

there is no substitute for participating in the governmental process, no substitute for the investment of our lives and our time. I commend all of you for your hard work and for the long hours of preparation, and commend you for a victory well earned, well deserved and bringing honor and credit to the Fourth District of Kentucky.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. MALONEY of New York addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

□ 1945

IMMIGRANT SOLDIERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GONZALEZ) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. GONZALEZ. Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity today to rise and speak on a subject that has been conspicuously absent from legislative debate over the issue of immigration reform. Over the length of this debate, the proponents of the enforcement-only approach, some of which you heard earlier this evening, have repeatedly referred to immigrants as dangerous to the American economy, as dangerous to our society and dangerous to our culture.

A number of my colleagues argue that immigrants take away jobs from American citizens and that immigration has a net effect of shrinking the middle class. They suspect immigrants generally of bringing crime, drugs, and even terrorism into our country. And they suggest that immigrants weaken our patriotic culture by failing to assimilate into American society.

Fear characterizes all of these sentiments and arguments. Fear of change, both economic and social change. Fear of new contributions to the fabric of American culture. Generally, a fear of the "other."

Fear can be a powerful and dangerous force. It can motivate hate. It can impede toleration and understanding. Fear can paralyze us with paranoia and blind us to reasoned and logical argument. Fear in the media and in the Halls of Congress have distorted the image of immigrants in this country.

Much as sensationalist TV programming can make us believe that our communities are more dangerous than they really are, sensationalist characterizations of the immigrant population based on anecdotal examples or predictions of worst-case scenarios can falsely lead us to negative, reactionary, and unfounded opinions about immigrants.

I can no longer tolerate the blanket generalizations used to cast our Na-

tion's immigrant population in a universally negative and threatening light. They do not reflect reality. They misrepresent our national interest with respect to immigration. These arguments polarize the public and prevent reasoned and productive dialogue, and they promote a legislative climate that distracts us from our national interest in reforming our broken immigration policies.

We can all agree that we need comprehensive immigration reform, but we must also come to an understanding that demonizing immigrants will not get us there. Ostracizing immigrants in this country with venomous and inapt rhetoric will not move us toward the integration of newcomers into our economy, or the promotion of safe streets for our children to play in, or assimilation of the immigrant population into American society.

It can only delay the time when the immigrant population becomes a fully functional and participatory component of our American society. It can only set back the day when we can guarantee the security of our borders and documentation of all individuals that cross those borders.

Like my colleagues that emphasize tough border enforcement, I, too, believe in reform that provides security for our country and documentation for all the individuals that enter American territory. I think that we speak with a common voice regarding our homeland security goals. Our approaches to talking about the issues of immigration and the methods for solving the problem may differ, but we share common goals in promoting our national and economic security. Debate over approaches to immigration reform is a topic for responsible legislative discourse.

Today, my colleagues and I speak on a related topic about some of the immigrants that are the subjects of our larger debate over immigration. The immigrants we want to talk about are not threats to our national security, they are not threats to our economy, and they are not threats to our people. They, in fact, have demonstrated their solidarity with our Nation. Unquestionably, they wish to contribute to our security and to our economy. And the individuals we speak of cannot be considered separately as friend or foe to the American people, because they demonstrate daily that they are, in fact, Americans in their own right.

The individuals we rise to speak of today are the tens of thousands of brave men and women in the American Armed Forces that were not born in the United States. Like the courageous sons and daughters born and raised in my home State of Texas and throughout this country, these individuals have taken an oath to defend the United States of America with their very lives if necessary.

These immigrant soldiers may differ from their native-born brothers and sisters in terms of location of their

birth and even in their citizenship status; however, on the battlefield, they are united by a common purpose.

Among the soldiers in the United States military, there is no distinction between those that are born in Texas, in the Philippines, or in Mexico. They all take an oath. They all assume the same risks. They all make the same sacrifice. All are worthy of honor and distinction, and we must thank them all equally for giving so generously that we, living in communities across this great Nation, may do so peacefully.

