CORRECTION

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House of Representatives

The House met at 12:30 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. HIRONO).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
October 1, 2007.

I hereby appoint the Honorable MAZIE K. HIRONO to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

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 debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 30 minutes and each Member, other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip, limited to 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS) for 5 minutes.

EFFECTIVE JOB TRAINING FOR OUR RETURNING WARRIORS

Mr. STEARNS. Madam Speaker, when our soldiers come home from combat, they often face an uphill battle. For many servicemembers, the transition from active duty to veteran status and returning to a full, meaningful civilian life is daunting, fraught with many challenging obstacles and bureaucratic barriers. Many times, these brave service men and women require job training but for entirely new careers.

Although statistics show that eventually veterans in general enjoy a favorable rate in the Nation's job market, many veterans obviously find it difficult to compete successfully in the labor market. That is why for over a decade the Federal Government has provided job training benefits to veterans through the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Labor. The mission statement for the Department of Labor Veterans' Employment and Training Service, VETS program, is to ''provide veterans and transitioning servicemembers with the resources and services to succeed in the 21st century workplace by maximizing their employment opportunities, protecting their employment rights, and meeting labor market demands with qualified veterans today.''

Additionally, the Department of Labor offers servicemembers leaving the military with a service-connected disability the Disability Transition Assistance Program, DTAP. DTAP includes a 3-day workshop plus additional hours of individual instruction to help determine job readiness and address the special needs of disabled veterans. However, this is the identical DTAP program offered to all transitioning disabled veterans across this country. This 3-day program is valuable support, but it only provides general employment information and at no time addresses the specific needs of the community in which the veteran lives. Unfortunately, this means that frequently there is a void of information on local labor market conditions that result in veterans using their benefits to train for jobs that do not exist in their community.

Mr. Jeffrey Askew is director of the Marion County Veterans' Service Center in my hometown of Ocala, Florida. He said many veterans have used their Federal job training benefit for information technology (IT) career training. However, Ocala has little demand for IT professionals, and veterans are often advised to move to Orlando where there are many more opportunities for them. Upon finally getting settled back into civilian life, it is frustrating and unfortunate to say the least to be forced to uproot one more time and move your family to an unknown city.

I am concerned about this problem, but I think and I believe that there is an easy solution. That is why I introduced legislation to provide better information to veterans on their local job market needs.

H.R. 3646, the Veterans Effective Training Job Opportunities and Benefits Act of 2007, or VET JOBS Act of 2007, directs the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Secretary of Labor to conduct a joint study on the greatest employment needs in various job markets around the country and post these results on the VA Web site. These results would then be updated annually to reflect the current and possibly changing needs in the local job market. With this tool, a veteran could plug in his or her zip code and see a list of the occupations that are most in demand, and subsequently use their Federal job training most effectively.

The Department of Labor already has the infrastructure in place for this kind of research, so this is a practical, low-cost solution. In fact, the Congressional Budget Office has unofficially scored this proposal as having insignificant costs, insignificant costs for immeasurable benefits to our veterans.

I encourage my colleagues to join me in this effort. Help our veterans today. Help them with their quality employment. Help them to find out where the jobs that they wish to be trained for are located, and support the VET JOBS Act that I ask for all of my colleagues to cosponsor.

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RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 35 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until 2 p.m.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. CASTOR) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

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

Lord God Almighty, before the majesty of Your creation and the power of Your will, we humbly stand and present ourselves to You.

We are a people who love freedom. We have proven creative in our work and appear prosperous in the eyes of the world. Yet we are made of the same clay as all others.

Help us to find common cause with others and be proven true to noble purpose in Your sight.

Show us how to use our bountiful blessings, to attain true leadership in the world and a model for others. Thus may we be Your instrument for achieving lasting peace and justice in troublesome times.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. 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 pro tempore. The Chair will lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The SPEAKER pro tempore 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.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
WASHINGTON, DC,
September 28, 2007.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
The Speaker, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MADAM SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on September 28, 2007, at 9:15 am:

That the Senate passed with an amendment H.R. 327.

That the Senate passed without amendment H.J. Res 43.

That the Senate passed without amendment H.J. Res 52.

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 3625.

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 3668.

With best wishes, I am,
Sincerely,

LORRAINE C. MILLER,
Clerk of the House.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 4 of rule I, the following enrolled bills and joint resolutions were signed by the Speaker on Friday, September 28, 2007:

H.R. 976, to amend title XXI of the Social Security Act to extend and improve the Children's Health Insurance Program, and for other purposes

H.R. 3625, to make permanent the waiver authority of the Secretary of Education with respect to student financial assistance during a war or other military operation or national emergency

H.R. 3668, to provide for the extension of Transitional Medical Assistance (TMA), the Abstinence Education Program, and the Qualifying Individuals (QI) Program, and for other purposes

H.J. Res. 43, increasing the statutory limit on the public debt

H.J. Res. 52, making continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 2008, and for other purposes

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 2 o'clock and 4 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

□ 1431

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. WALZ of Minnesota) at 2 o'clock and 31 minutes p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. 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 after 6:30 p.m. today.

COMMENDING THE WINGS OVER HOUSTON AIRSHOW

Ms. CASTOR. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 691) commending the Wings Over Houston Airshow for its great contribution to the appreciation, understanding, and future of the United States Armed Forces, the City of Houston, Texas, and Ellington Field.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 691

Whereas for 23 years the all-volunteer Gulf Coast Wing and West Houston Squadron of the Commemorative Air Force has performed in the Wings Over Houston Airshow at Ellington Field in Houston, Texas;

Whereas the Wings Over Houston Airshow has been rated as one of the top events of its kind in the Nation;

Whereas tens of thousands of people from southeast Texas and all over the United States attend the event each year and experience the unique opportunity to see the United States Air Force, Navy, Marines, and Coast Guard perform and to meet service members of the past and present;

Whereas the Wings Over Houston Airshow has helped to increase awareness and appreciation for the United States Armed Forces and its active duty members and veterans;

Whereas the Wings Over Houston Airshow serves to promote an understanding and appreciation of military history through the reenactment of battles and the acquisition, restoration, and display of vintage aircraft;

Whereas throughout its history, Wings Over Houston Airshow has benefited local and national charities, including the Wings Over Houston Airshow Scholarship Program, the Texas Southern University Aviation Career Academy, the Exchange Club of Sugar Land, and the Commemorative Air Force aircraft restoration and flying historical programs;

Whereas the Wings Over Houston Airshow and its partners, including the Lone Star Flight Museum, the Houston Airport System, the Clear Lake Area Chamber of Commerce, the Bay Area Houston Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Greater Houston Convention and Visitors Bureau, Destination League City, and the cities of Houston, Kemah, Nassau Bay, Seabrook, and Webster, have contributed to the economy and growth of southeast Texas; and

Whereas the Wings Over Houston Scholarship Program has promoted the importance of math and science education by helping southeast Texas students pursue college educations in the fields of aviation and aerospace: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives commends the Wings Over Houston Airshow for its great contribution to the appreciation, understanding, and future of the United States Armed Forces, the City of Houston, Texas, and Ellington Field.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. CASTOR) and the gentleman from Washington (Mr. REICHERT) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. CASTOR. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Florida?

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 691 commending the Wings Over Houston Airshow for its great contribution to the appreciation, understanding, and future of the United States Armed Forces, the City of Houston, Texas, and Ellington Field.

I would like to thank my colleague from Texas, Mr. NICK LAMPSON, for bringing this measure to the floor of the House.

The Wings Over Houston Airshow is one of the highest rated events of its kind. This coming Saturday and Sunday, folks from Congressman LAMPSON's district and, in fact, from all over America, will come to see these mighty military machines maneuver through the skies with seeming ease. These classic and contemporary airframes break their bounds to Earth and share the heavens with the sun and clouds.

It's a rare experience to see with your own eyes the awe-inspiring airborne arsenal of our Armed Forces. It's difficult to explain the seemingly impossible coordination our pilots execute in midair. No one can truly understand the peril, skill, and thrill involved except for the pilots themselves; yet our extraordinarily talented men and women fly in conditions that require nothing less than perfection. And visitors will have that rare glimpse of airborne art.

Spectators will be visited by the Texas Air National Guard 147th Fighter Squadron. Their TANG F–16s will tear rifts through the sky as they buzz by. The Texas Air National Guard F–16s are at a state of constant readiness, prepared to defend the great State of Texas and our Nation at a moment's call.

Attendees will also have the chance to see Canadian Forces Snowbirds, the P–38, the B–24A, a heritage flight consisting of the F–4 Phantom, the P–51 Mustang, the P–47 Thunderbolt, and the F–15E Strike Eagle, and a number of Navy fighters among them.

Mr. Speaker, the Wings Over Houston Airshow provides an important experience for folks to understand and to see the many machines that help our brave men and women in uniform protect us.

I urge my colleagues to support House Resolution 691.

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

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I might consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of House Resolution 691, which commends the Wings Over Houston Airshow for its contribution to the appreciation, understanding, and the future of the United States Armed Forces, the City of Houston, and Ellington Field.

Mr. Speaker, for 23 years, the Wings Over Houston Airshow has been delighting aviation enthusiasts and future pilots from around the world with spectacular flying in the skies, and with historical and educational displays on the ground in Ellington Field.

This top-rated aviation event, which is sponsored by the all-volunteer Gulf Coast Wing and West Houston Squadron of the Commemorative Air Force, honors the spirit of the courageous and valiant American military flyers of the past and those who take to the skies today to ensure our Nation's freedoms.

The Wings Over Houston Airshow showcases the United States Air Force, Navy, Marines and Coast Guard, and increases the awareness and appreciation for active duty members and the veterans of our Armed Forces.

But more important than the air show's entertainment, the Wings Over Houston Airshow has awarded $10,000 to $15,000 in scholarships per year to students who are pursuing an education in aviation and in aerospace. In total, this organization has provided over $100,000 to young men and women who have entered into careers in both military and civilian aviation.

The Wings Over Houston Airshow celebrates America's aviation and aerospace history and the courageous military pilots whose sacrifices have ensured our freedom. I am confident that the Wings Over Houston Airshow will continue to ignite the enthusiasm for flying in future generations of American aviators.

I strongly urge all Members to support this resolution.

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

Ms. CASTOR. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to yield 3 minutes to my friend and colleague from Texas, a true champion for Texas and a staunch supporter of our Armed Forces, Mr. LAMPSON, the sponsor of this resolution.

Mr. LAMPSON. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me the opportunity to come and speak on this.

I am proud to honor the Wings Over Houston Airshow because each year about 70,000 spectators from around the world gather in the 22nd Congressional District of Texas to view this historic Ellington Field and view re-enactments of great battles, see up-close views of vintage aircraft, and meet yesterday's and today's heroes.

For the last 23 years, as you've heard, pilots from our Armed Forces and around the globe wow audiences with their high-speed acrobatics. And how often do we get to see real-life daredevils? Well, this weekend, the Canadian Forces Snowbirds will demonstrate their seven- to nine-plane close formations, tight turns, and head-on passes. Crowds will get to view state-of-the-art military aircraft, along with planes from days of old.

This year, the air show brings history to life through authentic World War II vehicles, equipment and uniforms at a realistic military camp. They're going to re-enact part of the movie, ''Tora! Tora! Tora!'' As a former school teacher, I know activities like these help promote an understanding and appreciation of military history.

Visitors are going to be able to see trainers, fighters, and bombers from the World War II, Korea and Vietnam era, and even NASA aircraft. The air show presents a unique opportunity to tour some of the largest aircraft in the world, including the Hurricane Hunter KC–135 and a C–5 cargo plane, walk over the wings of vintage airplanes, and even sit in the pilot's seat.

Children have the opportunity to meet flying aces and decorated war heroes and to hear historical recounts from the people who were there.

This year's show features both Pearl Harbor survivors and the Tuskegee Airmen, who were recently awarded the Congressional Gold Medal. I am proud of these folks, and I know that all Americans are as well. Meeting living legends and air show performers is inspiring for young and old alike, and this show is a rare opportunity to thank these heroes for their service and for their sacrifice.

Wings Over Houston has spent, in the last 23 years, a quarter of a million dollars to help challenge young people to go into aerospace, engineering, and aviation. Many go on to careers in the military and go to work at NASA where they can also gain valuable experience as interns at the Johnson Space Center, which is across the street from Ellington Field. With its important contributions, Wings Over Houston ensures that our Nation leads the way in math and science.

The air show has also donated proceeds to various local and national charities throughout the years, including the Texas Southern University Aviation Career Academy, the Exchange Club of Sugar Land, and the Commemorative Air Force aircraft restoration and flying historical programs. Together with their partner, Wings Over Houston, it has greatly contributed to the economy and growth of southeast Texas.

So I want to thank the members of the House Armed Services Committee, and many of my Texas colleagues, particularly, for their cosponsorship of this resolution. I am pleased to honor the Wings Over Houston Airshow as a leader in the history and the future in the United States Armed Forces.

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

Ms. CASTOR. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Washington (Mr. REICHERT) and salute my colleague from Texas (Mr. LAMPSON) for bringing this resolution. I know, as a member of the Tampa Bay area and the Armed Services Committee, we value our air show every year at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa. So I thank my colleague again from Houston for his resolution commending the Wings Over Houston Airshow.

I ask my colleagues to support the resolution.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Res. 691,

commending the Wings Over Houston Airshow for its great contribution to the appreciation, understanding, and future of the United States Armed Forces, the city of Houston, TX, and Ellington Field, of which I am proud to be an original cosponsor. I would like to thank my good friend and colleague, Congressman LAMPSON, for introducing this legislation, and the chairman of the Armed Services Committee, Congressman SKELTON, for his leadership on this important issue.

The 23rd annual Wings Over Houston Airshow will take place on October 6 and 7, 2007, at Ellington Field, Houston, TX. This year's event will feature an array of modern civilian aerobatic and state-of-the-art military hardware, including the Canadian Forces Snowbirds, as well as historic planes such as a Lockheed P–38 buried under ice in Greenland in 1942 and only recovered 50 years later. Also performing will be the all-volunteer Gulf Coast Wing and West Houston Squadron of the Commemorative Air Force, which has performed for the last 23 years at the airshow.

Mr. Speaker, the Wings Over Houston Airshow has been rated as one of the top events of its kind. Over 70,000 people, both from the local community in southeast Texas and from all over the Nation, gather every year at this event, where they have the opportunity to see the United States Air Force, Navy, Marines, and Coast Guard perform, as well as to meet service members of the past and present. The Wings Over Houston Airshow has helped to increase awareness and appreciation for the United States Armed Forces and its active duty members and veterans.

The Wings Over Houston Airshow also serves to promote an understanding and appreciation of military history. The airshow's many events include the reenactment of battles and the acquisition, restoration, and display of vintage aircraft. Among these historical reenactments is Tora!Tora!Tora!, an explosive recreation of the air attack on Pearl Harbor. Viewers of all ages will have the opportunity to view this exciting spectacle, while also learning about military and aviation history.

Mr. Speaker, the Wings Over Houston Airshow plays an important role in both local and national communities. The airshow benefits local and national charities, including the Wings Over Houston Airshow Scholarship Program, the Texas Southern University Aviation Career Academy, the Exchange Club of Sugar Land, and the Commemorative Air Force aircraft restoration and flying historical programs.

