Law, Orange, California; and Christopher L. Peterson, University of Florida Levin College of Law, Gainesville.

XM-SIRIUS RADIO

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the proposed merger between XM and Sirius satellite radio services, after receiving testimony from Mel Karmazin, Sirius Satellite Radio, and David Bank, RBC Capital Markets, both of New York, New York; W. Russell Withers, Jr., Withers Broadcasting Companies, Mount Vernon, Illinois, on behalf of the National Association of Broadcasters; and Gene Kimmelman, Consumers Union, on behalf of Common Cause, Consumer Federation of America, Free Press, and Media Access Project, and Gigi B. Sohn, Public Knowledge, both of Washington, D.C.

WORKPLACE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions: Subcommittee on Employment and Workplace Safety concluded a hearing to examine domestic violence in the workplace, after receiving testimony from Laura A. Fortman, Maine Department of Labor, Augusta; Kathy Rodgers, Legal Momentum, New York, New York; Sue K. Willman, Spencer Fane Britt and Browne LLP, Kansas City, Missouri, on behalf of the Society for Human Resource Management; and Yvette Cade, Temple Hills, Maryland.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 42 public bills, H.R. 1863–1904; and 19 resolutions, H. Con. Res. 112–115; and H. Res. 299–300, 303–314 were introduced. **Pages H3473–76**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages H3476–78**

Reports Filed: Reports were filed today as follows:

H.R. 886, to enhance ecosystem protection and the range of outdoor opportunities protected by statute in the Skykomish River valley of the State of Washington by designating certain lower-elevation Federal lands as wilderness (H. Rept. 110–89);

H.R. 309, to direct the Secretary of the Interior to establish a demonstration program to facilitate landscape restoration programs within certain units of the National Park System established by law to preserve and interpret resources associated with American history, with an amendment (H. Rept. 110–90);

H.R. 865, to grant rights-of-way for electric transmission lines over certain Native allotments in the State of Alaska (H. Rept. 110–91);

H.R. 285, to establish the Steel Industry National Historic Site in the State of Pennsylvania, with an amendment (H. Rept. 110–92);

H.R. 249, to restore the prohibition on the commercial sale and slaughter of wild free-roaming horses and burros (H. Rept. 110–93);

H.R. 162, to adjust the boundary of the Barataria Preserve Unit of the Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve in the State of Louisiana (H. Rept. 110–94);

H.R. 319, to establish the Journey Through Hallowed Ground National Heritage Area, with an amendment (H. Rept. 110–95);

H. Res. 301, providing for consideration of H.R. 1257, to amend the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 to provide shareholders with an advisory vote on executive compensation (H. Rept. 110–96); and

H. Res. 302, providing for consideration of H.R. 1361, to improve the disaster relief programs of the Small Business Administration (H. Rept. 110–97). **Page H3473**

Speaker: Read a letter from the Speaker wherein she appointed Representative Holden to act as Speaker Pro Tempore for today. **Page H3403**

Recess: The House recessed at 10:35 a.m. and reconvened at noon. **Page H3403**

Suspensions: The House agreed to suspend the rules and pass the following measures:

Wild Sky Wilderness Act of 2007: H.R. 886, to enhance ecosystem protection and the range of outdoor opportunities protected by statute in the Skykomish River valley of the State of Washington by designating certain lower-elevation Federal lands as wilderness; **Pages H3406–09**

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives concerning the 50th anniversary of Celilo Falls: H. Res. 217, to express the sense of the House of Representatives concerning the 50th anniversary of Celilo Falls; **Pages H3409–12**

Amending the Reclamation Wastewater and Groundwater Study and Facilities Act to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to participate in the Central Texas Water Recycling and Reuse Project: H.R. 609, to amend the Reclamation Wastewater and Groundwater Study and Facilities Act to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to participate in the Central Texas Water Recycling and Reuse Project; **Pages H3412–13**