Mr. Speaker, it is my great privilege tonight and a true honor that the first member of the United States Armed Services that we are about to honor is Lance Corporal Jose Antonio Gutierrez, and this is the photo of Jose Antonio when he was a little boy, an orphan and I will be a little more specific in a minute, to the time he put on this uniform of the United States Marine.

He was the first member of the United States Armed Forces killed in Iraq. He was not a citizen of this country.

Marine Lance Corporal Jose Antonio Gutierrez, like most Guatemalans, was born into poverty. He was orphaned in 1983 at the age of 9 and taken in by Casa Alianza, or Covenant House, in Guatemala City. The causes and dates of his parents' deaths are unknown to us today.

For the next 10 years, Lance Corporal Gutierrez led a tragic and tumultuous life, bouncing from the orphanage to the street and back again. His adulthood, like his childhood, was characterized by hardship. He worked for a time in a maquila plant, a sweatshop, operating a sewing machine. Even as a single person, making ends meet at such a job was incredibly difficult for this young man.

In early 1997, Lance Corporal Gutierrez made a decision to travel to the United States to seek a better life. He arrived in California an undocumented immigrant. He attended North High School in Torrance, California.

In March 2002, Lance Corporal Gutierrez enlisted in the United States Marine Corps because he wanted to become a citizen of this great country. He was assigned to the 2nd Battalion of the Expeditionary Forces of the United States Marines 1st Division.

Lance Corporal Gutierrez was killed a year later, close to the city of Umm al Qasr in southern Iraq, on March 21, 2003. He was 28 years old.

This man's sacrifice, the first life laid down in the sands of Iraq on behalf of the United States, is testament to the belief of immigrants in the promise of America. It is a symbol of patriotism, of commitment to defending a dream that we all share.

In May of last year, according to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Service, nearly 69,000 foreign-born soldiers, 5 percent of the entire military, are on active duty. Five percent are foreign born.

Can it be said of these immigrants that they are a threat to our national security? Clearly, no. They ensure our national security.

Can it be said that these immigrants threaten American workers? Clearly, no. They ensure that American workers can go to their jobs in peace.

Can it be said of these immigrants that they threaten the safety of our communities with drugs or violence? Again, clearly, no. They are the pillars of their communities when home and defenders of their communities when abroad.

Why then have so many in this debate over immigration missed the contributions these brave individuals make to the peace, the prosperity, and the security of our country? Do examples of immigrants' courage and sacrifice occur as seldom as those acts of violence some use to characterize an entire immigrant population? Is their heroic service anecdotal in the larger discussion about the contributions of immigrants to our society?

Once again, I hardly believe so. One out of every 20 soldiers in the United States military was born outside the United States. Two members of an average platoon immigrated to this country and now serve us all honorably.

What more can we ask of these young people? Lance Corporal Gutierrez not only gave his life for his adopted country; he was the first to do so in this war.

What more can we ask of immigrant parents when they have already given up their brave sons and daughters for the defense of an adopted homeland?

Mr. Speaker, these immigrant soldiers are among the most prominent faces of immigration today, but they are not uncharacteristic of the larger immigrant population. They represent the honest work ethic, the ambition and the patriotism characteristic of immigrants of all national origins and across all eras.

They represent the frontier spirit that built our country and continues to bring the best the world has to offer here to our shores, to the United States, in pursuit of our common American Dream.

At this time I would like to recognize a dear friend, a colleague, the dean of the Texas delegation, Congressman Solomon Ortiz of Texas.

Mr. ORTIZ. Thank you, Charlie, for allowing me some time to speak tonight, and I would like to acknowledge your leadership in bringing this to the forefront.

Mr. Speaker, as we continue the national discussion of immigration and the value of immigrants to our Nation, we must not forget the immigrant men and women who populate our Armed Forces, who fight for freedoms that we all enjoy each day, yet who in the current debate are cast aside as unworthy for citizenship. Yes, more than 70,000 of them serve our military today.