The Wings Over Houston Scholarship Program is particularly important. This scholarship program promotes math and science education by helping students from southeast Texas pursue college educations in the fields of aviation and aerospace. Scholarships are awarded to students residing in Harris County, or a contiguous county, who have demonstrated academic potential, leadership, and extracurricular involvement, with preference giving to those pursuing an academic degree directly associated with aviation or aerospace. For 2007, a total of $10,000 in scholarships was awarded, and I would like to congratulate the four recipients: Robert Tristan Reeves, David Gehris, Kristen John, and Donovan Johnson.

Mr. Speaker, the Wings Over Houston Airshow is made possible by the collaboration of a number of Houston area organizations. I would like to extend my thanks to the airshow's partners, which include the Lone Star Flight Museum, the Houston Airport System, the Clear Lake Area Chamber of Commerce, the Bay Area Houston Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Greater Houston Convention and Visitors Bureau, Destination League City, and the cities of Houston, Kemah, Nassau Bay, Seabrook, and Webster. Together, the Wings Over Houston Airshow and its generous partners have contributed to the economy and growth of southeast Texas.

Mr. Speaker, the 110th Congress has made the promotion of math and science education for all our Nation's children a legislative priority. Exciting and exhilarating events like the Wings Over Houston Airshow are an opportunity for children of all ages to engage with science, to hear heroic stories that helped shape America's rich aviation history, to get excited about the world of aviation, to meet and interact with members of our Nation's military, and to dream about their own futures.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly support this resolution, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Wings Over Houston Airshow in Houston, Texas for its contribution to the city of Houston, local communities, and the military by fully supporting H. Res. 691.

Wings Over Houston is about to give its 23rd annual show and in those 23 years, the show has continued to bring attention to the history and future of the United States Armed Forces, and its veterans and active duty members while becoming one of the top events of its kind in the country and one of the largest in Metropolitan Houston. An estimated 70,000 to 90,000 people are expected to enjoy the air and static displays this year which will not only help to support many non-profit and charitable organizations, but help to fund the Wings Over Houston Scholarship Program and Aviation Career Education summer camp.

This family-oriented international event is housed at Ellington Field. Originally built in 1917, the field was integral in flight training for both world wars and was one of the airfields selected to maintain a large military force after the end of WWII. It currently is home to local presence of NASA, Texas Air National Guard, Coast Guard, the National Guard, as well as being used for other aviation purposes.

Wings Over Houston not only brings local and international tourists to Houston, but also generates awareness of U.S. Armed Forces by showing a vested interest in education and supporting local students through the scholarship program. That is why I support H. Res. 691.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. CASTOR) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 691.

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.

HONORING THE SACRIFICES AND COMMITMENTS OF THE MEN, WOMEN, AND FAMILIES OF THE UNITED STATES TRANSPORTATION COMMAND

Ms. CASTOR. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 640) honoring the sacrifices and commitments of the men, women, and families of the United States Transportation Command, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 640

Whereas the passage of the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 (Public Law 99–433) revoked the law prohibiting consolidation of military transportation functions, and President Reagan subsequently ordered the establishment of a United States Transportation Command;

Whereas October 1, 2007, marks the 20th anniversary of the activation of the Transportation Command at Scott Air Force Base, Illinois;

Whereas the Transportation Command is comprised of the Air Mobility Command at Scott Air Force Base, Illinois, the Military Sealift Command at Washington, DC, and the Military Surface Deployment and Distribution Command at Scott Air Force Base, Illinois;

Whereas the mission of Transportation Command is to provide air, land, and sea transportation for the Department of Defense, both in times of peace and war;

Whereas Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm first demonstrated the fully operational capability of the Transportation Command with the movement of approximately 504,000 passengers, 3,700,000 tons of dry cargo, and 6,100,000 tons of petroleum products in 7 months;

Whereas the Transportation Command has continued to serve the Nation during many contingency and peacekeeping operations around the world, including United Nations operations in Iraq, Rwanda, and Somalia, as well as North Atlantic Treaty Organization operations in Serbia and Kosovo;

Whereas the Transportation Command has supported many humanitarian relief operations transporting relief supplies to victims of foreign and domestic natural disasters;

Whereas after terrorist attacks killed nearly 3,000 people and wounded thousands on September 11, 2001, the Transportation Command became a vital asset in the global war on terrorism, supporting members of the Armed Forces in Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, in Operation Iraqi Freedom, and around the world;

Whereas from October 2001 to September 2007, the Transportation Command, its components, and its national partners have transported approximately 4,000,000 passengers, 9,000,000 short tons of cargo, and over 4,000,000,000 gallons of fuel in support of the global war on terrorism; and

Whereas the 2005 quadrennial defense review recognized the importance of joint mobility and the critical role that it plays in global power projection: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) honors the sacrifices and commitment of the approximately 155,000 men and women who comprise the United States Transportation Command, including active and reserve components, civilian employees, and contractors;

(2) honors the families of the United States Transportation Command and their sacrifices while their loved ones are deployed around the world;

(3) owes the men, women, and families of the Transportation Command a debt of gratitude; and

(4) honors the achievements of the Transportation Command during the global war on terrorism.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. CASTOR) and the gentleman from Washington (Mr. REICHERT) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. CASTOR. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Florida?

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 640, to honor the sacrifices and commitments of the men, women, and families of the United States Transportation Command, or TRANSCOM.

Today marks the 20th anniversary of TRANSCOM's activation at Scott Air Force Base in Illinois, and I would like to thank my colleague from Illinois (Mr. COSTELLO) for bringing this measure before the House.

Charged with the vital duty of providing air, land and sea transportation for the Department of Defense, both in times of peace and war, TRANSCOM consists of the Air Mobility Command, the Military Surface Deployment and Distribution Command, and the Military Sea Lift Command.

Established in 1978, TRANSCOM is the single manager of America's global defense transportation system, and its skilled coordination allows our country to project and sustain our Armed Forces whenever, wherever and for as long as they are needed.

Responding quickly and effectively to the demands of our warfighting commanders, TRANSCOM first proved its crucial capability during Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm, with the movement of more than 500,000 passengers, 3.7 million tons of dry cargo, and 6.1 million tons of petroleum products in only 7 months.

TRANSCOM has continued to serve the Nation and the world through many contingency and peacekeeping operations around the globe. It has supported numerous humanitarian relief operations, transporting supplies to victims of foreign and domestic natural disasters.

Following the terrorist attacks of September 11, TRANSCOM became an especially vital asset to our Nation, supporting our Armed Forces in Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

From October 2001 to September 2007, TRANSCOM and its components have transported approximately 4 million passengers, 9 million tons of cargo, and over 4 billion gallons of fuel. House Resolution 640 honors these great achievements and the men and women who make them happen.

TRANSCOM provides a vital service to our Nation and enables our Armed Forces to carry out their missions effectively and efficiently.

I hope you will join me today in congratulating TRANSCOM on its 20th anniversary, and expressing gratitude to the 155,000 men and women who comprise it for their continued sacrifice and commitment to this country.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support House Resolution 640.

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

□ 1445

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I might consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of House Resolution 640, as amended, a resolution that honors the sacrifices and commitments of the men, women and families of the United States Transportation Command. U.S. TRANSCOM was established in 1987 as one of the nine U.S. unified commands. TRANSCOM is tasked with coordination of people and transportation assets to allow our country to sustain forces whenever, wherever and for as long as they are needed. The men, women and families of TRANSCOM have done an extraordinary job of supporting this Nation and our national defense over the past 20 years.

I would like to take a moment to share a story with you that exemplifies the incredible capabilities of this unique organization. On an early morning in July, one of our sergeants was on a raid in Baghdad and found himself the victim of a brutal attack that resulted in a severe head injury. The soldier was immediately transported to Balad Air Base in Iraq for treatment. The wonderful people at the 332nd expeditionary medical group, whom I met on a recent trip to Iraq, examined this wounded soldier and determined that he needed to be quickly returned to the United States for a level of care that they could not provide in the field.

This is the point where the amazing men and women of the U.S. TRANSCOM went into action. A C–17 crew was just getting ready to start their day making normal cargo runs around the theater. As they arrived for duty, they were told of the wounded soldier. They immediately began planning the mission to get him the critical care that he needed. While U.S. TRANSCOM deals with urgent requests almost daily, this one was different. The C–17 crew was notified that due to the nature of the sergeant's head injury, they would have to keep the cabin pressure no higher than 4,000 feet on the flight home. They were also told, by the way, that it wouldn't be prudent to land anywhere on their trip as the pressure changes from climbing and descending could trigger bleeding and the patient would possibly lose his life. In order to make the flight home at a lower than normal altitude, the C–17 would need to be refueled twice along the way. The folks at U.S. TRANSCOM coordinated for the air refueling support over Turkey and England. As the flight was en route, this refueling took place. The extraordinary skills and capabilities of U.S. TRANSCOM personnel brought that flight safely to the ground at Andrews Air Force Base, Maryland, in record time. The wounded soldier was under the care of a neurosurgeon at Bethesda less than 24 hours from the moment of attack.

Now, that miracle is pretty impressive. But there are a few other details that you should know about this story. First of all, the C–17 was a McChord Air Force Base, Washington, airplane, where I happen to serve. It was flown by an active duty crew from Charleston Air Force Base. The doctor who cared for the patient while in flight is a reservist from Langley Air Force Base. The nurse is also a reservist, but he is from MacDill Air Force Base in Florida. The rest of the critical care team is a part of the Air National Guard. The entire mission, Mr. Speaker, was being controlled from Scott Air Force Base, Illinois, by the Tanker Airlift Control Center. That is what U.S. TRANSCOM is all about, bringing together the mobility assets needed to support our war fighters to the medical service that they need.

This is why I am proud to support H.R. 640. The men, women and families of U.S. TRANSCOM have served this Nation well. As we celebrate the 20th anniversary of U.S. TRANSCOM today, let's send them a strong message and support this legislation.

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

Ms. CASTOR. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Washington (Mr. REICHERT), and I thank our colleague from Illinois (Mr. COSTELLO) for bringing this resolution to the floor of the House, House Resolution 640, honoring the sacrifices and commitments of the men, women and families of the United States Transportation Command.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support House Resolution 640.

Mr. COSTELLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Res. 640, a resolution honoring the United States Transportation Command (US TRANSCOM) on its 20th Anniversary at Scott AFB, IL. I would like to thank Chairman SKELTON and Ranking Member HUNTER for working with me to bring this to the floor expeditiously.

TRANSCOM is responsible for creating and implementing first-class global deployment and distribution solutions to support the President, Secretary of Defense, and our Combatant Commander assigned missions.

Scott AFB, home of US TRANSCOM, Air Mobility Command, the Surface Deployment and Distribution Command, the 375th AW, the

932nd AW, and the 126th ARW, among other units, have made countless contributions to the OEF/OIF.

Since Oct 10, 2001, the US TRANSCOM has moved over 4 million passengers, almost 4.654 billion gallons of fuel, over 9.4 million tons of cargo, over 88,000 airlift missions, over 760 ship loads, more than 164,000 rail car shipments, and approximately 2 million CONUS truck shipments.

They have done all of this with only 2 fatalities in the aeromedical system. Those statistics demonstrate a remarkable commitment to excellence and an indication of true leadership, strong spirit and continued sacrifice.

Each day, the people at TRANSCOM and Scott AFB and their families and friends, are asked to sacrifice for the good of our country. They make that sacrifice without hesitation and should be commended for it.

Mr. Speaker, as we mark TRANSCOM's 20th anniversary at Scott AFB, I would like to commend General Norton Schwartz and the men and women who serve with him. It is truly an honor to have this command at Scott AFB and I look forward to countless more years of this unique partnership. I urge my colleagues to join me in honoring TRANSCOM and supporting this resolution.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. CASTOR) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 640, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RECOGNIZING THE NAVY UDT-SEAL MUSEUM IN FORT PIERCE, FLORIDA, AS THE OFFICIAL NATIONAL MUSEUM OF NAVY SEALS AND THEIR PREDECESSORS.

Ms. CASTOR. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2779) to recognize the Navy UDT-SEAL Museum in Fort Pierce, Florida, as the official national museum of Navy SEALs and their predecessors.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2779

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

SECTION 1. RECOGNITION OF NAVY UDT–SEAL MUSEUM IN FORT PIERCE, FLORIDA, AS OFFICIAL NATIONAL MUSEUM OF NAVY SEALS AND THEIR PREDECESSORS.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

(1) The United States Navy SEALs are the most elite fighting force in the world and bravely serve in combat operations around the World.

(2) The Navy SEALs trace their roots from the Navy Frogmen of World War II.

(3) The location recognized as the birthplace of the Navy Frogmen, where thousands of brave volunteers were trained as members of Naval Combat Demolition Units and Underwater Demolition Teams during World War II, is now home to the Navy UDT–SEAL Museum.

(4) The Navy UDT–SEAL Museum is the only museum dedicated solely to preserving the history of the Navy SEALs and its predecessors, including the Underwater Demolition Teams, Naval Combat Demolition Units, Office of Strategic Services Maritime Units, and Amphibious Scouts and Raiders.

(5) The Navy UDT–SEAL Museum preserves the legacy of the honor, courage, patriotism, and sacrifices of those Navy SEALs and their predecessors who offered their services and who gave their lives in defense of liberty.

(6) The Navy UDT–SEAL Museum finances, operations, and collections are managed by UDT–SEAL Museum Association, Inc., a nonprofit organization governed by current and former SEALs and UDTs.

(7) The Navy UDT–SEAL Museum seeks to educate a diverse group of audiences through its comprehensive collection of historical materials, emphasizing eyewitness accounts of the participants on the battlefield and the home front and the impact of Navy SEALs and their predecessors, then and now.

(8) Since 1985, when the Navy UDT–SEAL Museum first opened, it has become home to artifacts and photos telling the history of Naval Special Warfare from the beginnings of Underwater Demolition training in Ft. Pierce, Florida, through the exploits of Navy Frogmen in the Atlantic and Pacific war theaters of World War II, through the role of Navy SEALs in fighting in the War on Terror and in Iraq.

(9) The State of Florida, St. Lucie County, Florida, thousands of private donors, and philanthropic organizations have contributed millions of dollars to build, restore, and expand the Navy UDT–SEAL Museum.

(10) The United States Navy and the United States Special Operations Command have provided many of the historical materials and artifacts on display at the Navy UDT–SEAL Museum.

(b) RECOGNITION OF NATIONAL MUSEUM.—The Navy UDT–SEAL Museum, located at 3300 North A1A, North Hutchinson Island, in Fort Pierce, Florida, is recognized as the official national museum of Navy SEALs and their predecessors.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. CASTOR) and the gentleman from Washington (Mr. REICHERT) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. CASTOR. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Florida?

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2779 to honor the legacy of the Navy SEALs by recognizing the Navy Underwater Demolition Team Sea, Air, Land, or UDT–SEAL, Museum in Fort Pierce, Florida, as the official national museum of Navy SEALs and their predecessors. I thank my colleague from Florida (Mr. MAHONEY) for bringing this measure to the floor of the House.