Amending the Reclamation Wastewater and Groundwater Study and Facilities Act to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to participate in the Los Angeles County Water Supply Augmentation Demonstration Project: H.R. 786, to amend the Reclamation Wastewater and Groundwater Study and Facilities Act to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to participate in the Los Angeles County Water Supply Augmentation Demonstration Project; **Pages H3413–14**

Directing the Secretary of the Interior to establish a demonstration program to facilitate landscape restoration programs within certain units of the National Park System established by law to preserve and interpret resources associated with American history: H.R. 309, amended, to direct the Secretary of the Interior to establish a demonstration program to facilitate landscape restoration programs within certain units of the National Park System established by law to preserve and interpret resources associated with American history; **Page H3414**

Southern Nevada Readiness Center Act: H.R. 815, to provide for the conveyance of certain land in Clark County, Nevada, for use by the Nevada National Guard; **Pages H3414–15**

Copper Valley Native Allotment Resolution Act of 2007: H.R. 865, amended, to grant rights-of-way for electric transmission lines over certain Native allotments in the State of Alaska; **Pages H3415–16**

Authorizing the National Park Service to pay for services rendered by subcontractors under a General Services Administration Indefinite Deliver/Indefinite Quantity Contract issued for work to be completed at the Grand Canyon National Park: H.R. 1191, amended, to authorize the National Park Service to pay for services rendered by subcontractors under a General Services Administration Indefinite Deliver/Indefinite Quantity Contract issued for work to be completed at the Grand Canyon National Park; **Pages H3416–17**

Taxpayer Protection Act of 2007: H.R. 1677, amended, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to enhance taxpayer protections and outreach, by a 2/3 yea-and-nay vote of 407 yeas to 7 nays, Roll No. 214; **Pages H3417–23, H3435–36**

Supporting the goals and ideals of World Water Day: H. Res. 196, to support the goals and ideals of World Water Day, by a 2/3 yea-and-nay vote of 393 yeas to 22 nays, Roll No. 215; **Pages H3424–26, H3436–37**

Condemning the recent violent actions of the Government of Zimbabwe against peaceful opposition party activists and members of civil society: H. Con. Res. 100, amended, to condemn the recent violent actions of the Government of Zimbabwe against peaceful opposition party activists and members of civil society, by a 2/3 yea-and-nay vote of 414 yeas with none voting "nay" and 4 voting "present", Roll No. 216; **Pages H3426–29, H3437**

American National Red Cross Governance Modernization Act of 2007: H.R. 1681, amended, to amend the Congressional Charter of The American National Red Cross to modernize its governance structure, to enhance the ability of the board of governors of The American National Red Cross to support the critical mission of The American National Red Cross in the 21st century; and **Pages H3429–32**

Amending the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 to treat certain communities as metropolitan cities for purposes of the community development block grant program: H.R. 1515, to amend the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 to treat certain communities as metropolitan cities for purposes of the community development block grant program. **Pages H3434–35**

Recess: The House recessed at 3:23 p.m. and reconvened at 6:04 p.m. **Page H3435**

Suspensions—Proceedings Resumed: The House agreed to suspend the rules and agree to the following measures which were debated on Monday, April 16th:

Supporting the goals and ideals of Financial Literacy Month: H. Res. 273, to support the goals and ideals of Financial Literacy Month, by a 2/3 yea-and-nay vote of 414 yeas to 2 nays, Roll No. 217 and **Pages H3432–34, H3437–38**

Honoring the 50th Anniversary of the International Geophysical Year (IGY) and its past contributions to space research: H. Con. Res. 76, to honor the 50th Anniversary of the International Geophysical Year (IGY) and its past contributions to space research, and looking forward to future accomplishments, by a 2/3 yea-and-nay vote of 406 yeas with none voting ''nay'', Roll No. 218. **Pages H3438–39**

Suspension—Proceedings Postponed: The House debated the following measure under suspension of the rules. Further proceedings were postponed until Wednesday, April 18th:

Supporting the goals and ideals highlighted through National Volunteer Week: H. Res. 293, to support the goals and ideals highlighted through National Volunteer Week. **Pages H3432–34**

Committee Election: The House agreed to H. Res. 304, electing the following Member to serve on the Committee on the Judiciary: Representative Baldwin, to rank immediately after Representative Sherman. **Page H3439**

Amendments: Amendments ordered printed pursuant to the rule appear on pages H3478–79.