Now, they have a unique love of America. They consider this great Na-

tion as a beacon of light that drew them here, with a promise of freedom, of democracy and opportunity.

The voices of these immigrant soldiers are remarkably missing from the debate on the value of immigrants in this Nation. I would like to add their voices today. For them, the United States is their only chance to make a new life. Like all soldiers, they don't want our Nation to be harmed. This is their brass ring, the key to the rest of their lives.

They are willing to risk their life for this country because it is the promise of what working hard can give you. They come to the United States longing for a better life than they had in their homeland. Their last light of hope resides in what this Nation promises in terms of honoring our soldiers and supporting our troops.

Many have said that they would rather fight and die for the United States because they so desperately want their home countries to emulate, to copy, their adopted Nation. They hope beyond hope that their public service in our military will someday influence their home countries, the ones in which they were born, so their families will someday have similar living conditions promised by this Nation and the same economic opportunities.

They fear that if America's beacon of light is extinguished, the long-lasting effect of that would inspire great fear, in this hemisphere and around the world.

One of the most heartbreaking exercises for me is going to military funerals, as it is for all of us. One of the most heartbreaking moments is with a family after losing a loved one and bestowing citizenship upon the lost soldier after he's buried.

At this point, I would like my colleagues to join me in commending the service of Private First Class Rey Cuervo, killed in Baghdad by an IED just before New Year's Eve in 2003. He left behind a young wife, pregnant with his first child, a child of immigrants who will never see his father again, who died for this Nation.

I still remember the moment I was there for the ceremony granting Rey his citizenship in 2004 after his death.

□ 2000

Tears in the eyes of all who attended the funeral spoke volumes. Yes, so far to the price of citizenship, now so close to God, so that you and I and the rest of the citizens of this great country could enjoy the freedoms and privileges and liberties that we have today.

Mr. GONZALEZ. I yield at this time to my colleague from Colorado, an Army veteran himself. I do want to point out, without his permission, but knowing this particular fact, that the Salazar family, I know that he lost his uncle during World War II, and that was incredible and brave service by the Salazar family, Congressman JOHN SALAZAR of Colorado.

Mr. SALAZAR. I want to thank the gentleman from Texas for yielding, Mr.

GONZALEZ, and I want to thank your leadership for bringing this very important issue to the forefront.

Tonight, I would like to tell the story of Christopher Herrera. Lance Corporal Evenor Christopher Herrera was just 9 years old when his family came to the United States from Honduras in search of opportunity. He found that opportunity for himself in the United States serving in the Marine Corps, which he joined a year after graduating from Gypsum's Eagle Valley High School in Colorado.

He figured that enlisting he could pave the way to a better future, or, as he told his family, the 22 year-old would be considered a hero if he should die while serving his adopted country. Fate chose him the latter. On August 10, 2005 while manning a machine gun during a clash near Ar Ramadi in Iraq, an improvised explosive device detonated. Herrera was killed in combat with a month and a half left before he was to return home.

From the time his family immigrated from Honduras, he began talking about joining the Army. Christopher, as he was known to his family and friends, was not naive about the dangers he faced in Iraq. His brother, who was also a Marine, said that Christopher was happy to fight for the country that he loved. He would rather die over there as a hero and be remembered as doing something good, as opposed to being here and not remembered at all.

His mother, Blanca, said that he joined because he wanted to have more opportunity in this country. He wanted a career in the Marines. The stories about Christopher come easily. His sister recalled about how shy he was, but yet he was fearless, and once drove a 4-wheel-drive vehicle down a muddy hill, nearly flipping it over. Christopher enjoyed typical mountain activities like most young men in Colorado, like fishing and snowboarding.

The brothers often went camping. The brothers were close, but because they were both deployed Balmore Herrera hadn't seen his brother in 7 months. When Christopher was killed, Balmore was called to act as official military transport as his brother's body was transported from Maryland to Colorado.