Since the program's inception in 1962, the Special Operations Sailors, known as Navy SEALs, have risked their lives at sea, in the air and on land to protect the United States of America. The most elite fighting force in the world, the Navy SEALs have bravely executed some of the most dangerous combat operations in our Nation's history. Tracing the roots of these historic sailors, the Navy UDT–SEAL Museum in Fort Pierce, Florida, marks the birthplace of the Navy frogmen where thousands of brave volunteers were trained to become the first members of naval combat demolition units and underwater demolition teams during World War II. The Navy UDT-SEAL Museum is the only museum dedicated solely to preserving the legacy of the Navy SEALs and its predecessors.

Since 1985 when the facility first opened, the museum served both as a physical monument to our sailors' bravery as well as an educational repository that preserves the legacy of their honor, skill, courage and patriotism. The museum traces the SEALs' lineage from the UDTs conducting hydrographic reconnaissance on the beaches of Normandy to the present-day professionals who practice conventional warfare and counterterrorism. The museum exhibits memorialize the incredible courage and versatility of the Navy SEALs through emphasizing eyewitness accounts and photographs of sailors on the battlefield as well as on the homefront.

The Navy UDT–SEAL Museum in Fort Pierce, Florida, is an immensely important venture for the Navy underwater combat community as well as for the great State of Florida, preserving the rich history and valiant story of the Navy SEALs for both the program's veterans and future generations.

Our Nation can express its great admiration for these brave sailors and the gratitude for this monument to their sacrifices by recognizing the Navy UDT–SEAL Museum in Fort Pierce, Florida, as the official national museum of Navy SEALs and their predecessors.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2779, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I might consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 2779, a bill that recognizes the Navy Underwater Demolition Team-SEAL Museum in Fort Pierce, Florida, as the official national museum of the Navy SEALs and their predecessors. H.R. 2779 has the strong bipartisan support of 44 cosponsors, including the distinguished members of the Committee on Armed Services and my good friends SUSAN DAVIS of California and THELMA DRAKE of Virginia whose districts contain the majority of present-day SEALs units.

The Navy SEALs are deservedly renowned around the world for their combat prowess and are a critical part of our special forces team. This elite fighting team and force traces its beginning to the Navy's World War II

frogman training facility in Fort Pierce, Florida, where this museum is located. During World War II, the Navy trained thousands of volunteers as combat demolition and underwater demolition experts at Fort Pierce. The brave men who mastered these difficult and dangerous skills set the standard for today's SEALs to attain.

The Navy Underwater Demolition Team–SEAL Museum, which we designate today as the official national museum, has an impressive and comprehensive collection of material about these elite Navy fighting forces, providing the public with an excellent education of today's Navy SEALs and their predecessors.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that this bill has been brought to the floor. I urge my colleagues to join me in support of this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. CASTOR. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to my friend and colleague, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MAHONEY), who is an outstanding leader and staunch supporter of the Nation's Armed Forces.

Mr. MAHONEY of Florida. I would like to thank my good friend, the gentlewoman from Florida, and an original cosponsor of this bill for yielding time to me this afternoon. I would also like to recognize the gentleman from Washington (Mr. REICHERT) for his support for this important bill.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2779, legislation that I introduced to recognize the Navy UDT–SEAL Museum in Fort Pierce, Florida, as the official national museum of the Navy SEALs and their predecessors.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure that there are many today watching and asking how important is it to create a national museum recognizing brave men and women who have served in underwater demolition teams as frogmen and today as SEALs. In my life, I have had the privilege and honor of knowing and learning about brave men who have served our Nation and have seen the hell of combat, people like Reggie White, my daughter Bailey's grandfather, who was a combat engineer and who, like the men of UDT, had the job of clearing Omaha Beach that fateful day of June 6, 1944. My uncle, Bart Mahoney, a B–17 pilot, was one of the first to be shot down over Germany. Bart survived combat and then survived German concentration camps. Bobbie Maynard saw frontline action in Korea and survived some of the heaviest engagements in the Korean War. My friend, Pat Kelley, was a medic in Vietnam who had to endure the life-and-death realities of combat. These men are heroes. These men have seen the horrors of war and survived them. These men never bragged about their service. In fact, they rarely spoke of it, preferring to let the horrors of their experience rest. This bill is important because it gives voice to the heroes whose stories and honor need to be captured and passed down to future generations.

The ground upon which the Navy UDT–SEAL Museum rests was the birthplace of the Navy frogmen. Through World War II, thousands of brave soldiers were trained as members of naval combat demolition units and underwater demolition teams at the site. Since that time, the frogmen have evolved into one of the elite fighting forces in the world, the Navy SEALs.

The Navy UDT–SEAL Museum is the only museum dedicated solely to preserving the legacy of the honor, courage, patriotism, and sacrifices of those Navy SEALs and their predecessors, including the underwater demolition teams, naval combat demolition units, Office of Strategic Service maritime units, and Amphibious Scouts and Raiders.

□ 1500

I would like to personally thank Captain Mike Howard, a retired Navy SEAL; Ruth McSween; Rolf Snyder; and others, who have made the UDT–SEAL Museum possible. I would also like to thank all the men and women who worked to preserve the legacy of the Naval Special Warfare community. Since the museum was opened in 1985, thousands of visitors have learned of the accomplishments of the Navy SEALs through the museum's artifacts and photos tracing the history of Naval Special Warfare from its beginnings during World War II, through the Navy's SEALs current role in fighting the war on terror and in Iraq.

While we are here today to honor the Naval Special Warfare community, I would like to take a moment to remember Petty Officer First Class Robert Richard McRill and all of those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice while serving our Nation. Petty Officer McRill, from Lake Placid, Florida, was killed while serving in Iraq as part of SEALs Group Two when his team was hit by an IED.

By designating the Navy UDT–SEAL Museum as the official national museum of Navy SEALs and their predecessors, we are honoring Mr. McRill and all the warriors who have served in Naval Special Warfare. I ask all my colleagues to join me in recognizing the honor, courage, patriotism and sacrifices of the SEALs and their predecessors by supporting this legislation.

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

Ms. CASTOR. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Washington (Mr. REICHERT) for his support. I would also like to thank my colleague and friend from Florida (Mr. MAHONEY) for bringing this thoughtful bill to the floor of the House of Representatives.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2779.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. CASTOR) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2779.

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.

COMMENDING THE 1ST BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM/34TH INFANTRY DIVISION OF THE MINNESOTA NATIONAL GUARD

Ms. CASTOR. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 185) commending the 1st Brigade Combat Team/34th Infantry Division of the Minnesota National Guard upon its completion of the longest continuous deployment of any United States military unit during Operation Iraqi Freedom, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

H. CON. RES. 185

Whereas the 1st Brigade Combat Team/34th Infantry Division of the Minnesota National Guard, known as the Red Bull Division, is headquartered in Bloomington, Minnesota, and deployed approximately 2,700 hard-working and courageous Minnesotans and approximately 1,300 more soldiers from other Midwestern States;

Whereas the 1st Brigade Combat Team has a long history of service to the United States, beginning with the Civil War;

Whereas the 1st Brigade Combat Team was most recently mobilized in September 2005 and departed for Iraq in March 2006;

Whereas the 1st Brigade Combat Team recently completed the longest continuous deployment of any United States ground combat military unit during Operation Iraqi Freedom;

Whereas, during its deployment, the 1st Brigade Combat Team completed 5,200 combat logistics patrols, secured 2.4 million convoy miles, and discovered 462 improvised explosive devices (IEDs) prior to detonation;

Whereas the 1st Brigade Combat Team processed over 1.5 million vehicles and 400,000 Iraqis into entry control points without any insurgent penetrations;

Whereas the 1st Brigade Combat Team captured over 400 suspected insurgents;

Whereas more than 1,400 members of the 1st Brigade Combat Team reenlisted during deployment and 21 members became United States citizens during deployment;

Whereas the 1st Brigade Combat Team helped start two Iraqi newspapers that provide news to the local population and publish stories on reconstruction progress;

Whereas the 1st Brigade Combat Team completed 137 reconstruction projects;

Whereas the deployment of the 1st Brigade Combat Team in Iraq was extended by 125 days in January 2007;

Whereas the 1st Brigade Combat Team and its members are now returning to the United States to loving families and a grateful nation;

Whereas the families of the members of the 1st Brigade Combat Team have waited patiently for their loved ones to return and endured many hardships during this lengthy deployment;

Whereas the employers of members and family members of the 1st Brigade Combat

Team have displayed patriotism over profit, by keeping positions saved for the returning soldiers and supporting the families during the difficult days of this long deployment, and these employers are great corporate citizens through their support of members of the Armed Forces and their family members;

Whereas communities throughout the Midwest are now integral participants in the Minnesota National Guard's extensive Beyond the Yellow Ribbon reintegration program that will help members of the 1st Brigade Combat Team return to normal life; and

Whereas the 1st Brigade Combat Team/34th Infantry Division has performed admirably and courageously, putting service to country over personal interests and gaining the gratitude and respect of Minnesotans, Midwesterners, and all Americans: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That Congress—

(1) commends the 1st Brigade Combat Team/34th Infantry Division of the Minnesota National Guard upon its completion of the longest continuous deployment of any United States ground combat military unit during Operation Iraqi Freedom;

(2) recognizes the achievements of the members of the 1st Brigade Combat Team and their exemplary service to the United States; and

(3) directs the Clerk of the House of Representatives to transmit a copy of this resolution to the Adjutant General of the Minnesota National Guard for appropriate display.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MAHONEY of Florida). Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. CASTOR) and the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. KLINE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. CASTOR. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Florida?

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Concurrent Resolution 185, commending the 1st Brigade Combat Team/34th Infantry Division of the Minnesota National Guard upon its completion of the longest continuous deployment of any United States military unit during Operation Iraqi Freedom. I would like to thank my colleague from Minnesota (Mr. WALZ) for bringing this measure before the House.

The 1st Brigade Combat Team of the 34th Infantry Division was deployed for 22 months, nearly 2 years. That's how long they were continuously deployed. This is longer than any other ground combat unit in Operation Iraqi Freedom. Many Americans count down the hours until the end of the workday, until Friday night, until the end of the work week. Often our commitment to our jobs comes in bundles of 40 hours.

Yet the soldiers of the Red Bull Division had no such luxury. Counting down the time until redeployment was computed in entire weeks, if not months. Just when they and their families thought they were to come home, their deployment was extended by an additional 125 days.

In 22 months some of our brave men and women in uniform missed their infants and their young children taking their first steps, saying their first words. Some of the roughly 5,000-member BCT missed their kids' high school graduations, and they didn't get a chance to move their sons and daughters into a dorm for college.

So much can change in 2 years. So many precious moments that we hold dear pass by during this time. Yet we go about our daily lives and forget that these precious moments that we enjoy are being protected by America's tremendous servicemembers.

Even more amazing is the fact that the members of the 1st Brigade Combat Team/34th Infantry Division are members of the National Guard. These are everyday folks, our neighbors and friends who signed up to be citizen soldiers. Their single deployment lasted as long as some active duty servicemembers' entire time in our Armed Forces. This was an extraordinary commitment and sacrifice on the part of the Red Bull Division.

Mr. Speaker, I know Mr. WALZ and Mr. KLINE, our colleagues from Minnesota, will have much to say about these fine Minnesotans as representatives of that great State. But I would just like to say how proud I am as a Member of the United States House of Representatives and as an American, Mr. Speaker, of the 5,200 combat logistics patrols, the 2.4 million convoy miles, the 400 captured terrorists and the 22-month deployment that the 1st Brigade Combat Team/34th Infantry Division accomplished.

We can never repay these servicemembers for their time and their tremendous sacrifice. But what we can do is enshrine our appreciation and thanks by passing this resolution into law.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support House Concurrent Resolution 185.

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

Mr. KLINE of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of House Concurrent Resolution 185, which commends the men and women of the 1st Brigade Combat Team/34th Infantry Division, Minnesota National Guard, for completing the longest continuous deployment of any United States combat team in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Mr. Speaker, these men and women did not want to set this record. They didn't seek this record. In fact, when they left these shores, they had no idea this record was going to be theirs: 16 months in a combat zone, 22 months of mobilization. But when the word came, they didn't flinch. They set forward, they did their duty and they set a record, one which I certainly hope no other unit will ever be asked to surpass.

The men and women of the 1st Brigade Combat Team are some of this Nation's finest soldiers. Their first-rate service in Iraq carries on the tradition of excellence established by previous generations of the 1st Brigade, through service in the Civil War, the Spanish-American War, and both world wars.

The more than 2,200 Minnesotans and 1,300 more Midwestern soldiers who served in the 1st Brigade in Iraq performed remarkably during their unrivaled tour of duty. These soldiers completed more than 5,200 combat logistics patrols, secured 2.4 million convoy miles, captured over 400 suspected insurgents, and discovered 462 improvised explosive devices prior to detonation. They also helped to start two Iraqi newspapers and completed 137 reconstruction projects.

As a mark of their commitment to the unit and to this Nation, more than 1,400 members of the brigade reenlisted, reenlisted, while in Iraq, and 21 members became United States citizens.

Throughout their long tour of duty, their historic tour of duty, the soldiers of the 1st Brigade Combat Team had the steady support of families and employers. The soldiers are now home and beginning the process of reintegration through the Minnesota National Guard's extensive Beyond the Yellow Ribbon program.

Mr. Speaker, given their admirable and courageous service over so long a period of time, and in recognition of their willingness to put service to country over personal interest, it is only fitting that we take this opportunity to commend the men and women of the 1st Brigade Combat Team.

I want to thank my friend and colleague, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. WALZ) for bringing this measure forward and for his service with the National Guard.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote in strong support of this concurrent resolution.

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

Ms. CASTOR. Mr. Speaker, I intend to recognize the sponsor of this thoughtful resolution, but I think it is important for our colleagues to recognize his service as well. Mr. WALZ from Minnesota spent 24 years himself in the Army National Guard, so he has had a full life of service to this country. I don't think he knew when he enlisted at the young age of 17 that he would end up so many years in the Army National Guard. He also became a teacher. But he achieved the rank of command sergeant major.

I am pleased to yield 5 minutes to Command Sergeant Major WALZ, my friend and colleague from Minnesota, the sponsor of this thoughtful resolution.

Mr. WALZ of Minnesota. I thank the gentlewoman from Florida for her kind words, and I thank the gentleman from Minnesota for his many years of leadership and his service also and to the whole Armed Services Committee for this important legislation.

I am urging my colleagues, and I am sure it will not take a lot of urging. This House of Representatives understands. This resolution, House Concurrent Resolution 185, has recognized the incredible contributions, courage, and sacrifice of the 1st Brigade Combat Team of the National Guard that they have given to our Nation.

In July of 2005, members of the 1/34th Brigade Combat Team of the famed Red Bull Division were notified of their deployment. Twenty-two months later, in July of 2007, they began returning home, after a 22-month deployment. As my colleague from Minnesota said, they had no intention or no knowledge that they would be setting a record. They simply said yes when they were called upon.

As you have heard from each of my colleagues, the statistics are amazing on what this unit did: 5,200 combat logistic patrols covering 2.4 million convoy miles. You heard Mr. KLINE talk about the number of IEDs that were found. A full 37 percent of the total IED incidents during their time there were attributed to the diligent work of this unit.

They helped start the Iraqi newspapers that you heard about, and they also helped produce documentaries on the positive work that our units are doing in Iraq. They completed 137 reconstruction projects; and during this deployment, as you heard, they reenlisted 1,400 of these brave citizen soldiers. And I think a really special thing is 21 of them became citizens during their time in service to this country.