Quorum Calls—Votes: Five yea-and-nay votes developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H3435–36, H3436–37, H3437, H3438, H3438–39. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 10:30 a.m. and adjourned at midnight.

Committee Meetings

LIVESTOCK INDUSTRY

Committee on Agriculture, Subcommittee on Livestock, Dairy and Poultry held a hearing to review the market structure of the livestock industry. Testimony was heard from James E. Link, Administrator, Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administrator, USDA; and public witnesses.

DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Defense held a hearing on Army Force Posture/Acquisition Overview. Testimony was heard from the following officials of the Department of the Army: GEN Richard Cody, USA, Vice Chief of Staff; and Claude Bolton, Assistant Secretary, Acquisition, Logistics and Technology.

The Subcommittee also met in executive session to hold a hearing on U.S. Central Command. Testimony was heard from ADM William Fallon, USN, Commander, U.S. Central Command, Department of Defense.

FINANCIAL SERVICES AND GENERAL GOVERNMENT APPROPRIATIONS

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government held a hearing on the FCC. Testimony was heard from Kevin J. Martin, Chairman, FCC.

INTERIOR, ENVIRONMENT AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies held a hearing on Indian Health Service. Testimony was heard from Charles W. Grim, M.D., Director, Indian Health Service, Department of Health and Human Services.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, VETERANS' AFFAIRS AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans' Affairs and Related Agencies held a hearing on Central Command. Testimony was heard from ADM William J. Fallon, USN, Commander, Central Command, Department of Defense.

TRANSPORTATION, HUD, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies held a hearing on Federal Highway Administration/Federal Transit Administration. Testimony was heard from the following officials of the Department of Transportation: Richard Kapka, Administrator, Federal Highway Administration; and James Simpson, Administrator, Federal Transit Administration.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG USER FEE ACT REAUTHORIZATION

Committee on Energy and Commerce: Subcommittee on Health held a hearing entitled ''Reauthorization of the Prescription Drug User Fee Act.'' Testimony was

heard from Teresa M. Mullin, M.D., Assistant Commissioner, Planning, FDA, Department of Health and Human Services; and public witnesses.

RISING MORTGAGE FORECLOSURES POSSIBLE RESPONSES

Committee on Financial Services: Held a hearing entitled ''Possible Responses to Rising Mortgage Foreclosures.'' Testimony was heard from Representatives Kaptur and Turner; Sheila C. Bair, Chairman, FDIC; Brian Montgomery, Assistant Secretary, Housing, Federal Housing Commissioner, Department of Housing and Urban Development; Daniel H. Mudd, President and CEO, Fannie Mae; Richard F. Syron, Chairman and CEO, Freddie Mac; and public witnesses.

KOSOVA—OUTLOOK FOR INDEPENDENCE

Committee on Foreign Affairs: Held a hearing on the Outlook for the Independence of Kosova. Testimony was heard from R. Nicholas Burns, Under Secretary, Political Affairs, Department of State.

U.S. COUNTERTERRORISM POLICY

Committee on Foreign Affairs: Subcommittee on International Organizations and Human Rights and the Subcommittee on Europe held a joint hearing on Extraordinary Rendition in the U.S. Counterterrorism Policy: The Impact on Transatlantic Relations. Testimony was heard from the Michael F. Scheuer, former Chief, Bin Laden Unit, CIA; and a public witness.

The Subcommittees also held a joint briefing on this subject. They were briefed by the following Members of the European Parliament: Jonathan Evans, Chairman, European Parliament Delegation for Relations with the United States; Claudio Fava; and Baroness Sarah Ludford, Vice-Chairman, Temporary Committee on the Alleged Use of European Countries by the CIA for the Transportation and Illegal Detention of Prisoners.