There have been 3,396 servicemembers killed in Iraq and Afghanistan, and over 25,000 Americans wounded. This evening, members of the Hispanic Caucus rise to recognize immigrant servicemembers because these brave men and women didn't have the privilege of being born in this country. They chose to live here, and also made the choice to serve the country they loved in the Armed Forces.

Many immigrants, like Christopher, have paid the ultimate sacrifice for their country. Each of them has a story. Each story is filled with struggle and a hope for opportunity. Like Christopher, each story is also filled with sacrifice.

There is an Internet blog set up as a memorial for Lance Corporal Herrera. Whiskey 3, Red 2, left these words for him:

“To my fellow brother Evenor, I had the great privilege of serving with you in the good and the bad times.

“I’ll keep fighting the good fight, and one day I’ll see you again . . . and together we can guard the gates of heaven as we once guarded each other in Iraq.

“You will never be forgotten.”

Mr. GONZALEZ. At this time I would yield to my dear friend, a fellow Texan, the gentleman from Texas, Mr. Ciro Rodriguez.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. I want to thank my friend and colleague from San Antonio, Congressman Charlie Gonzalez, for taking this opportunity tonight for us to recognize those soldiers that have served our country and that have been immigrants and are noncitizens of this country. I want to personally thank him for allowing this opportunity for us to be able to do that.

There are approximately 69,300 foreign-born men and women who serve in the United States Armed Forces, roughly 5 percent of the total active duty force. Of those 43 percent, which is 29,800, are not U.S. citizens. I repeat, of those that are serving our country, of those 69,000, 43 percent, or 29,800, are non-U.S. citizens.

The Pentagon says more than 100 immigrant soldiers have died in combat in Iraq and Afghanistan in the last 5 years. I want to repeat that again, that over 100 immigrant soldiers have died both in the war in Iraq and Afghanistan.

This evening, I join my colleagues in paying tribute and recognizing the service of these men and women who, out of the desire to become citizens of the United States, enlist and fight proudly and bravely for our country. They display the ultimate symbol of patriotism and of commitment to defending a dream that we all share.

The service and sacrifice of these brave immigrants is often lost in our debate over immigration reform. That is why I am here this evening to share the story of immigrant soldiers from the 23rd Congressional District. The story and life of the soldier is of great significance to the State of Texas and the Nation.

Earlier this year, Texas State Representative Chente Quintanilla of Texas introduced a resolution to the Texas House of Representatives paying tribute to the life of Sergeant Israel Devora Garcia. Sergeant Garcia of Clint, Texas, died in Iraq on April 1, 2006, at the age of 23.

Sergeant Garcia was attached to the Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 6th Infantry, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, based in Baumholder, Germany, and was serving his second tour of duty in Iraq. He was mortally wounded while conducting a dismounted patrol in Baghdad.

He was born in Zacatecas, Mexico. Sergeant Garcia came to the United

States at the age of 6 and graduated in 2001 from Clint High School in Texas, where he was an honor student. Although he completed all of his required courses ahead of schedule and was told that he only needed to attend school part-time, he insisted on attending a full day and, in his spare time, helped tutor other kids.

Drawn to the military at an early age, Sergeant Garcia spent 4 years in the Junior Reserve Officers’ Training Corps and demonstrated a notable capacity for leadership. In addition to winning first and second place medals during week-long camps at Ft. Bliss, Texas, he attained the rank of major and served in the executive office of these units.

Family and friends will forever remember Sergeant Garcia for his cheerful nature, his great zest for life and his strong desire to help others. In his leisure time, he enjoyed playing the guitar with friends, and he had a special passion for soccer.

After fulfilling his commitment to the Army, Sergeant Garcia’s plan was to study law enforcement at Texas A&M University and hopefully apply for the FBI in the Border Patrol. Sergeant Garcia earned United States citizenship shortly before he died, and he was officially proclaimed a citizen at the cemetery in Clint, Texas.