Although they were originally slated to come home, they endured a 125-day extension, and their families and employers endured that with them. This record of the longest continuous deployment of any U.S. military operation in Iraqi Freedom is something to be incredibly proud of. Being there is one thing. Contributing positively the way they did is quite another.

The soldiers sacrificed 2 years of their lives in service to their country. I know how much they have given, as I was a former member of this Red Bull Division myself; and I know many of these men and women personally.

They have added to the long and impressive list of the Red Bull. Their lineage goes back to the 1st Minnesota Volunteers, the first unit to volunteer for the Civil War. The Red Bulls had 517 days of actual combat in World War II, that is more than any other U.S. division during the war, and captured more enemy hills and territory than any other division in World War II.

I, along with the rest of the Minnesota delegation in both the House and the Senate, introduced this resolution to honor their service and to recognize not just the soldiers, but their families and employers who patiently supported, loved and cared for them and waited for them until they returned to the Midwest.

I want to thank my colleagues from Minnesota for their work in support of this resolution, especially my colleague Mr. KLINE from Minnesota. My colleague from Minnesota himself is a lieutenant colonel, a lifelong and career Marine Corps officer and one that served with distinction. He understands and he too knows the sacrifice that they have given.

I want to thank the 30 other Members of Congress who cosponsored this resolution to show their support of the 1st Brigade Combat Team. But most of all, I want to thank the 2,447 soldiers of the 1st Brigade Combat Team from Minnesota. The other soldiers that augmented this unit came from Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas, Wisconsin, New Jersey, Kentucky, Idaho, and Washington.

The Red Bulls have truly lived up to their long and heroic tradition and have contributed bravely to the war in Iraq and this Nation's security. Regardless of what any American feels about the war in Iraq, it is clear that America's servicemembers, like those from the 1st Brigade Combat Team, have performed brilliantly and magnificently; and they deserve our full support.

Now Congress must do its part to recognize their service and provide them the benefits and the health care that they need. The Minnesota National Guard has a world-class reintegration program, the Beyond the Yellow Ribbon program, which helps soldiers readjust to civilian life.

I want to thank my friend and colleague and fellow Minnesotan, Congressman KLINE, for working to expand this program nationwide for all soldiers. His leadership in this is appreciated by soldiers and families across this Nation.

□ 1515

Their needs will go far beyond reintegration. Long after the initial fanfare fades, Congress and the Department of Veterans Affairs must stand ready to assist these brave warriors throughout the rest of their lives. They have more than earned our support, and we must be certain they always have it.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to show their support for the Red Bulls by adopting this resolution.

Mr. KLINE of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself a moment to say that I urge all of my colleagues to support this important resolution. The service that these men and women performed is truly historic and commendable. Again, I thank Mr. WALZ for bringing this measure forward.

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

Ms. CASTOR. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleagues from Minnesota, Mr. KLINE and Mr. WALZ, the sponsor of this thoughtful concurrent resolution, and urge my colleagues to support H. Con. Res. 185.

Mrs. BACHMANN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in proud support of this legislation which commends Minnesota's First Brigade Combat Team of the 34th Infantry Division for their completion of the longest continuous deployment of any United States military unit during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

This extraordinary group of men and women, also known as the Red Bulls, is comprised of about 3,700 dedicated Minnesotans and some 1,300 more soldiers from other Midwestern States. Recently, more than 1,000 of our courageous Red Bulls returned home from a 22-month deployment to Iraq.

During their time in the Middle East, the First Brigade Combat Team protected lives and helped to preserve the blessings of liberty here at home. They discovered 462 improvised explosive devices, IEDs, before they were able to wreak havoc on the innocent. By finding these IEDs prior to detonation, the First Brigade Combat Team surely saved the lives of countless fellow soldiers and Iraqi citizens. They also captured over 400 suspected insurgents and completed 137 reconstruction projects. In addition, the First Brigade Combat Team successfully processed over 1.5 million vehicles and 400,000 Iraqis into entry control points without any insurgent penetrations.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to honor the First Brigade Combat Team, whose bravery and commitment to serving our country is as apparent today as it has been in wars long past. These soldiers have returned with an outstanding record of achievement and have earned hundreds of awards including: one Silver Star, 151 Bronze Stars, 32 Purple Hearts, 771 Army Commendation Medals, 136 Combat Infantry Badges, 302 Combat Action Badges and 14 Combat Medical Badges.

The important measure before us today recognizes the service of our Red Bull soldiers, and reminds us of the price of our freedom, and those who have freely chosen to honor it.

To our Red Bulls, and all of the men and women that defend this Nation, my colleagues and I continue to stand in awe of you.

Thank you, and may God bless you and your families.

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the service of the men and women of the 1st Brigade Combat Team/34th Infantry Division of the Minnesota National Guard and in strong support of H. Con. Res. 185.

I want to thank my colleague and friend TIM WALZ for bringing this important resolution before the floor.

The dedicated men and women of 1st Brigade Combat Team/34th Infantry Division of the Minnesota Guard have just finished serving the longest continuous deployment of any United States military unit during Operation Iraqi Freedom. This Minnesota National Guard unit served 22 months, 16 of which were in Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, I believe our Nation owes a debt of gratitude to the members of the 1st Brigade Combat Team/34th Infantry Division along with all the men and women who have honorably served in Iraq.

H. Con. Res. 185 represents a small token of appreciation for our grateful Nation. The resolution formally recognizes the achievements of these citizen soldiers and officially thanks them for their service.

This resolution thanks the 1st Brigade Combat Team for their work and the time they have sacrificed from their families, neighbors and communities in their valiant service to our country.

I urge my fellow colleagues in Congress to support this important resolution.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. CASTOR) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 185, 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.

Ms. CASTOR. Mr. 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 motion will be postponed.

CORPORAL CHRISTOPHER E. ESCKELSON POST OFFICE BUILDING

Mr. CLAY. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2276) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 203 North Main Street in Vassar, Michigan, as the ''Corporal Christopher E. Esckelson Post Office Building''.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2276

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

SECTION 1. CORPORAL CHRISTOPHER E. ESCKELSON POST OFFICE BUILDING.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The facility of the United States Postal Service located at 203 North Main Street in Vassar, Michigan, shall be known and designated as the ''Corporal Christopher E. Esckelson Post Office Building''.

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the facility referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the ''Corporal Christopher E. Esckelson Post Office Building''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. CASTOR). Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. CLAY) and the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WESTMORELAND) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Missouri.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CLAY. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. CLAY. Madam Speaker, as a member of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, I am pleased to join my colleague in supporting H.R. 2276, which names a postal facility in Vassar, Michigan, after Corporal Christopher E. Esckelson.

H.R. 2276, which was introduced by Representative KILDEE of Michigan on May 10, 2007, was reported from the Oversight Committee on September 20, 2007, by a voice vote. This measure has the support of the entire Michigan congressional delegation.

Madam Speaker, Marine Corporal Christopher E. Esckelson was killed on December 28, 2006, while conducting combat operations in al Anbar Province, Iraq. He was assigned to 1st Battalion, 24th Marine Regiment, 4th Marine Division, Lansing, Michigan.

In October of 2002, Corporal Esckelson joined the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve and attended Delta College. His desire was to become a doctor, but he was called to active duty in April 2006. Corporal Esckelson was extremely proud to be a marine and committed to serve his country with distinction and courage.

Madam Speaker, I commend Representative KILDEE for introducing this legislation and urge swift passage of this bill.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Madam Speaker, H.R. 2276 honors the life of a young man who fought bravely for his country and made the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom. Corporal Christopher Esckelson was killed during combat action in Fallujah, Iraq on December 28, 2006. He was less than 1 week shy of reaching his 23rd birthday.

Christopher Esckelson felt personal anger after September 11, 2001, when his country was brutally attacked, and he knew immediately he wanted to serve in the U.S. Marine Corps. In addition to defending his country, it was a way to earn money for college. His plans included attending medical school. His dream of becoming a doctor, however, was cut short on a 5-day mission fighting insurgents in a war-torn Fallujah.

Corporal Esckelson was a squad leader of 12 men and suffered a direct hit during a mission. His leadership skills were proven day in and day out while in Iraq. He knew the risks involved and experienced the horrors of war. But his determination to fight and win was evident. He was fearless on the battlefield.

Christopher never had the chance to return home safely from the war or attend medical school as he planned, but he will surely be remembered in his community by the naming of this post office in his hometown of Vassar, Michigan. I am pleased to support H.R. 2276 in naming of the post office for this valiant soldier.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CLAY. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to Representative KILDEE from Michigan.

Mr. KILDEE. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to be the sponsor of H.R. 2276. H.R. 2276 will designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 203 North Main Street in Vassar, Michigan, as the ''Corporal Christopher E. Esckelson Post Office Building.''

Corporal Esckelson of Vassar, Michigan, heroically gave his life fighting for our country in Fallujah, Iraq, on December 28, 2006, 2 days shy of his 23rd birthday. Corporal Esckelson, the squad leader of 12 men, suffered a direct hit while inspecting a truck in war-torn Fallujah, Iraq.

Corporal Esckelson's leadership qualities came to fruition long before he began to serve our country. An outstanding athlete at Vassar High School, Christopher Esckelson played the game of football like he did life, with great passion. That same passion is what drove the aspiring doctor to join the Marines shortly after the September 11 attacks.

He once told his mother, Michelle Hill, that whatever life might bring, he still would have been a marine.

His early time in the Marine Corps Reserve allowed him to earn money to pay for classes at Delta College, where he studied premedicine. Other activities Corporal Esckelson enjoyed were hunting with his father, David, and brother, Craig, as well as spending time with his girlfriend, Samantha Reasner, who last saw him when she drove him to the airport when he left for basic training.

His last contact with his family came 2 days before Christmas 2006 when he left on a 5-day mission which would ultimately be his last.

For his heroism, Corporal Christopher E. Esckelson deserves our recognition and thanks. Designating this postal facility in Vassar, Michigan, where his mother works will allow all who enter the post office the unique opportunity to be mindful of the sacrifices brave young soldiers like Christopher have made and continue to make today.

I would like to thank the entire Michigan delegation for their support on this legislation, and urge all of my colleagues to join me in passing this legislation.

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

Mr. CLAY. Madam Speaker, I commend my colleague, Representative KILDEE, for introducing this legislation, and urge its swift passage by the House.

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 Missouri (Mr. CLAY) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2276.

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. CLAY. 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 motion will be postponed.

CORPORAL STEPHEN R. BIXLER POST OFFICE

Mr. CLAY. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3325) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 235 Mountain Road in Suffield, Connecticut, as the ''Corporal Stephen R. Bixler Post Office''.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3325

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

SECTION 1. CORPORAL STEPHEN R. BIXLER POST OFFICE.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The facility of the United States Postal Service located at 235 Mountain Road in Suffield, Connecticut, shall be known and designated as the ''Corporal Stephen R. Bixler Post Office''.

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the facility referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the ''Corporal Stephen R. Bixler Post Office''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. CLAY) and the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WESTMORELAND) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Missouri.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CLAY. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. CLAY. Madam Speaker, as a member of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, I am pleased to join my colleague in the consideration of H.R. 3325 which names a postal facility in Suffield, Connecticut, after CPL Stephen R. Bixler. H.R. 3325, which was introduced by Representative JOE COURTNEY on August 2, 2007, was reported from the Oversight Committee on September 20, 2007, by voice vote. This measure has the support of the entire Connecticut congressional delegation.

Madam Speaker, Marine CPL Stephen R. Bixler was killed on May 4, 2006, while conducting combat operations against enemy forces in al Anbar Province, Iraq. He was assigned to 2nd Reconnaissance Battalion, 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Lejeune, North Carolina.

LTC James M. Bright, the battalion's commander, said, ''Corporal Bixler was a vibrant, active man. He died fearlessly leading and willingly sacrificing his own safety for those around him.''

Corporal Bixler was a devoted soldier with strength of character and self-assurance. He served his country with honor and distinction.

Madam Speaker, I commend the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. COURTNEY) for introducing this legislation and urge swift passage of the bill.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Madam Speaker, CPL Stephen Bixler was a proud and loyal American who served his country while fighting the war on terror. He made the ultimate sacrifice defending freedom when he lost his life on May 4, 2006. Corporal Bixler was born in Hartford, Connecticut, on August 17, 1985. As a student at Suffield High School, he was known as a ''shy, soft-spoken, very dedicated young man and very patriotic, in a quiet, determined way.'' During high school, he was involved in athletics and was a member of the indoor/outdoor track team as well as the cross country team. His love for the outdoors and helping others was exemplified during the time he was a Boy Scout and his hard work and dedication was shown when he became an Eagle Scout.

□ 1530

In July 2003, Corporal Bixler's sense of dedication to his community and country led him to enlist in the United States Marine Corps. He was an ambitious man who was able to accomplish much in his short, but meaningful, life.

As a result of his exceptional military skills, drive, courage and strength, Corporal Bixler applied for and was selected as a member of the 2nd Reconnaissance Battalion. He volunteered willingly for his second tour in Iraq because he knew his fellow marines needed his help. Tragically, during his second tour, on May 4, 2006, he was killed by enemy fire in Fallujah.

His decorations include the Sea Service Deployment Ribbon, Humanitarian Service Medal, Armed Forces Terrorism Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Combat Action Ribbon, and Purple Heart Medal.

We can never show adequate appreciation in honoring the brave men and women who give their lives in service to our country. However, Corporal Bixler's name is etched on the Wall of Honor in the Rayburn House Office Building in Washington, DC.

In addition to the memorial wall, naming this post office in his honor is a fitting and meaningful tribute to a proud marine who served selflessly on behalf of his hometown and his Nation.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CLAY. Madam Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to my friend from Connecticut (Mr. COURTNEY).

Mr. COURTNEY. Madam Speaker, I thank Congressman CLAY. I also want to thank Congressman WESTMORELAND for his kind words in support of H.R. 3325, which I'm the sponsor of, to name the post office at 235 Mountain Road in Suffield, Connecticut, after Corporal Stephen R. Bixler, who at the age of 20, on a second deployment in Iraq, lost his life serving our Nation.

As the prior speakers have indicated, this young man was not with us long, but made an extraordinary mark on all who knew him and served with him, particularly in his home of Suffield, Connecticut, which is a small Connecticut town of 14,000 people. It was founded in 1749 before our Nation even was born, and his family on his mother's side goes back three generations. As you can imagine, in a tight-knit, small community, he was well-known despite being a quiet young man because of his work in the community as an Eagle Scout. He was a varsity track athlete and an outstanding student.

He had a twin sister, Sandra, who graduated with honors from the University of Connecticut; and, clearly, Stephen could have followed that same path. But he followed a road less traveled, and he enlisted for the Marines before he even graduated from Suffield High School and, as I indicated, was on his second tour of duty when he lost his life on May 4, 2006.

His funeral at Sacred Heart Church in Suffield, which was attended by Archbishop Mansell from the Hartford Archdiocese, was an extraordinary outpouring of support from his community. And all I can say is that event was not the end as far as the town was concerned. They have held many ceremonies in memory of Stephen. They named a stretch of road in Suffield in his memory.