SECURE HANDLING OF AMMONIUM NITRATE ACT

Committee on Homeland Security: Began mark up of H.R. 1680, Secure Handling of Ammonium Nitrate Act of 2007.

Committee recessed subject to the call of the Chair.

OVERSIGHT—BANKRUPTCY CASES AND EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION

Committee on the Judiciary: Subcommittee on Commercial and Administrative Law held an oversight hearing on Executive Compensation in Chapter 11 Bankruptcy Cases: How Much Is Too Much? Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT HATE CRIMES PREVENTION ACT OF 2007

Committee on the Judiciary: Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security held a hearing on H.R. 1592, Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2007. Testimony was heard from Mark Shurtleff, Attorney General, State of Utah; and public witnesses.

OVERSIGHT—IMPLEMENTING OIL/GAS ENERGY POLICY

Committee on Natural Resources: Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources held an oversight hearing on Implementation of Title III, the Oil and Gas provisions of the Energy Policy Act of 2005. Testimony was heard from Abraham Haspel, Assistant Deputy Secretary, Department of the Interior; Senator Curtis Bramble, Majority Leader, Senate, State of Utah; and public witnesses.

OVERSIGHT—CLIMATE CHANGE AND WILDLIFE/OCEANS

Committee on Natural Resources: Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife and Oceans held an oversight hearing on Wildlife and Oceans in a Changing Climate. Testimony was heard from C. Mark Eakin, Coordinator, NOAA Coral Reef Watch, NOAA Satellite Oceanography and Climate, Department of Commerce; and public witnesses.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES

Committee on Natural Resources: Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands held a hearing on the following bills: H.R. 554, Paleontological Resources Preservation Act; H.R. 986, Eightmile Wild and Scenic River Act; H. R. 1100, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site Boundary Revision; and H.R. 1285, Snoqualmie Pass Land Conveyance Act. Testimony was heard from Representatives McGovern, Courtney and Hastings of Washington; Sue Masica, Chief of Staff, National Park Service, Department of the Interior; Frederick Norbury, Associate Deputy Chief, National Forest System, Forest Service, USDA; and public witnesses.

U.S. POSTAL SERVICE

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform: Subcommittee on Federal Workforce, Postal Service, and the District of Columbia held a hearing on the U.S. Postal Service: 101. Testimony was heard from the following officials of the U.S. Postal Service: John E. Potter, Postmaster General/CEO; James C. Miller, III, Chairman, Board of Governors; and David C. Williams, Inspector General; Dan G. Blair, Chairman, Postal Regulatory Commission; Katherine A. Siggerud, Director, Physical Infrastructure Issues, GAO; and public witnesses.

OVERSIGHT—WALTER REED

Committee on Natural Resources: Subcommittee on National Security, and Foreign Affairs continued hearings on Is This Any Way to Treat Our Troops—Follow-up on Corrective Measures Taken at Walter Reed and Other Medical Facilities Caring for Wounded Soldiers. Testimony was heard from the following officials of the Department of Defense: Michael L. Dominguez, Principal Deputy Under Secretary (Personnel and Readiness); MG Gale S. Pollack, USA, Army Surgeon General (Acting) and Commander, U.S. Army Medical Command; and MG Eric Schoomaker, USA, Commander, Walter Reed Army Medical Center; and the following officials of the Independent Review Group: Togo D. West, Jr., former Secretary of Veterans Affairs and former Secretary of the Army; Jack Marsh, former Secretary of the Army; Arnold Fisher; Lawrence Holland, Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Secretary of Defense, Reserve Affairs; and Charles Roadman, former Air Force Surgeon General.