Notwithstanding the dangerous nature of his mission, this courageous soldier performed his mission with dedication and professionalism. He was awarded the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart. Through his unflinching devotion to duty, honor and his country, Sergeant Israel Devora Garcia embodied the highest ideals of the United States Armed Forces, and his valiant efforts in the memorable sacrifice are deserving of honor by every American.

Sergeant Garcia is survived by his mother and his father, Frances and Lorenzo Sandoval; his sister, Rosa Sandoval; and his brothers, Adrian Sandoval and Lorenzo Sandoval, Jr. Sergeant Garcia’s story may not seem like that of other veterans, but this represents part of the American history that has too often been overlooked.

His story, like the stories my colleagues are sharing tonight, are stories of immigrants in this country. This evening we share those stories of individuals that are out there giving their all. More notably, the American public must understand and recognize that noncitizens have served and have died for our country, not only during the Iraq and Afghanistan war, but during every single war during this country’s struggle.

I take this opportunity to once again thank CHARLIE GONZALEZ for allowing us to have this opportunity.

Mr. GONZALEZ. Thank you very much for your attention and for your story of Israel Garcia.

At this time I would like to yield to the gentlelady, Congresswoman GRACE NAPOLITANO, from the great State of California.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Thank you, Congressman GONZALEZ. Thank you for allowing the Hispanic Caucus to speak today on this very important issue of Hispanic veterans and the problems that we have seen them face.

I would like to relate a story of SGT Henry Meraz, an Army veteran of the Vietnam War, who lives in my district. Sergeant Meraz grew up in El Paso, Texas, moved to California at age 17, registered with the Selective Service and was drafted into the Army in 1967.

He served honorably on the special forces team in Vietnam, receiving five distinguished medals and a Purple Heart before being honorably discharged in October of 1969. He has lived a full, normal, law abiding, average American life with his family. He is married, he has retired from his job. He has one child currently in the university and a second one who is a Los Angeles deputy sheriff.

In 2003, Mr. Meraz, Sergeant Meraz, went to renew his driver’s license, whereupon he was shocked to learn that he was not a U.S. citizen, that his Social Security was not being recognized and the administration had listed him as a Mexican national.

Upon checking into this further, he could not find his birth certificate in the city he grew up in in El Paso. He then immediately applied for United States citizenship based upon his exemplary military service and quickly relinquished, gave up his voting rights he thought he had the right to exercise since his 18th birthday.

His application for citizenship was denied on the grounds of failure to show good moral character, citing his illegal voting history as bad moral character, even though he was and convinced he was a U.S. citizen. His DD214, the military discharge, lists him as a U.S. citizen.

Then Henry appealed the decision so he could legally become what he thought he was always, a U.S. citizen. He signed a statement and swore under penalty of perjury that the votes he cast under his sincere belief of citizenship were true. Psychiatrists provided letters attesting to Henry’s good moral character and the sincerity of his prior belief in his citizenship, because he was undergoing psychiatric treatment for Vietnam War related PTSD, post traumatic stress disorder.

Thankfully, Henry won his appeal and will be taking his citizenship oath in my district at the City of Pomona, California, on May 30. I hope to be there to help him celebrate. This is not necessarily a unique story. Henry is but one of many, of many immigrants, who have served and continue to serve loyally and bravely in our Armed Services.

As you have heard, there are currently nearly 69,000 immigrants in the United States Armed Services, which account, as you have heard again, for roughly 5 percent of our total Armed Forces. Any soldier will tell you, race, color, religion, et cetera, it does not

matter when you are fighting the enemy shoulder to shoulder. These brave men and women risk their lives for this country.

We should, we must embrace them. What matters is there is loyalty to our country and their undying love for it, evidenced by their willingness to die for it.

□ 2015

They have earned and should receive the same benefits, the same rewards and the same recognitions, and they should be welcomed for the patriotic and brave dedicated service to our country through the small measure of granting them their citizenship. It is overdue and high time Congress addressed this issue. Just ask any veteran. It's the right thing to do.