And it is fitting that the post office, which is the only Federal building in Suffield, should be named in his honor. His father has been a letter carrier for 35 years in the United States Post Office; but to be sure, our office solicited requests from the community to make sure that there was actual support in town. We had an outpouring of support: 170 letters came in, again, people who knew him as a young child all the way up through his time in the Marines, and I will submit letters from the Governor on down in support of this measure at this point.

STATE OF CONNECTICUT,
EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS,
July 20, 2007.

Congressman JOE COURTNEY,
Cannon House Office Building,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN COURTNEY: I am writing to encourage you to pursue legislation in the United States Congress that will change the name of the U.S. post office on Mountain Road in West Suffield, Connecticut to honor Marine Corporal Stephen R. Bixler.

As you know, Corporal Bixler was killed in Fallujah, Iraq on May 3, 2006 while on foot patrol. Corporal Bixler was proud of his service to the nation, and believed that he was able to make a difference in the lives of the Iraqi citizens he encountered. In addition to

being a valiant member of our armed forces, Corporal Boxler was a Suffield native and an Eagle Scout. Renaming the post office in his honor would be an especially fitting tribute to Corporal Bixler because it will be a lasting reminder of his selfless service to our nation.

I join with State Representative Ruth Fahrbach, Suffield's Board of Selectmen and numerous residents of Suffield, in urging you to pursue this legislation to preserve the memory of one of our fallen heroes.

Very truly yours,

M. JODI RELL,
Governor.

STATE OF CONNECTICUT SENATE,
STATE CAPITOL,
Hartford, CT, July 26, 2007.

Congressman JOE COURTNEY,
Enfield, CT.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN COURTNEY: Thank you for contacting me in regards to naming the Suffield Post Office in honor of Corporal Stephen Bixler. Although such a gesture can never make up for the loss of such a brave young man, I believe that honoring his life in this way will be a source of comfort to his family and friends. Corporal Bixler, who selflessly gave his life for his country, fellow servicemembers, and all of us, deserves to be commemorated for his bravery and sacrifice. It is my hope that you will introduce this legislation to Congress and that the Suffield Post Office will be dedicated to the life of Corporal Bixler.

Thank you again for asking my thoughts on this issue. It was my pleasure to write in support of this wonderful young man, his family, and his friends.

Sincerely,

JOHN A. KISSEL,
State Senator—7th District.

STATE OF CONNECTICUT,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
July 11, 2007.

Re: Suffield Post Office Comment Period

Hon. JOE COURTNEY,
Member of Congress,
Enfield, CT.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN COURTNEY: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the request to name the Suffield Post Office for Corporal Stephen R. Bixler.

When Kevin Goff first contacted me about his suggestion to name the post office for Stephen, I thought it was an excellent idea. I suggested that he start by first contacting the Suffield Postmaster.

The death of Corporal Bixler brought together a community very divided on the war in Iraq. Residents lined the streets when his remains were transported from Bradley International Airport to the funeral home. Hundreds of friends, relatives and strangers attended his wake to show their love and support and to give thanks for his service and sacrifice to his country as well as to show support for grieving family members. As the funeral procession drove past the Suffield Post Office to the church, Suffield postal employees lined the street outside. (Stephen's father is a postal employee.) McAlister Elementary School students and teachers just across the street lined the route as well. Sacred Heart Church was overflowing with mourners.

I had the pleasure of presenting Stephen with a citation when he received his Eagle Scout award. He was an inspiration and set a positive example to the younger boys in his troop. To Stephen, achieving the rank of Eagle Scout was not just about accumulating badges. It was about guiding younger scouts to achieve their goals assisting them in any way that he could and setting a positive example for those who were to follow. Not because he had to but because that was who he was. Stephen accomplished much in his short life. Since I am not a resident of Suffield, I would defer to those who have decided to honor Corporal Bixler in this manner. I will say that in my opinion, naming the Suffield Post Office in honor of Corporal Stephen R. Bixler is appropriate, and well deserved and I am hopeful that Suffield residents agree.

Sincerely,

RUTH FAHRBACH,
House Republican Whip.

TOWN OF SUFFIELD,
SELECTMEN'S OFFICE,
July 19, 2007.

Congressman JOE COURTNEY,
Enfield, CT.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN COURTNEY: The Suffield Board of Selectmen strongly supports any and all efforts to name the Suffield Post Office in honor of Corporal Stephen R. Bixler. The Board of Selectmen voted unanimously at their July 18, 2007 meeting to support this proposal. The naming of the Suffield Post Office in honor of Corporal Bixler is an appropriate tribute to a man who sacrificed his life for our Country.

The loss of Corporal Bixler had a profound impact on the Town of Suffield and the residents of Suffield have made great efforts to recognize this hero. The Board of Selectmen, on behalf of the residents of Suffield, would like to thank you for your continued efforts to name the Suffield Post Office in honor of Corporal Bixler and will provide any further support you may need in this endeavor.

Very truly yours,

SCOTT R. LINGENFELTER,
First Selectman.

JULY 9, 2007.

Hon. JOE COURTNEY,
Congress of the United States,
Enfield, CT.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE COURTNEY: I would like to lend my support to the suggestion that the Suffield Post Office located at 235 Mountain Road be named in honor of Corporal Stephen R. Bixler, United States Marine Corps. I believe that this would be a fitting tribute to a man who gave his life for his country. I am a member of the Suffield Board of Selectman, and I will ask our First Selectman to add an agenda item to our next meeting supporting this proposal.

Thank you very much.

Very truly yours,

TIMOTHY J. REYNOLDS,
Selectman, Town of Suffield.

The excerpts of the letters, which Mr. WESTMORELAND was kind enough to share with the House, I think again describe an extraordinary person who every day as people drive by that post office and young children come in and ask their parents who that name is, it would be a fitting tribute and an inspiration of human excellence and courage, which all of us should try to aspire to.

And, again, I urge strong support for this measure which is a fitting tribute to an extraordinary young man.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Madam Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I would like to encourage all my colleagues to vote affirmative on H.R. 3325 honoring this brave young marine who gave the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom and country.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CLAY. Madam Speaker, like my colleague from Georgia (Mr. WESTMORELAND), I urge my colleagues to vote favorably for H.R. 3325, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. CLAY) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3325.

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. CLAY. 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 motion will be postponed.

PHILIP A. BADDOUR, SR. POST OFFICE

Mr. CLAY. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3382) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 200 North William Street in Goldsboro, North Carolina, as the ''Philip A. Baddour, Sr. Post Office''.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3382

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

SECTION 1. PHILIP A. BADDOUR, SR. POST OFFICE.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The facility of the United States Postal Service located at 200 North William Street in Goldsboro, North Carolina, shall be known and designated as the ''Philip A. Baddour, Sr. Post Office''.

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the facility referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the ''Philip A. Baddour, Sr. Post Office''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. CLAY) and the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WESTMORELAND) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Missouri.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CLAY. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. CLAY. Madam Speaker, as a member of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, I am pleased to join my colleague in consideration of H.R. 3382, which names a postal facility in Goldsboro, North Carolina, after Philip A. Baddour, Sr.

H.R. 3382 was introduced by Representative G.K. BUTTERFIELD on March 1, 2007, and was reported from the Oversight Committee on September 20, 2007, by a voice vote. This measure has the support of the entire

North Carolina congressional delegation.

Mr. Baddour was born on March 16, 1915. He was a business and civic leader in Goldsboro, North Carolina. He was a merchant for over 30 years and served on the city council from 1979 until 1995. During his tenure on the council, he also served as mayor pro tempore.

Upon his retirement as a city councilman, Mr. Baddour was honored with a key to the City of Goldsboro and a resolution from the North Carolina League of Municipalities for his years of public service. Former Governor Jim Hunt honored him as a recipient of the Long Leaf Pine. Mr. Baddour died on April 6, 2002.

Madam Speaker, I commend my colleague, Representative BUTTERFIELD, for introducing this legislation, and I urge the swift passage of this bill.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I rise today to join my fellow Members of Congress in recognizing Philip Baddour, Sr., and his extraordinary contributions to Goldsboro, North Carolina. A steadfast business and civic leader, Mr. Baddour served on the Goldsboro City Council from 1979 to 1995 and owned several downtown businesses.

Mr. Baddour passed away in April 2002 at the age of 87. As a young man, he served in World War II. After the war, he returned to Goldsboro, North Carolina, where he married his wife, Louise, and was the father of four sons.

He was known for his love of the community and affection for what he called the ''little man,'' the average working person in Goldsboro.

As the son of Lebanese immigrants, his desire to give back to the community that had welcomed him when he was just an infant took many paths. He served as a director of Wayside Fellowship, was active in Boy Scouts, Lions Club, and St. Mary's Catholic Church.

Mr. Baddour's popularity as a public servant was a result of his compassion and interest in helping his fellow citizens. He also felt it his civic duty to wisely spend the taxpayers' money while delivering needed city improvement projects. His legacy of sacrifice and service to others is a wonderful example to his children, grandchildren and great grandchildren, and the citizens of Goldsboro.

With gratitude for his devotion to the Goldsboro community, it is particularly fitting that we would rename the William Street Post Office in his honor.

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

Mr. CLAY. Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to my friend from North Carolina (Mr. BUTTERFIELD).

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Madam Speaker, I want to thank my friend and my colleague, Mr. CLAY from Missouri, for yielding this time to me to speak to this very important legislation. I also want to thank Mr. WESTMORELAND for his leadership on the committee. This is a bipartisan piece of legislation that I hope this body will pass unanimously.

Madam Speaker, I rise today to express my strong support for H.R. 3382 and to urge my colleagues to support this legislation. I am the primary sponsor of H.R. 3382, and I'm proud to say that I am joined by the entire North Carolina delegation, both Democrat and Republican. I am seeking to name the post office located in the downtown area of Goldsboro, North Carolina, which incidentally is the home of Seymour Johnson Air Force Base. We're seeking to name this post office as the Philip A. Baddour, Sr. Post Office.

Madam Speaker, Mr. Baddour was my friend. He was also a well-respected member of the Goldsboro City Council for 16 long years. After his service on the council was complete, Mr. Baddour continued to be involved in the civic life of his community, and he leaves a legacy of service in the perfect sense of the word.

Madam Speaker, Philip Baddour, Sr.'s occupation was that of a downtown merchant for more than 30 years. His service on the city council was his second calling, and he served in that capacity from 1979 until 1995. During his tenure on the council, he served as mayor pro tempore and was instrumental in improving the lives of the citizens of Goldsboro, of all races and backgrounds. He was known as the people's representative because of his ability to listen and understand the concerns of his constituents and because he always stood up for those who did not have a voice.

Upon his retirement from the council, Mr. Baddour was honored with a key to the City of Goldsboro and a resolution from the North Carolina League of Municipalities for his many years of public service. Former North Carolina Governor James B. Hunt, Jr., honored Mr. Baddour as a recipient of the Order of the Long Leaf Pine, for individuals who have a proven record of extraordinary service to our State. It is the highest civilian honor that can be granted in the State of North Carolina.

Mr. Baddour dedicated his time and was very compassionate about his community, a community that had given him so much in his youth. He served as director of Wayside Fellowship and was the recipient of the Cancer Society's Outstanding Crusade Volunteer Award. He was also active in the Cub Scouts and the Boy Scouts of America. He was a lifelong member of St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church and served as chairman of the parish council. He was also a member of the Knights of Columbus.

Nothing was more important to Philip Baddour, Sr. than his family. He was married to Louise Farfour for 60 years. Together, they reared four sons who have followed in their father's footsteps by themselves being community leaders and outstanding citizens. Philip, Jr., his son, my dear friend, is an attorney and former majority leader of the North Carolina House of Representatives. Richard is the athletic director at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Stephen is a retired public schoolteacher. And Neil is a real estate broker. Philip Baddour also had eight grandchildren and eight great grandchildren.

Sadly, Madam Speaker, Mr. Baddour, Sr. passed away in April of 2002 after giving so much to his community, to his State and his country.

Madam Speaker, I can think of no finer individual in Wayne County, North Carolina, and no person who is more deserving of this honor than Philip A. Baddour, Sr. The people of Goldsboro and Wayne County and the First Congressional District of North Carolina are grateful for his commitment to community and his great leadership. I ask my colleagues to join me today in honoring this great public servant by passing H.R. 3382.

Again, I want to thank the gentleman from Missouri and the gentleman from Georgia, my friends, for yielding this time. I thank them for their service.

□ 1545

Mr. CLAY. Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to swiftly pass H.R. 3382, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. CLAY) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3382.

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.

LAURENCE C. AND GRACE M. JONES POST OFFICE BUILDING

Mr. CLAY. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3233) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at Highway 49 South in Piney Woods, Mississippi, as the ''Laurence C. and Grace M. Jones Post Office Building''.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3233

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

SECTION 1. LAURENCE C. AND GRACE M. JONES POST OFFICE BUILDING.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The facility of the United States Postal Service located at Highway 49 South in Piney Woods, Mississippi, shall be known and designated as the ''Laurence C. and Grace M. Jones Post Office Building''.

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the facility referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the ''Laurence C. and Grace M. Jones Post Office Building''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. CLAY) and the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WESTMORELAND) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Missouri.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CLAY. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. CLAY. Madam Speaker, as a member of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, I am pleased to join my colleague in consideration of H.R. 3233, which names a postal facility in Piney Woods, Mississippi, after Laurence C. and Grace M. Jones.

H.R. 3233, which was introduced by Representative CHARLES PICKERING on July 31, 2007, was reported from the Oversight Committee on September 20 of 2007 by voice vote. This measure has the support of the entire Mississippi congressional delegation.

Madam Speaker, Dr. Laurence Clifton Jones was born on November 21, 1882, in St. Joseph, Missouri. He attended the University of Iowa and graduated in 1907. Due to racial oppression and widespread poverty among African Americans, he decided to establish a school in Piney Woods, Mississippi, to educate young people. He started the Piney Woods School with just $2 and three students.

Dr. Jones married Ms. Grace M. Allen in 1912. She became a pivotal helpmate to her husband by performing fundraising activities for the Piney Woods School. Mrs. Jones was an educator and taught courses in domestic science.

Laurence and Grace Jones were dedicated educators who left a legacy in keeping with their principles, ''educating the head, hearts and hands'' of young people. The school they built continues to this day on a 60-acre campus among a 2,000-acre wooded site with an enrollment of 275 students.

Piney Woods School is the largest of four remaining historically black boarding high schools in the United States. It is a college preparatory high school with grades 9–12, where many students graduate and go on to college.

I commend my colleague, Representative CHARLES ''Chip'' PICKERING, for introducing this legislation and urge the swift passage of this bill.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I am pleased to support today H.R. 3233, naming the postal facility in Piney Woods, Mississippi, the Laurence C. and Grace M. Jones Post Office Building.

Laurence Jones was well-known in Mississippi history for founding the Piney Woods School in 1909. After graduating from the University of Iowa, he returned to his home State of Missouri, where he was sought out by a local Baptist church to create a school for black children.

Jones found himself by himself in an abandoned sheep shed with no students, but one day a small barefoot boy arrived seeking a lesson. The next day, this young boy came back with two friends. This simple and small beginning grew over the years to what is now a premier educational institution, teaching 300 high school students on a 300-acre campus. Piney Woods is the country's largest African American boarding school and the oldest continually operating African American boarding school.

Laurence's wife, Grace, was also an educator. They met in Iowa, where she had established a similar school for black children. Upon moving to Mississippi, she helped raise funds for Piney Woods and also taught classes. They believed in the importance of providing these youths with the educational opportunity they deserved.