SHAREHOLDER VOTE ON EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION ACT

Committee on Rules: Granted, by voice vote, an open rule with a preprinting requirements. The rule provides 1 hour of general debate on H.R. 1257, Shareholder Vote on Executive Compensation Act, equally divided and controlled by the Chairman and Ranking Minority Member of the Committee on Financial Services. The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the bill except for clauses 9 and 10 of Rule XXI. The rule provides that the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Financial Services now printed in the bill shall be considered as an original bill for the purpose of amendment. The rule also provides that each section of the amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be considered as read.

The rule makes in order only those amendments to the amendment in the nature of a substitute that have been pre-printed in the Congressional Record on or before Tuesday, April 17, 2007 or are pro forma amendments for the purpose of debate. The rule provides that each amendment printed in the Congressional Record may be offered only by the Member who caused it to be printed or a designee, and that each amendment shall be considered as read. Finally, the rule provides one motion to recommit with or without instructions. Testimony was heard from Chairman Frank and Representative Bachus.

RECOVERY ACT

Committee on Rules: Granted, by voice vote, a structured rule. The rule provides 1 hour of general debate on H.R. 1361, RECOVERY Act, equally divided and controlled by the Chairman and Ranking Minority Member of the Committee on Small Business. The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the bill except for clauses 9 and 10 of Rule XXI. The rule provides that the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Small Business, modified by the amendment printed in Part A of the Rules Committee report, shall be considered as adopted in the House and in the Committee of the Whole. The bill as amended shall be considered as an original bill for the purpose of further amendment and shall be considered as read. The rule waives all points of order against provisions in the bill as amended, and provides that no further amendments shall be in order except those amendments printed in Part B of the Rules Committee report accompanying the resolution.

The rule provides that such further amendments made in order in Part B may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole. The rule waives all points of order against the amendments printed in the report except for clauses 9 and 10 of Rule XXI. Finally, the rule provides one motion to recommit with or without instructions. Testimony was heard from Chairwoman Velázquez and Representative Chabot.

CLIMATE CHANGE SCIENCE

Committee on Science and Technology: Held a hearing on the State of Climate Change Science 2007: The Findings of the Fourth Assessment Report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Working Group II: Climate Change Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

PUBLIC-PRIVATE CONTRACTING

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure: Subcommittee on Highways and Transit held a hearing on Public-Private Partnerships: Innovating Contracting. Testimony was heard from the following officials of the Department of Transportation: James Ray, Acting Deputy Administrator, Federal Highway Administration; and David B. Horner, Chief Counsel, Federal Transit Administration; John Njord, Director, Department of Transportation, State of Utah; and public witnesses.

ATMOSPHERIC DEPOSITION AND WATER QUALITY

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure: Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment held a hearing on Nonpoint Source Pollution: Atmospheric Deposition and Water Quality. Testimony was heard from Benjamin H. Grumbles, Assistant Administrator, Office of Water, EPA; Arleen O'Donnell, Acting Commissioner, Department of Environmental Protection, State of Massachusetts; and public witnesses.

VETERANS MEASURES

Committee on Veterans' Affairs: Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs held a hearing on the following bills: H.R. 67, Veterans Outreach Improvement Act of 2007; H.R. 1435, Department of Veterans Affairs Claims Backlog Reduction Act of 2007; H.R. 1444, To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to make interim benefit payments under certain remanded claims; and H.R. 1490, To provide for a presumption of service-connectedness for certain claims for benefits under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs. Testimony was heard from Representatives McIntyre, Baca, Donnelly, and Upton; Ronald R. Aument, Deputy Under Secretary, Benefits, Department of Veterans Affairs; representatives of veterans organizations; and public witnesses.

PERSONNEL AND SECURITY

Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence: Met in executive session to hold a hearing on Personnel and Security. Testimony was heard from departmental witnesses.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR WEDNESDAY, APRIL 18, 2007

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: to hold hearings to examine economic challenges and opportunities facing American agricultural producers today, focusing on livestock, poultry and competition issues, 9:30 a.m., SD–106.

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs, to hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates for fiscal year 2008 for maternal and child health, and family planning and reproductive health, 10 a.m., SD–124.

Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development, to hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates for fiscal year 2008 for the Department of Energy, 2:30 p.m., SD–138.

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Readiness and Management Support, with the Subcommittee on Personnel, to hold joint hearings to examine the readiness impact of quality of life and family support programs to assist families of Active Duty, National Guard, and Reserve military personnel in review of the Defense Authorization Request for Fiscal Year 2008 and the Future Years Defense Program, 3 p.m., SR–232A.

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Subcommittee on Interstate Commerce, Trade, and Tourism, to hold hearings to examine if "Free Trade" is working, 10 a.m., SR–253.

Subcommittee on Oceans, Atmosphere, Fisheries, and Coast Guard, to hold oversight hearings to examine the President's budget request for fiscal year 2008 for the United States Coast Guard, 2:30 p.m., SR–253.

Committee on Environment and Public Works: to hold hearings to examine the nomination of Lieutenant General Robert L. Van Antwerp, Jr. to be Chief of Engineers and Commanding General of the United States Army Corps of Engineers, 2:30 p.m., SD–406.

Committee on Finance: to hold hearings to examine the Administration's plan for reducing the tax gap, focusing on goals, benchmarks, and timetables, 10 a.m., SD–215.

Committee on Foreign Relations: to hold hearings to examine the nominations of R. Niels Marquardt, of California, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Madagascar, and to serve concurrently and without additional compensation as Ambassador to the Union of Comoros, Janet E. Garvey, of Massachusetts, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Cameroon, and Phillip Carter, III, of Virginia, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Guinea, 9:30 p.m., SD–419.

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions: business meeting to consider S.1082, to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to reauthorize and amend the prescription drug user fee provisions, and the nominations of Douglas G. Myers, of California, Jeffrey Patchen, of Indiana, Lotsee Patterson, of Oklahoma, all to be Members of the National Museum and Library Services Board, Stephen W. Porter, of the District of Columbia, to be a Member of the National Council on the Arts, and Cynthia Allen Wainscott, of Georgia, to be a Member of the National Council on Disability, and promotion lists for the Public Health Service, 10 a.m., SH–216.

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: business meeting to consider the nomination of Gregory B. Cade, of Virginia, to be Administrator of the United States Fire Administration, Department of Homeland Security, Time to be announced, S–216, Capitol.

Committee on Rules and Administration: to hold hearings to examine repealing the limitation on party expenditures on behalf of candidates in general elections, 10 a.m., SR–301.

Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship: to hold hearings to examine Public Law 107–204 (Sarbanes Oxley Act) and small business addressing proposed regulatory changes and their impact on capital markets, 10 a.m., SR–428A.

Committee on Veterans' Affairs: business meeting to markup the nomination of Thomas E. Harvey, of New York, to be an Assistant Secretary of Veterans Affairs (Congressional Affairs), 10 a.m., Room to be announced.

House

Committee on Agriculture, Subcommittee on Horticulture and Organic Agriculture, hearing to review the economic impacts of production, processing and marketing of organic agricultural products, 10 a.m., 1300 Longworth.

Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Defense, on Army Reset, 10 a.m., and on Army/Marine Corps Personnel Issues, 1:30 a.m., H–140 Capitol.

Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government, on GSA, 10 a.m., 2220 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies, on Public Witnesses (Native Americans), 9:30 a.m., and 1:30 p.m., B–308 Rayburn.

Committee on Armed Services, hearing on the Fiscal Year 2008 National Defense Authorization Budget Request U.S. Central Command, 9 a.m., 2118 Rayburn.

Committee on Energy and Commerce, Subcommittee on Energy and Air Quality, hearing entitled ''Alternative Transportation Fuels: An Overview,'' 2 p.m., 2123 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Health, hearing entitled ''Medicare Program Efficiency and Integrity,'' 2 p.m., 2322 Rayburn.

Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Middle East and South Asia, hearing on the Political Situation in Lebanon, 10 a.m., 2172 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Terrorism, Noproliferation and Trade, and the Subcommittee on Domestic, and International Monetary Policy, Trade and Technology of the Committee on Financial Services, joint hearing on Isolating Proliferators and Sponsors of Terror: The Use of Sanctions and the International Financial System to Change Regime Behavior, 2 p.m., 2172 Rayburn.

Committee on Homeland Security, Subcommittee on Emerging Threats, Cybersecurity, and Science and Technology, hearing entitled ''Can BioShield Effectively Procure Medical Countermeasures that Safeguard the Nation?'' 1 p.m., 1539 Longworth.

Committee on the Judiciary, to consider the following: a resolution authorizing the Chairman to issue a subpoena to Monica Goodling for testimony and related documents at a hearing before the Committee regarding the circumstances surrounding recent termination of U.S. Attorneys, representations to Congress regarding those circumstances, and related matters; a resolution directing the House General Counsel to apply to a United States district court for an order immunizing from use in prosecutions the testimony of, and related information provided by, Monica Goodling under compulsion at proceedings before or ancillary to the Committee regarding the circumstances surrounding recent terminations of U.S. Attorneys, representations to Congress regarding those circumstances, and related matters; and pending Committee business, 10:15 a.m., 2141 Rayburn.

Committee on Natural Resources, hearing on the following bills: H.R. 1294, Thomasina E. Jordan Indian Tribes of Virginia Federal Recognition Act of 2006; and H.R. 65, Lumbee Recognition Act, 10 a.m., 1324 Longworth.

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, to mark up H.R. 401, National Capital Transportation Amendments Act of 2007, 10 a.m., 2154 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Information Policy, Census and National Archives, hearing on Ensuring Fairness and Accuracy in Elections Involving Electronic Voting Systems, 2 p.m., 2154 Rayburn.

Committee on Rules, to consider the following bills: H.R.1495, Water Resources Development Act of 2007; and H.R. 363, Sowing the Seeds Through Science and Engineering Research Act, 2 p.m., H–313 Capitol.

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, oversight hearing on Proposals to Downsize the Federal Protective Service and Effects on the Protection of Federal Buildings, 10 a.m., and an oversight hearing on Compliance with Requirements of the Coast Guard's Deepwater Contract,'' 2 p.m., 2167 Rayburn.

Committee on Veterans' Affairs, to mark up H.R. 1642, Homeless Veterans Housing at Sepulveda Ambulatory Care Center Promotion Act; followed by a hearing on H.R. 23, Belated Than You to the Merchant Mariners of World War II Act of 2007, 10 a.m., 334 Cannon.

Subcommittee on Health, hearing on access to VA Health Care: How Easy is it for Veterans? Addressing the Gaps, 2 p.m., 334 Cannon.

Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, Subcommittee on Terrorism, Human Intelligence, Analysis and Counterintelligence, executive, hearing on All-Source Analysis, 2 p.m., H–405 Capitol.

Select Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming, hearing entitled ''Geopolitical Implications of Rising Oil Dependence and Global Warming,'' 9:30 a.m., 1100 Longworth.

Joint Meetings

Joint Committee on the Library: organizational business meeting to consider an original resolution authorizing expenditures for committee operations and committee's rules of procedure for the 110th Congress, 2:15 p.m., S–115, Capitol.

Joint Committee on Printing: organizational business meeting to consider an original resolution authorizing expenditures for committee operations and committee's rules of procedure for the 110th Congress, 2:30 p.m., S–115, Capitol.

Next Meeting of the SENATE

8:30 a.m., Wednesday, April 18

Senate Chamber

Program for Wednesday: After the transaction of any morning business (not to extend beyond 60 minutes), Senate will vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to consideration of S. 3, Medicare Prescription Drug Price Negotiation Act; following which, Senate may vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to consideration of S. 378, Court Security Improvement Act.

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

10 a.m., Wednesday, April 18

House Chamber

Program for Wednesday: To be announced.

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