Our Congressional Hispanic Caucus is working on what we call the STRIVE Act, H.R. 1645, which addresses immigrants in our Armed Forces. The act, among other things, grants citizenship immediately after combat zone service, grants citizenship after 2 years of active duty, and creates a naturalization information telephone service for armed service members. We can do no less than to honor and respect the many immigrants who have served, those who are currently serving, and those who will continue to serve our country ensuring our country's freedom.

Thank you Congressman GONZALEZ, and thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. GONZALEZ. Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure at this time to yield to my colleague and chairman of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, the gentleman from California (Mr. BACA).

Mr. BACA. Thank you very much, Mr. GONZALEZ, for carrying this issue this afternoon, and thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I rise to honor the more than 69,300 legal permanent residents who are currently serving in the United States Armed Services, which represents 43 percent noncitizens and 5 percent of the armed services who are serving now.

Their courage, their honor and their sacrifices prove what we've always known, that you don't have to be born in America to love America. Each and every person who serves in the Armed Forces generally loves his country and is willing to give their ultimate sacrifice. And these individuals gave their ultimate sacrifice for this country, for a dream of coming here.

Each individual was prepared to lay down his or her life to protect what is sacred to all of us, hope, freedom and opportunity, not only for them, but for all of us who believe in this country, because we know ultimately every person who has served in our military has been willing to lay down their lives so that we can enjoy the freedoms, the freedoms that we have today. And the 69,300, 43 percent noncitizens, or 5 percent of the United States, believed in the same sacrifice as other individuals

who have served us. They know that our freedom comes from men and women who are willing to serve this great Nation.

When I look at the names of immigrant soldiers who've died in Iraq and Afghanistan, it makes me realize why America is the greatest country in the world. And when we look at those individuals who served in World War II, the 500-some thousand, how many of those were noncitizens and immigrants?

And when we look at my district, or the State of California, 26 foreign-born soldiers from my State have given their lives in Iraq and Afghanistan. And they come from all over the world. But whether they come from El Salvador, Korea, Mexico, Jamaica or Honduras, when they put on that United States military uniform, they do it as Americans and with pride.

Douglas Jose Marencoreyes, a young man from my district, was an immigrant to this country from Nicaragua. Corporal Marencoreyes came to this country with his family in search of opportunity and hope. Yet he was willing to serve in the Armed Forces when many others were not even willing to serve. And yet he found that by serving in the military that it was an honor.

The same goes for Sergeant Jorge Alberto Molinabautista, an immigrant from Mexico who lived in my hometown of Rialto, California. Both of these young men died while serving in the global war on terror. And they did so proudly, with honor, with honor for what they believed and what this country stands for, for the freedoms, so they know that their children and others can enjoy the freedoms that we have, because this is the greatest Nation, the greatest country; and they knew it and they served for this country.

Both men were posthumously awarded citizenship for their service to this Nation. Why? Because nothing would have honored the sacrifices more than to be recognized and acknowledge their love for this country.

Mr. Speaker, our country is currently engaged in a great debate regarding immigration. And there are many who want to diminish or even deny the great contributions of immigrants to our Nation's history, economy, and culture. And many of these have contributed and continue to contribute to our country because they believe in this country. They come here for hope, for freedom and opportunity and are willing to serve and die for this country.

But as we move forward in this debate, let us not forget the 69,300 immigrants soldiers out there in the battlefields, those who are willing to risk their lives every day to protect the same people who are criticizing them, the same people who are criticizing, they're willing to stand up and defend those individuals because they believe in the principles and the freedoms and opportunities of this country.

I urge the American people to support all troops, all individuals and the

sacrifices of every one of our soldiers, regardless of where they were born, because at the end of the day they are willing to give their lives for this country and to sacrifice for this country. Each one of them are patriots and are true American heroes.

Mr. GONZALEZ. Thank you very much, Mr. BACA.