Laurence and Grace Jones were pioneers in the education system in the early 1900s. Their historic achievements are worthy of this recognition, and I am pleased to support H.R. 3233.

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

Mr. CLAY. Madam Speaker, I urge the swift passage of H.R. 3233 and yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. CLAY) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3233.

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 until approximately 6:30 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 3 o'clock and 50 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until approximately 6:30 p.m.

□ 1830

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. CLARKE) at 6 o'clock and 30 minutes p.m.

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. Con. Res. 185, by the yeas and nays;

H.R. 2276, by the yeas and nays;

H.R. 3325, by the yeas and nays.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. Remaining electronic votes will be conducted as 5-minute votes.

COMMENDING THE 1ST BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM/34TH INFANTRY DIVISION OF THE MINNESOTA NATIONAL GUARD

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. 185, 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 gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. CASTOR) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 185, as amended.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 378, nays 0, not voting 54, as follows:

[Roll No. 924]

YEAS—378

Abercrombie	Cantor	Emerson
Ackerman	Capito	Engel
Aderholt	Capps	English (PA)
Akin	Capuano	Eshoo
Alexander	Cardoza	Etheridge
Altmire	Carnahan	Fallin
Andrews	Carney	Farr
Arcuri	Carter	Fattah
Baca	Castle	Feeney
Bachmann	Castor	Filner
Bachus	Chabot	Forbes
Baird	Chandler	Fortenberry
Baker	Clarke	Fossella
Baldwin	Clay	Foxx
Barrow	Cleaver	Franks (AZ)
Bartlett (MD)	Clyburn	Frelinghuysen
Barton (TX)	Coble	Garrett (NJ)
Bean	Cohen	Gerlach
Becerra	Cole (OK)	Giffords
Berkley	Conaway	Gilchrest
Berry	Cooper	Gillibrand
Biggert	Costa	Gingrey
Bilbray	Courtney	Gohmert
Bilirakis	Cramer	Gonzalez
Bishop (GA)	Crenshaw	Goode
Bishop (NY)	Crowley	Goodlatte
Bishop (UT)	Cuellar	Gordon
Blackburn	Culberson	Granger
Blumenauer	Cummings	Graves
Blunt	Davis (AL)	Green, Al
Boehner	Davis (CA)	Green, Gene
Bonner	Davis (IL)	Hall (TX)
Bono	Davis (KY)	Hare
Boozman	Davis, David	Hastings (WA)
Boren	Davis, Lincoln	Hayes
Boswell	Davis, Tom	Heller
Boustany	Deal (GA)	Hensarling
Boyd (FL)	DeFazio	Herger
Boyda (KS)	DeGette	Herseth Sandlin
Brady (PA)	Delahunt	Hill
Brady (TX)	DeLauro	Hinchey
Braley (IA)	Dent	Hinojosa
Broun (GA)	Diaz-Balart, L.	Hirono
Brown (SC)	Diaz-Balart, M.	Hobson
Brown, Corrine	Dingell	Hodes
Brown-Waite, Ginny	Doggett	Hoekstra
Buchanan	Donnelly	Holden
Burgess	Doolittle	Holt
Burton (IN)	Doyle	Honda
Butterfield	Drake	Hooley
Buyer	Dreier	Hoyer
Calvert	Duncan	Hulshof
Camp (MI)	Edwards	Hunter
Campbell (CA)	Ehlers	Inglis (SC)
Cannon	Ellison	Inslee
	Ellsworth	Israel

Issa
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Jones (NC)
Jones (OH)
Jordan
Kagen
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Keller
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilpatrick
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kirk
Klein (FL)
Kline (MN)
Knollenberg
Kucinich
Kuhl (NY)
Lamborn
Lampson
Langevin
Lantos
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
LaTourette
Levin
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (KY)
Linder
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lucas
Lungren, Daniel E.
Lynch
Mack
Mahoney (FL)
Maloney (NY)
Manzullo
Markey
Marshall
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (CA)
McCarthy (NY)
McCaul (TX)
McCollum (MN)
McCotter
McCrery
McDermott
McGovern
McHenry
McHugh
McIntyre
McKeon
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
McNulty
Meek (FL)
Melancon
Mica
Michaud
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller (NC)
Miller, Gary
Miller, George
Mitchell
Mollohan
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Moran (KS)
Murphy (CT)
Murphy, Tim
Musgrave
Myrick
Nadler
Napolitano
Neugebauer
Nunes
Oberstar
Olver
Ortiz
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Paul
Payne
Pearce
Pence
Peterson (MN)
Petri
Pitts
Platts
Poe
Pomeroy
Porter
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Putnam
Rahall
Ramstad
Rangel
Regula
Rehberg
Reichert
Renzi
Reyes
Reynolds
Richardson
Rodriguez
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Roskam
Ross
Rothman
Royce
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Salazar
Sali
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sarbanes
Saxton
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schmidt
Schwartz
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sestak
Shadegg
Shays
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shuler
Sires
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Snyder
Solis
Souder
Space
Spratt
Stark
Stearns
Stupak
Sullivan
Sutton
Tancredo
Tanner
Tauscher
Taylor
Terry
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Tierney
Turner
Udall (CO)
Udall (NM)
Upton
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walberg
Walden (OR)
Walsh (NY)
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)

NOT VOTING—54

Allen
Barrett (SC)
Berman
Boucher
Carson
Conyers
Costello
Cubin
Davis, Jo Ann
Dicks
Emanuel
Everett
Ferguson
Flake
Frank (MA)
Gallegly
Grijalva
Gutierrez
Hall (NY)
Harman
Hastert
Hastings (FL)
Higgins
Jefferson
Jindal
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, Sam
Kind
Kingston
LaHood
Lee
Lewis (GA)
Marchant
Meeks (NY)
Moran (VA)
Murphy, Patrick
Murtha
Neal (MA)
Obey
Perlmutter
Peterson (PA)
Pickering
Pryce (OH)
Radanovich
Rogers (KY)
Ros-Lehtinen
Roybal-Allard
Rush
Sanchez, Loretta
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (WA)
Towns

□ 1857

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.

The title was amended so as to read: ''Concurrent resolution commending the 1st Brigade Combat Team/34th Infantry Division of the Minnesota National Guard upon its completion of the longest continuous deployment of any United States ground combat military unit in Operation Iraqi Freedom.''.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

CORPORAL CHRISTOPHER E. ESCKELSON POST OFFICE BUILDING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2276, 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 Missouri (Mr. CLAY) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2276.

This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 379, nays 0, not voting 53, as follows:

[Roll No. 925]

YEAS—379

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Aderholt
Akin
Alexander
Altmire
Andrews
Arcuri
Baca
Bachmann
Bachus
Baird
Baker
Baldwin
Barrow
Bartlett (MD)
Barton (TX)
Bean
Becerra
Berkley
Berry
Biggert
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blumenauer
Blunt
Boehner
Bonner
Bono
Boozman
Boren
Boswell
Boustany
Boyd (FL)
Boyda (KS)
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Braley (IA)
Broun (GA)
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
Cooper
Costa
Courtney
Cramer
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (IL)
Davis (KY)
Davis, David
Davis, Lincoln
Davis, Tom
Deal (GA)
DeFazio
DeGette
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Dingell
Doggett
Donnelly
Doolittle
Doyle
Drake
Dreier
Duncan
Edwards
Ehlers
Ellison
Ellsworth
Emerson
Engel
English (PA)
Eshoo
Etheridge
Fallin
Farr
Fattah
Feeney
Filner
Forbes
Fortenberry
Fossella
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Garrett (NJ)
Gerlach
Giffords
Gilchrest
Gillibrand
Gingrey
Gohmert
Gonzalez
Goode
Goodlatte
Gordon
Granger
Graves
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Hall (TX)
Hare
Hastings (WA)
Heller
Hensarling
Herger
Herseth Sandlin
Hill
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Hirono
Hobson
Hodes
Hoekstra
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hooley
Hoyer
Hulshof
Hunter
Inglis (SC)
Inslee
Israel
Issa
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Jones (NC)
Jones (OH)
Jordan
Kagen
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Keller
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilpatrick
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kirk
Klein (FL)
Kline (MN)
Knollenberg
Kucinich
Kuhl (NY)
Lamborn
Lampson
Langevin
Lantos
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
LaTourette
Levin
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (KY)
Linder
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lucas
Lungren, Daniel E.
Lynch
Mack
Mahoney (FL)
Maloney (NY)
Manzullo
Markey
Marshall
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (CA)
McCarthy (NY)
McCaul (TX)
McCollum (MN)
McCotter
McCrery
McDermott
McGovern
McHenry
McHugh
McIntyre
McKeon
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
McNulty
Meek (FL)
Melancon
Mica
Michaud
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller (NC)
Miller, Gary
Miller, George
Mitchell
Mollohan
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Moran (KS)
Murphy (CT)
Murphy, Tim
Musgrave
Myrick
Nadler
Napolitano
Neugebauer
Nunes
Oberstar
Olver
Ortiz
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Paul
Payne
Pearce
Pence
Peterson (MN)
Petri
Pitts
Platts
Poe
Pomeroy
Porter
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Putnam
Rahall
Ramstad
Rangel
Regula
Rehberg
Reichert
Renzi
Reyes
Reynolds
Richardson
Rodriguez
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Roskam
Ross
Rothman
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Salazar
Sali
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sarbanes
Saxton
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schmidt
Schwartz
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sestak
Shadegg
Shays
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shuler
Shuster
Sires
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Snyder
Solis
Souder
Space
Spratt
Stark
Stearns
Stupak
Sullivan
Sutton
Tancredo
Tanner
Tauscher
Taylor
Terry
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Tierney
Turner
Udall (CO)
Udall (NM)
Upton
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walberg
Walden (OR)
Walsh (NY)
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)

NOT VOTING—53

Allen
Barrett (SC)
Berman
Boucher
Carson
Conyers
Costello
Cubin
Davis, Jo Ann
Dicks
Emanuel
Everett
Ferguson
Flake
Frank (MA)
Gallegly
Grijalva
Gutierrez
Hall (NY)
Harman
Hastert
Hastings (FL)
Hayes
Higgins
Jefferson
Jindal
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, Sam
Kind
Kingston
LaHood
Lee
Lewis (GA)
Marchant
Meeks (NY)
Moran (VA)
Murphy, Patrick
Murtha
Neal (MA)
Obey
Perlmutter
Peterson (PA)
Pickering
Pryce (OH)
Radanovich
Rogers (KY)
Ros-Lehtinen
Rush
Sanchez, Loretta
Shimkus
Simpson
Smith (WA)
Towns

□ 1905

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

CORPORAL STEPHEN R. BIXLER POST OFFICE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3325, 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 Missouri (Mr. CLAY) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3325.

This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 379, nays 0, not voting 53, as follows:

[Roll No. 926]

YEAS—379

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Aderholt
Akin
Alexander
Altmire
Andrews
Arcuri
Baca
Bachmann
Bachus
Baird
Baker
Baldwin
Barrow
Bartlett (MD)
Barton (TX)
Bean
Becerra
Berkley
Berry
Biggert
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blumenauer
Blunt
Boehner
Bonner
Bono
Boozman
Boren
Boswell
Boustany
Boyd (FL)
Boyda (KS)
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Braley (IA)
Broun (GA)
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
Cooper
Costa
Courtney
Cramer
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (IL)
Davis (KY)
Davis, David
Davis, Lincoln
Davis, Tom
Deal (GA)
DeFazio
DeGette
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Dingell
Doggett
Donnelly
Doolittle
Doyle
Drake
Dreier
Duncan
Edwards
Ehlers
Ellison
Ellsworth
Emerson
Engel
English (PA)
Eshoo
Etheridge
Fallin
Farr
Fattah
Feeney
Filner
Forbes
Fortenberry
Fossella
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Garrett (NJ)
Gerlach
Giffords
Gilchrest
Gillibrand
Gingrey
Gohmert
Gonzalez
Goode
Goodlatte
Gordon
Granger
Graves
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Hall (TX)
Hare
Hastings (WA)
Hayes
Heller
Hensarling
Herger
Herseth Sandlin
Hill
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Hirono
Hobson
Hodes
Hoekstra
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hooley
Hoyer
Hulshof
Hunter
Inglis (SC)
Inslee
Israel
Issa
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Jones (NC)
Jones (OH)
Jordan
Kagen
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Keller
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilpatrick
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kirk
Klein (FL)
Kline (MN)
Knollenberg
Kucinich
Kuhl (NY)
Lamborn
Lampson
Langevin
Lantos
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
LaTourette
Levin
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (KY)
Linder
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lucas
Lungren, Daniel E.
Lynch
Mack
Mahoney (FL)
Maloney (NY)
Manzullo
Markey
Marshall
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (CA)
McCarthy (NY)
McCaul (TX)
McCollum (MN)
McCotter
McCrery
McDermott
McGovern
McHenry
McHugh
McIntyre
McKeon
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
McNulty
Meek (FL)
Melancon
Mica
Michaud
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller (NC)
Miller, Gary
Miller, George
Mitchell
Mollohan
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Moran (KS)
Murphy (CT)
Murphy, Tim
Musgrave
Myrick
Nadler
Napolitano
Neugebauer
Nunes
Oberstar
Olver
Ortiz
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Paul
Payne
Pearce
Pence
Peterson (MN)
Petri
Pitts
Platts
Poe
Pomeroy
Porter
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Putnam
Rahall
Ramstad
Rangel
Regula
Rehberg
Reichert
Renzi
Reyes
Reynolds
Richardson
Rodriguez
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Roskam
Ross
Rothman
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Salazar
Sali
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sarbanes
Saxton
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schmidt
Schwartz
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sestak
Shadegg
Shays
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shuler
Shuster
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Snyder
Solis
Souder
Space
Spratt
Stark
Stearns
Stupak
Sullivan
Sutton
Tancredo
Tanner
Tauscher
Taylor
Terry
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Tierney
Turner
Udall (CO)
Udall (NM)
Upton
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walberg
Walden (OR)
Walsh (NY)
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)

NOT VOTING—53

Allen
Barrett (SC)
Berman
Boucher
Carson
Conyers
Costello
Cubin
Davis, Jo Ann
Dicks
Emanuel
Everett
Ferguson
Flake
Frank (MA)
Gallegly
Grijalva
Gutierrez
Hall (NY)
Harman
Hastert
Hastings (FL)
Higgins
Jefferson
Jindal
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, Sam
Kind
Kingston
LaHood
Lee
Lewis (GA)
Marchant
Meeks (NY)
Moran (VA)
Murphy, Patrick
Murtha
Neal (MA)
Obey
Perlmutter
Peterson (PA)
Pickering
Pryce (OH)
Radanovich
Rogers (KY)
Ros-Lehtinen
Rush
Sanchez, Loretta
Shimkus
Simpson
Sires
Smith (WA)
Towns

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). Members are advised 2 minutes remain in this vote.

□ 1912

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Madam Speaker, due to a family emergency I missed the following votes on Monday, October 1, 2007. I would have voted as follows:

H. Con. Res. 185—Commending the 1st Brigade Combat Team/34th Infantry Division of the Minnesota National Guard upon its completion of the longest continuous deployment of any United States military unit during Operation Iraqi Freedom—"yea."

H.R. 2276—To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 203 North Main Street in Vassar, Michigan, as the "Corporal Christopher E. Esckelson Post Office Building"—"yea."

H.R. 3325—To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 235 Mountain Road in Suffield, Connecticut, as the "Corporal Stephen R. Bixler Post Office"—"yea."

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I took a leave of absence on October 1, 2007, as I was attending to personal business. The following list describes how I would have voted had I been in attendance today.

"Yea." H. Con. Res. 185—Commending the 1st Brigade Combat Team/34th Infantry Division of the Minnesota National Guard upon its completion of the longest continuous deployment of any United States military unit during Operation Iraqi Freedom (Rep. WALZ—Armed Services)

"Yea." H.R. 2276—To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 203 North Main Street in Vassar, Michigan, as the "Corporal Christopher E. Esckelson Post Office Building" (Rep. KILDEE—Oversight and Government Reform)

"Yea." H.R. 3325—To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 235 Mountain Road in Suffield, Connecticut, as the "Corporal Stephen R. Bixler Post Office" (Rep. COURTNEY—Oversight and Government Reform)

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Madam Speaker, I was unavoidably absent from this Chamber today. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall votes 924, 925 and 926.

SUPPORT VETERANS: PASS THE VA APPROPRIATIONS BILL

(Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise this evening to highlight one of the most important pieces of legislation yet to pass this Congress: the Veterans Affairs-Military Construction appropriations bill. Each year from 1995 to 2006 the Republican-led Congress passed record increase

after increase for our Nation's veterans. More importantly, the Republican-led Congress made it a priority to pass the VA appropriations bill so that our veterans could continue to receive the care that they deserve.

That, Madam Speaker, cannot be said of this year's VA funding bill. Reports in today's Congressional Quarterly are that the majority is considering holding the vital VA bill hostage as a means of passing a giant omnibus bill to fund government operations. The health and welfare of our veterans is more important to my constituents than it is to score cheap political points here in Washington, D.C.

Madam Speaker, I hope that you can find it in your heart to appoint conferees to the VA-Military Construction appropriations bill and send the President a bill that he can sign. Our veterans deserve nothing less.

MARINES NOT WELCOME HERE

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

Mr. POE. Madam Speaker, Oakland Airport officials might as well put a sign: ''Welcome to Oakland, but no U.S. military allowed here.''

It seems that over 200 marines from the combat fields of Iraq flew into Oakland, California, and were not allowed to deplane into the airport. They were forced off the plane between two runways and had to sit in the grass for 3 hours while waiting to fly to Hawaii. The troops had flown from Iraq via Kuwait, Germany, and JFK Airport. They had already been completely screened by Customs and TSA at JFK, but the officials at Oakland Airport wouldn't let them into the terminal.

One marine said no explanation was ever given. Interestingly enough, reports say this not the first time Oakland banned the U.S. military from its airport.

Most airports welcome our returning troops with patriotism, cheers, flags and enthusiastic applause. But not in Oakland. They should be ashamed. They should apologize to each marine, and Congress needs to find out why the marines were treated so poorly and even consider prohibiting Federal funds from going to this airport if it is shown that the airport is antimilitary.

And that's just the way it is.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. CLARKE). 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.

REDEPLOYMENT FROM 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. Madam Speaker, the American people have been opposed to the occupation of Iraq and they have been demanding the redeployment of our troops for a very long time now, but the word obviously hasn't reached our Nation's leaders.

Last Wednesday, the Secretary of Defense asked Congress to appropriate billions of dollars more to continue the occupation of Iraq. He said that American troops will remain in Iraq for years to come with no end in sight.

The occupation has already cost nearly half a trillion dollars, and what have we gotten for that investment? Even General Petraeus couldn't say for sure that our involvement in Iraq has made us any safer when he testified before Congress last month. And the National Intelligence Estimate warned us in July that al Qaeda is using the occupation to energize extremists, raise money, and to recruit and indoctrinate operatives for attacks on the U.S. homeland.

Madam Speaker, the way to make America truly safer is to end the occupation, restore our moral leadership in the world, and use diplomacy to strengthen the structure and institutions of international cooperation and peace. That's why it is time to tell our leaders in the White House that Congress isn't going to be their friendly neighborhood ATM machine any more. Congress has the power of the purse. We can use it to force the administration to change course. We must refuse to appropriate one more dime for the occupation. Instead, we must fully fund the safe, orderly and responsible redeployment of American troops and military contractors out of Iraq.

Redeployment of our troops is the necessary first step on the road to peace. It is clear that Iraq will never stabilize while American troops and the vast unaccountable army of 180,000 American military contractors are there.

Our occupation of Iraq prevents Iraqis from finding solutions to their own problems, and it delays the regional and international diplomatic efforts needed to jump-start a true peace process.

The administration has said that it plans to redeploy some troops, but this is just a tactic, I believe, to win political favor. The arithmetic proves it. We began this year with 130,000 troops in Iraq. The escalation brought the level to 160,000. Now the administration says it will bring out 30,000 troops so by next summer we will again have 130,000 troops.

So, Madam Speaker, we end up with the same number of troops, but the administration calls it a reduction. I call it fuzzy math. President Bush has created a national mathematics panel to study ways to improve math education in America. That is a really good thing, because the President himself needs help with addition and subtraction.

Actually, Madam Speaker, the only way to make sure that our troops are out of harm's way is to proceed right now with a full redeployment and end the fantasy that there is a military solution to this quagmire.

If we fail to use our power of the purse, if we continue to spend our taxpayer dollars on this occupation instead of ending it, we will have failed politically, we will have failed economically, and we will have failed morally. And we will have failed our brave troops along with all of the American people. It is time to bring our troops home.

GOLD STAR MOTHERS

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

Mr. POE. Madam Speaker, yesterday, under the bright sun and blue sky of the Texas Sunday afternoon, American flags flew in the silent breeze over thousands of quiet marble uniform tombstones in the Houston National Cemetery. This is where Texans bury their war dead, men and women who go off to war for America.

In the center of the immaculately kept cemetery, a tribute of sacrifice was being made to the living: Those mothers who lost their children in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Mothers of Texas who gave their children that died in their youth so the rest of us could live in safety were honored on this Gold Star Mothers' Day.

I was present along with Congressman GENE GREEN and Congressman NICK LAMPSON and Congressman KEVIN BRADY to honor these special ladies. We, like those present, were emotionally affected.

Gold Star Moms are what we call them, is a mother who lost a child in combat. This concept started in World War II when Grace Seibold learned on Christmas Eve 1918 that her aviator son was killed in aerial combat in France. Grace Seibold directed her grief and sorrow to helping wounded doughboys in local D.C. hospitals. She formed the Gold Star Mothers to give support for other such moms.

During World War I, if a son had gone off to war in the War to End All Wars, as it was called, a banner was hung in front of the home in the window for each son in the military. This banner had a blue star in the center of it. If the son was killed, a gold star was superimposed over the blue one.

During World War II, my Grandmother Poe hung such a banner with a blue star in the front window of her home in the country. My dad went off to war when he was just 18. When my grandmother died, it was one of the few items she had saved. That banner never had to have a gold star placed on it because my dad returned safely.

Madam Speaker, here is a banner of a Gold Star Mother. It has the name of the soldier that was killed, William

Amundson, Jr. He was killed in Afghanistan. He was from Woodlands, Texas. He was a corporal in the United States Army.

The blue star banners are very similar to this except in the middle there is a blue star rather than a gold star. And when that son or daughter is killed in combat, the gold star is superimposed over the blue one. These banners have been carried throughout all of America's wars since World War I and applies to sons and daughters killed in war.

So yesterday these mothers of the fallen were there. And standing guard around them were the Patriot Guard motorcycle members, rugged Vietnam veterans who escort the fallen to this cemetery for burial. There was a 21-gun salute. Then after all of the speeches, these women were given yellow roses from Texas and the buglers played Taps for the fallen.

Madam Speaker, as a father of four, I can think of nothing worse than to lose one of my own kids. No parent wants their son or daughter killed in unknown foreign lands. No parent wants their child to predecease them, and no parent wants their child to die in their youth. But it happens, and the grief can only be understood by other such parents.

As Congressman GREEN said yesterday, ''Even the greatest heart surgeon in the world, Dr. Michael DeBakey, cannot repair such a broken heart of a mother like this.''

Mothers are special, especially the mothers of those who wear the American uniform. Those who keep statistics on the last words of soldiers say more often than not that the dying words of many soldiers in combat is, ''Mother, mother.''

It seems to me the strongest bond in all of creation is the bond between a mother and her child. The good Lord made it that way on purpose, and when that bond is broken by the loss of a child, that wound just never heals.

Madam Speaker, one out of every nine people in the military is from the State of Texas, and about 400 Texans, 10 percent of the total killed of 4,000, have been killed in Iraq and Afghanistan. Yet sons and daughters throughout America continue to join our military knowing that they will no doubt go into the desert of the sun and the valley of the gun, and they leave behind their parents, their mothers.

So as we show honor and respect to America's children who serve, let us show American compassion and ultimate gratitude for the mothers of those troops who display the Gold Star sacrifice from their windows. And the next time we pass a house with one of these gold stars, one of these 4,000 throughout the United States, and they are being displayed in the window, maybe we should stop and say a prayer and say ''thank you'' because of that special mother who gave that child for the rest of us.

And that's just the way it is.

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 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.)

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

(Mr. HALL of New York addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

COMMUNISM DOESN'T WORK

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. Madam Speaker, I want to comment right now on a little article that was in the paper. Probably most Americans didn't see it today. But I followed what went on in Zimbabwe a long time ago when the communist leader, Mr. Mugabe, took over. He said they were going to make that country greater because of the movement towards communism.

Well, here is what happened since he took office: The government says that it is going to have to import 100 tons of extra wheat but that is still going to be really short of the 375,000 tons that they need to feed their people. And the United Nations World Food Programme estimates that at least 3 million people will need emergency food aid in Zimbabwe before the April corn harvest.

Communism simply doesn't work. It hasn't worked in the past. It didn't work in the Soviet Union, and it hasn't worked in Zimbabwe or other places. And we ought to be very thankful that we live in a democratic republic in this country. And we ought to do everything we can to help those living under the yoke of communism and do everything to can to make them free.

I think it is extremely important because when you go to those countries, as I have, and you see what those people have to live like and you see the starvation, little children with big bellies because they don't have the food they need, you realize that the communist menace is very, very costly anyplace it occurs in the whole world.

□ 1930

PERU FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

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

Mr. HARE. Madam Speaker, I rise this evening in strong opposition to the pending Peru Free Trade Agreement. NAFTA promised Americans 200,000 new NAFTA jobs, higher wages and an increasing U.S. trade surplus with Mexico, just to name a few. Now, nearly 15 years later, the evidence shows that NAFTA has failed to make good on its promises.

In fact, in many areas in which benefits were promised, conditions are worse than before NAFTA went into effect. For example, in direct contradiction to the promises of NAFTA, nearly 1 million jobs were destroyed directly by the NAFTA free trade deal.

My district, in particular, has suffered the loss of 1,600 jobs; and NAFTA forced Maytag to leave Galesburg, Illinois, for Sonora, Mexico. And just last week, it was announced that Carrhart Manufacturing, a clothing company, will cease production and move to Mexico at the end of December.

Every aspect of the city of Galesburg is hurting. The economy, the schools, the small businesses that feed into these plants, and the citizens have lost their spirit. Now Galesburg is trying to rebuild its identity, but I fear that the Peru FTA promises more of the same.

The proposed Peru FTA would replicate, and in some instances expand, on many of the most devastating provisions of the flawed NAFTA–CAFTA model. First, the Peru FTA preserves many of the CAFTA terms providing extreme foreign investor rights. The provisions in the Peru FTA allow foreign investors to skirt U.S. courts and laws and give foreign investors the authority to sue the United States Government in foreign tribunals for violating their FTA-granted rights.

Second, the Peru Free Trade Agreement includes the NAFTA–CAFTA procurement chapters on Buy America and anti-offshoring policies. The FTA requires foreign firms be treated the same as American firms seeking government contracts, challenging our right to invest tax dollars into American jobs and businesses.

Several groups have publicly opposed the Peru FTA for those very reasons, including the two largest trade unions in Peru.

The September 17 Change to Win Coalition letter states: ''Chapters of the Bush-negotiated FTA that literally replicate job-killing aspects of the core NAFTA–CAFTA model have not been addressed. Not one word was changed from the Bush-negotiated text.''

In addition, the Interfaith Working Group on Trade and Investment released a statement saying: ''Based on our experience with NAFTA and CAFTA, the U.S.-Peru FTA will cause lost livelihoods in rural communities, reduce access to life-saving medication and perpetuate the global 'race to the bottom' for workers and environmental protection.''

But to make matters worse, no one seems to have faith in this President to

enforce the labor standards negotiated in the May 10 agreement. This administration cannot and will not enforce American worker safety right here in the United States.

In a statement released on May 11, AFL–CIO President, John Sweeney, reminded us of the Bush administration's past failures by saying: ''The Bush violations against nations like Jordan and China remind us there is no guarantee the executive branch will enforce any new rights workers may gain through these negotiations.''

The machinists labor union echoed Mr. Sweeney's statement in a letter to Congress dated August 2. It states: ''We are well aware of this administration's dismal record when it comes to workers' rights. For example, it has refused to issue a trade complaint against China for workers' rights violations described fully in AFL–CIO submissions. Given its past record, we fear that this administration will simply ignore even the most egregious labor violations.''

Recently, I received a letter from two Peruvian labor federations concerned about the labor provisions in the pending FTA.

Madam Speaker, our trade policies must start to serve the interests of America's working families and workers around the globe. We can do better. We need to overhaul our trade readjustment program. We need to calculate the loss of American jobs when this bill goes into effect, and we need to remember that our majority is here because working men and women demanded that we look out for them and their families.

Let's slow down, vote ''no'' on this trade deal, and stand up to those people who stood up for us. That, Madam Speaker, is the very least that we can do. I urge my colleagues to please vote ''no'' on the Peru agreement.

FREE THE CUBAN POLITICAL PRISONERS AND PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Madam Speaker, pro-democracy activists inside Cuba report that an undetermined number of dissidents were detained by the dictatorship on the morning of September 27. The dissidents were on their way to participate in peaceful activities to request the release of political prisoners.

Those detained in Cuba on September 27 include Martha Beatriz Roque, Jorge Luis Garcia Perez ''Antunez,'' Blas Augusto Fortun Martinez, Yubi Diosenegui Pernet Perez, Alicia Martinez Guevara, Alejandro Gabriel Martinez Martinez, Guillermo Perez Year, Amado Ruiz Moreno, Carlos Cordero Paez, Idania Yanes Contreras, Yesmi Elena Mena Silvano, Jose Diaz Silva, Georgina Noa Montes, Arturo Montgomery Alonso, Roberto de Jesus Guerra Perez, Yunieski Garcia Lopez, Lester Fernandez Zamora, Felix Reyes Gutierrez, Yoel Espinosa Medrano, Ariel Orama Martin, Angel Raul Perez Gavilan, Javier Delgado Torres, Carlos Michael Morales Rodriguez, and others whose names I do not have. At this time it is unknown how many of the detained dissidents have been released and how many will be kept in confinement. It is up to the whim of the ailing tyrant.