There is another individual that I want to recognize tonight, an extraordinary individual from an extraordinary family. This is Specialist Rodrigo Gonzalez-Garza. He comes from San Antonio. He died on February 25, 2003, when the Black Hawk helicopter in which he was riding crashed during a night mission 30 miles north of the Kuwaiti border. He was 26 years young.

Specialist Gonzalez-Garza was born in Sabinas Hidalgo, Nuevo Leon, Mexico and was brought to the United States by his parents as an infant.

He graduated from San Antonio's Fox Tech High School in 1996 and joined the Army in 1998. Specialist Gonzalez-Garza, like many other casualties of the Iraq war, did not die an American citizen. He died defending the United States and pursuing a dream to become a citizen of this country. Only in death was his goal finally achieved. After he gave his life, Specialist Gonzalez-Garza was awarded posthumous citizenship.

Specialist Gonzalez-Garza's sacrifice on our behalf is remarkable and perhaps only matched by the contribution that his parents have made to this great country. Specialist Gonzalez-Garza's parents, Ramiro and Orelia Gonzalez, have three other sons in the military, Staff Sergeant Ramiro Gonzalez, PVT Roland Gonzalez, and PVT Ricardo Gonzalez, Rodrigo's twin brother.

One would find it difficult to find a family more devoted to the United States and our American way of life than the Gonzalez family. Specialist Gonzalez-Garza has given his life. His three brothers continue to defend our security and liberty with their lives, and the parents, they have given not one, not two, but all four of their sons to the service of their adopted country.

I would like to share some of the sentiments posted on fallenheroesmemorial.com, a Web site devoted to the memory of soldiers killed in Iraq and Afghanistan during operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom.

The following are postings from fellow Americans who apparently did not know Specialist Gonzalez-Garza, but wished to express their gratitude for his service.

From Grayslake, IL: "Thank you Rodrigo Gonzalez-Garza. You will not be forgotten. Your bravery goes beyond words. I want to express my deepest gratitude for your sacrifice. To the family and friends, my prayers and deep condolences on your loss. May God strengthen you from knowing that fellow Americans and people around

the world care about you and grieve with you in your loss. God bless you all. Signed, a very appreciative fellow American."

From Wells, NV: "To the family and friends of Specialist Rodrigo Gonzalez-Garza, may God's grace be with you during your time of grief. Please know that our thoughts and prayers are with you and we feel your loss and share your sorrow. Bless Rodrigo for his sacrifice he has made to make a better life for the rest of us in this country."

From Montrose, ME: "Thanks for stepping forward when America needed you. To the family, thank you for your contribution to our liberty and to our freedom. I'm so sorry for your tremendous loss."

From Houston, TX: "Specialist Gonzalez-Garza, goodbye soldier, and thank you. You are my hero."

All those individuals that didn't know Specialist Rodrigo Gonzalez-Garza, they didn't know about his background. They didn't know about an undocumented family that came to this country and made the grandest sacrifice of all with four sons in the armed services, and one of those that gave his life in service of this country, their adopted country.

Did any of these individuals that posted those sentiments on that Web site ask if he documented or undocumented?

Had they known he was undocumented, or that the family had been undocumented, it would not have mattered, because we are united in purpose. We are united in spirit. And this is what the whole immigration reform debate is all about. Not what separates us. Not that which differentiates us, but rather, what binds us as a country, a country of immigrants, each making his unique contribution, wanting to be part of this country.

I want to join all those individuals that posted on the Web site to share my gratitude for Specialist Rodrigo Gonzalez-Garza's service and sacrifice.

Thank you, Specialist Gonzalez-Garza. Thank you also to Ramiro and Orelia Gonzalez, the parents, for the service of your sons. You emigrated from Mexico, but you have devoted yourselves and your family to the United States of America. We owe you comprehensive immigration reform. We owe you the opportunity to make your contribution in this country.

Before we took the floor here tonight to highlight the lives of these individuals, you may have heard previous speakers. One felt great pride that a town in the State of Texas had passed a law that will make it an offense to rent accommodations to undocumented individuals that may find themselves in that particular township.

What pride can be derived from a law of that nature? Who are you shutting the door to? In whose face are you slamming that door? I'll tell you. You are slamming it in the faces of Lance Corporal Gutierrez, Specialist Gonzalez-Garza, Lance Corporal Evenor

Herrera, Sergeant Israel Devora-Garcia, SGT Henry Meraz, Corporal Douglas Jose Marecoreyes, and PFC Rey Cuervo. Those are the individuals.

What is it that binds us, truly? Is it the color of our skin, our appearance, our ethnic origin? No, it's what beats within us all.

We are a Nation of laws. Our obligation as Members of Congress is to pass just and fair laws, and that's what we are seeking. Not those that will demonize, criminalize and punish individuals that are coming to this country at our behest. And make no mistake about that. They are coming because we are asking them to come and to be employed by fine, upstanding Americans.

□ 2030

And so they come, not to take but to give, to contribute.

What we are attempting to do tonight is put a human face on this immigrant that so often is criticized, demonized, characterized as a threat to our way of life. Do not be so concerned. People are so concerned: Is the face of America changing? That should not be our concern. Is the heart and the spirit and the soul of America changing? That should be our concern. And I am here to tell you and we give testament tonight that it is not.

For the next few weeks, my colleagues and I will take this floor, and we will demonstrate to you over and over again the contribution of the immigrant to this country, that their sons and daughters have donned this uniform. We have placed them in harm's way, and they have performed honorably and with great courage. There is no difference in that courage or the contribution that they make because of their ethnicity or undocumented status of a parent.

You saw the face of that young boy from Guatemala who was an orphan who came to the United States illegally. Now, he wasn't good enough, brave enough, strong enough to maybe deserve getting an apartment in a certain town in Texas; but he was good enough and brave enough to serve as a United States Marine and give his life up defending this country. Where is the justice and fairness?

Our soldiers are dying and protecting a way of life. And it is our obligation that that way of life is reflected in our laws, fair and just laws. That is what this debate is all about.

So I ask that my colleagues give careful thought as we debate this issue, and at the conclusion of this debate we will have a meeting of the minds and come up with a plan that doesn't accommodate those that are breaking the law, but rather allows them an opportunity to redeem themselves and to serve this country in a capacity that will utilize their unique talents and contributions, and I look forward to that time.

PERMISSION FOR COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES TO FILE SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT ON H.R. 1585, NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2008

Mr. GONZALEZ. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be allowed to submit a supplemental report on H.R. 1585, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008.

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

There was no objection.

PEAK OIL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. BARTLETT) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, this is really a very important day in our history. Exactly 50 years ago today in St. Paul, MN, Admiral Hyman Rickover gave a very famous speech. In a few moments, I will have here a copy of that speech, and I want to spend most of the hour that we have this evening going over that speech, because he was amazingly prophetic. This was a speech given to a group of physicians, and it was about energy. Of course, his primary interest was nuclear energy, and this was a speech about energy in general.

As I said, he was amazingly prophetic. He understood some relationships, which today, with 50 years of history behind us, he couldn't have seen. He was amazingly more cognizant of some realities than many of our people today.

We, of course, recognize that for several reasons we need to be moving away from fossil fuels. There are several groups of people with different interests who have really a common goal in their desire to move away from fossil fuels to renewables. And these several groups find common cause, and I hope that there will be less discussion of the potential limitations of the other groups' premise and more focus on a common goal, and that is to help our country and our world move away from fossil fuels to renewables.

The groups that have common cause in this are, first of all, environmentalists, and there are two groups in the environmentalists who are concerned about this. One is a group which is large and growing, and that is a group that believes that our excessive use of fossil fuels releasing carbon dioxide that was sequestered a very long time ago, perhaps millions of years ago, with subtropical seas and plumes of organisms like our algae today, which then fell to the bottom and were covered by sediment washed in from the adjoining hills and then later submerged by movements of tectonic