The list of political prisoners languishing in Cuban prisons is long, Madam Speaker. Sixty dissidents who were peacefully expressing their opposition to the dictatorship remain in prison since the regime's brutal crackdown of March 2003, joining hundreds of other political prisoners. Reporters Without Borders reports that there are at least 23 journalists languishing in abysmal conditions in Cuban prisons.

The Miami Herald today published a very important editorial about one such journalist. I think it's an editorial that deserves commendation and attention. It reads as follows:

Normando Hernandez Gonzalez may die for exercising free speech in Cuba. An independent journalist, he has been imprisoned since Cuba's crackdown on dissidents in April 2003. Now he is so critically ill that he was transferred to a Havana military hospital last week.

It is bad enough that Mr. Hernandez Gonzalez, 39, is serving a 25-year sentence for criticizing the government, something people in free countries do every day. Yet things could get worse. Returning him to prison would be a death sentence. This is where he contracted serious ailments, chronic digestive disorders and tuberculosis among them. Even if his condition were to improve in the hospital, he would not last long in the filthy cells and eating the food given to political prisoners.

The hope now is that Cuba will free Mr. Hernandez Gonzalez and allow him to leave the country and soon. International pressure is needed.

To their credit, legislators in Costa Rica granted Mr. Hernandez Gonzalez a humanitarian visa in April. Cuban authorities refused to honor the visa. But a recent move appeared to get Cuba's attention. Jose Manuel Echandi Meza, a Costa Rican lawmaker, filed a formal complaint with the U.N. Human Rights Commission two weeks ago that accuses Cuba of torturing Mr. Hernandez Gonzalez by denying him proper medical treatment. The following day, he was sent to the Havana hospital. He appears to be getting some medical treatment, according to his wife.

That wasn't the case before. Mr. Hernandez Gonzalez has been deteriorating since his first year in prison. He has been beaten, placed in solitary confinement and repeatedly denied access to basic medical care. He blames overcrowded, vermin-filled cells and contaminated food and water for his multiple illnesses. He suffers nausea, diarrhea, fever, fainting spells and weight loss.

Last December, he was rushed from his prison to a hospital in Camaguey. There he was placed in a room with no furniture. His food was thrown under the door. He returned to prison untreated. While Cuba boasts of its health care system, it denies political prisoners basic care.

PEN, a writers advocacy group, awarded Mr. Hernandez Gonzalez its prestigious Freedom to Write Award earlier this year. For more information on his case, go to PEN's Web site at www.pen.org. Let the world know that Mr. Hernandez Gonzalez and hundreds of other political prisoners haven't been forgotten. All of them should be released.''

Now, Madam Speaker, the same week that approximately 30 dissidents were rounded up and thrown in dungeons by the Cuban dictatorship, the Spanish Government of Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero decided to unilaterally break the European Union's ''Common Position'' on Cuba, by entering into a cooperation agreement with the Cuban tyranny.

Mr. Rodriguez Zapatero and his government thus continue to act as the Castro brothers' most zealous advocates in Europe, and they deserve the condemnation of all freedom-loving men and women for their disgraceful actions.

I renew tonight my call for the immediate liberation of all political prisoners and prisoners of conscience in totalitarian Cuba and urge international solidarity for them and for their right to be released immediately and unconditionally, all of them, now.

OPPOSE THE PERU FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

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

Mr. MICHAUD. Madam Speaker, many of the newly elected freshmen campaigned on a platform of ensuring a significant change of course from the Bush trade policy.

The Peru Free Trade Agreement is based on the same flawed NAFTA–CAFTA model that has been so devastating to industries all across our Nation.

While I campaigned for this seat 5 years ago, the cornerstone of my campaign also was to fix our broken trade policies. I've seen firsthand what they have done to the State of Maine.

I firmly believe that in order to address our trade imbalance, we have to change the trade model. The Peru Free Trade Agreement is the same old model with a little lipstick.

There is overwhelming opposition to the agreement by unions, environmental, consumer and small business groups. They're all asking Congress to oppose the Peru FTA. Who supports the bill? The large multinational corporations, Big Business, does.

When Tom Donahue, president of the United States Chamber of Commerce,

states that he is ''encouraged by assurance that the labor provisions cannot be read to require compliance with ILO conventions,'' we should be more than skeptical.

While we have all heard that the Peru trade agreement text improves labor and environmental standards, we fail to hear that they were added on top of the same old NAFTA and CAFTA text. The bottom line: this is another Bush NAFTA expansion.

Key unions are worried about the labor provisions. The new provisions require countries to adopt, maintain, and enforce only the terms of the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.

The new FTA language does not require signatories to meet the ILO conventions. That's the binding standards. The declaration is a nonbinding statement.

It is highly likely that changes to the environment and labor provisions will have no real effect on the ground.

We all know that the Bush administration has a long record of not enforcing the standards of past trade agreements. Why should they start now?

And there are so many problems with the Peru Free Trade Agreement, whether it's the privatization of Social Security, ban on anti-offshoring, or failure to protect our intellectual property rights. There are more than enough reasons to oppose the Peru FTA. Not to mention if you look at NAFTA, NAFTA has caused a worse problem here in the United States with illegal immigration. The Peru Free Trade Agreement will do the same thing, cause the illegal immigration problem to get worse.

I could go on and on about the Peru FTA. I ask my colleagues to really listen to what America is saying about these free trade agreements. I'm asking Members to vote their conscience. Oppose the Peru FTA.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman 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

CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS REPORT ON THE ANNUAL LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. JONES) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Madam Speaker, it's so good to see you in the Chair, especially on this occasion as we engage in the Congressional Black Caucus message hour.

This evening it gives me great pleasure to spend some time talking about the annual legislative conference that was this past weekend right here in Washington, DC.

I am joined this evening by the cochair. The Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus foundation is KENDRICK MEEK, but the cochairs of this wonderful weekend this year are my good friends G.K. BUTTERFIELD from North Carolina and my colleague and good friend DONNA CHRISTENSEN from the Virgin Islands.

So I am going to begin by yielding to my colleague and good friend from the great State of North Carolina, G.K. BUTTERFIELD.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. I want to first of all thank the gentlelady from Ohio for her leadership here in the Congress. One of the first Members that I met when I came to Washington 3 years ago was STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES. She is engaged all the time and is certainly representing the constituents of her district. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to share a few thoughts with you this evening.

We have just finished the 37th Annual Legislative Conference of the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation.

I want to delineate between the Congressional Black Caucus and the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation. Those are two separate entities. So often people confuse those entities, but the Congressional Black Caucus proper is simply an unofficial organization of the 43 CBC members, African American Members who are serving in the Congress who meet from time to time to discuss public policy issues. It is not a foundation; it is simply an informal gathering of Members of Congress.

By contrast, the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation is a very formal organization. It is a 501(c)3 tax-exempt foundation that has been in existence for many years. I want to start off by making that point abundantly clear.

The Congressional Black Caucus is composed of 43 members. We hear that number from time to time. That's a very important number. It has not always been 43 members. The African American representation here in Congress has evolved over the years, and now it is at its highest point in its history; 42 African Americans serve in the House. Of those 42, 40 are full voting Members of the House of Representatives. The other two have the right to vote in committees and in the Committee of the Whole, but not in the full House, because they represent the District of Columbia and the Virgin Islands. Hopefully one day in the not too distant future even those two Members will have a right to full participation here in the Congress.

But having 42 African Americans in the House of Representatives is significant. That is 17 percent of the House of Representatives, at least the Democrats in the House of Representatives come from the Congressional Black Caucus, and so that is very important.

So over the years, the Congressional Black Caucus has seen fit to annually produce an annual legislative conference whereby African American leaders from all across the country can come to Washington in fellowship and interact and network with other people across the country, and then we conclude the week by having a gala or an annual dinner. We have just completed the 37th annual conference this past week, and it was a smashing success.

I want to thank all of those persons who had a hand in making it happen. KENDRICK MEEK from Miami, Dade County, Florida, is the leader of the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation. We used to call him a part of the 30-something club, but he has now passed that great 40-year-old mark, but he is still young and energetic and dynamic.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Are you a member of the 30-something club?

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. No, ma'am, I am not. I am a member of the 60-something.

But KENDRICK MEEK has led our organization, and we had a very, very good conference last week. I am not going to go into all the details, I am sure my colleague, DONNA CHRISTENSEN, who was also my cochair last week may give you details about it, but it was a wonderful week.

We had brain trust on just about every topic that you can imagine. We had a gospel extravaganza, and one of my choirs from North Carolina came to Washington and really, really had a magnificent showing in that extravaganza. Then we had a prayer breakfast. We are very close to prayer in the Congressional Black Caucus, because we know it has been our faith that has brought us thus far along the way. Then we concluded on Saturday night with our gala. I don't know how many thousand people were at that dinner.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. More than 3,000.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Yes. There were more, more like 4, 5,000 people in attendance at the dinner, and it was a great success.

I want to thank all of those persons who had a hand in making the week the success that it was, particularly Dr. Elsie Scott and the staff of the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation.

You know, Congresswoman, I say in speeches all the time and I will say here on the House floor today, you know, we get credit for a lot of things that we really don't deserve, Members of Congress. We cut the ribbons and take pictures and sit in meetings and engage in unnecessary debate sometimes, but it is the staff that does the heavy lifting and gets the job done. So kudos to the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation staff.

Let me conclude by saying that since 1868 there has only been 122 African Americans who have served in the United States Congress. That is an actual statistic. Our research shows that 19 African Americans served in the House of Representatives during the Reconstruction. Four of those were

from my district that I now represent, which is the northeastern corner of North Carolina. Eight of those were from South Carolina, which is the district that my good friend, the majority whip of this House, Congressman JIM CLYBURN, represents. But we have only had 122 African Americans to serve in this body. We have come a long way to have 42 African Americans serving in the House and one in the Senate.

We have a lot of work to do, and I am going to close by simply saying that we had a good week and a very successful week. I know it's self-serving for me to say this, Congresswoman, but I think it's the best conference that we have had in our 37 years. So many people deserve the credit.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Before you leave, I want to congratulate you on your choice of prayer breakfast speaker. Dr. Clifford Jones out of North Carolina was a wonderful speaker, and his theme, ''Somebody Pray for Me,'' I think hit right home with all of us, and we had a wonderful, wonderful time in praise and worship Saturday morning. You would have actually thought we turned the convention center into a church on Saturday morning. It was a wonderful experience.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. We had a southern missionary Baptist preacher who came to Washington and delivered a powerful sermon. When I first suggested Dr. Jones' name a few months ago, a few people were skeptical because they had not heard of him before. When they came up with their name, I had not heard of their name before.

So I thought it was time to have a southern minister. Dr. Clifford Jones did a wonderful job, as did Rev. William Barber from Goldsboro, North Carolina, who delivered the prayer for the Nation. Dr. Barber is also the State president of the NAACP in North Carolina, and it was just a wonderful occasion. You would have had to have been there to really appreciate it, and hopefully persons who didn't come this year may see fit to come next year.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. I wasn't part of the choice, but I knew a minister named Jones had to be a really good person. Thank you so much for the choice.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Thank you, staff. Thank you all of you who had a hand in making this happen, including the chairwoman of the Congressional Black Caucus itself. I failed to mention the name of CAROLYN CHEEKS KILPATRICK. Congresswoman KILPATRICK is leader of the Congressional Black Caucus, and that's a tough job, leading 43 diverse politicians. But she reconciles all of our differences, all of our views and leads the Black Caucus with great distinction. Thank you as well to Congresswoman KILPATRICK.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. It gives me great pleasure to yield time to my colleague and good friend, Congresswoman DONNA CHRISTENSEN. She cochairs the brain trust for the Congressional Black Caucus. She represents the Virgin Islands. She has done a great job and always been a great friend since I have been in the Congress. This year, along with G.K. BUTTERFIELD, she cochaired the annual conference for the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, ''Unleashing Our Power.''

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Congresswoman TUBBS JONES, it's a pleasure to be back with you on the floor this evening. We were here together last week discussing SCHIP and the situation in Jena with the Jena 6 high school students, which was also a part of our discussion, a very integral part of our discussion at the annual legislative conference.

We were very fortunate that while we were there, Mychal Bell was released from prison, and we were able to have the lead attorney, Lewis Scott, come up and join us for a session.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Absolutely.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. But this was our 37th Annual Legislative Conference, and our theme, as you heard, was ''Unleashing Our Power.'' That is also exactly what we here in the CBC and our constituents across the country intend to do going forward, unleash our power.

I also want to join my cochair in thanking the Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, KENDRICK MEEK, for his strong and visionary leadership of the foundation and of the conference, and to thank our CBC chairwoman, the Honorable CAROLYN CHEEKS KILPATRICK, for her stellar guidance. As we have come into the majority, she has coalesced and directed our power to influence the product of what I think will be a historic 110th Congress.

I also, as you heard just a few minutes ago, had a great partner in my cochair, Congressman G.K. BUTTERFIELD of North Carolina, whose input, vision and hard work really helped to make this week a successful and momentous one as it was.

Of course, as he said too, the ALC could not have been successful without the work of our staff, his staff and my staff and the staff of the foundation under the excellent and skilled leadership of Dr. Elsie Scott, its president.

As this year's cochair, it was a special pleasure for me to welcome Generation Now and other Virgin Islanders, including Neville Peter, who sang at the prayer breakfast.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. He was excellent. He was excellent. Wow.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Both singers were great, but it was really inspiring. We were really pleased he was able to join us.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Why don't you tell us a little bit about Neville Peter? Some people across the Nation may not know about him.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. He is a young man, born in my district in the U.S. Virgin Islands. He started his musical career very early, at about 5, mostly in the piano and one other instrument. But at about 12, he pretty much lost all of his sight. He became blind at about age 12.

That didn't stop him, though. He went on to college at the University of Miami and studied music there, actually specializing in jazz and some other kinds of music. But in the recent years, he has turned his talent to the service of the Lord, and he has been a gospel singer, writer. He actually performed one of his original compositions, which, as he said, was a testimony of his own life and finding God; it was personal. Now it's personal.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Yes, now it's personal. We remarked, as we were sitting at the table listening to him, that his look was much like a Stevie Wonder look with the braids. When he turned to the side, the profile was much like Stevie Wonder.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Yes, he has a great voice and a great talent. We look for him to go to great places in the future.

So we have him and we have the Generation Now, and, of course, many of us in the Congressional Black Caucus also had our emerging leaders come up from our district that we sponsored; mine, attorney Mark Hodge and Natalie Humphries, also of Generation Now, the last person. So that was exciting.

Our opening session, of course, featured our Chairs, including my colleague here, Mrs. STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES, Congresswoman STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES, but also Chairman RANGEL, Chairman CONYERS, Chairman THOMPSON, and of course, our whip, JIM CLYBURN. That was a very, I think, powerful way to start off a conference, a weekend that was all about power.

It wasn't only about power in the Congress, but it was about a power in our community that is still really untapped and unleashed. We could really be agents of change for our community and our country if we were to really come together and use the power that is ours.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. I am with you.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. I wanted to focus the rest of my remarks on the town hall, though, and on the health sessions that I was a part of. There were many health sessions. There were many sessions, period, on a number of issues, and all very informative.

The town hall, first, was a real powerful discussion on ways to eliminate or reduce the factors that lead so many black men and now, increasingly, black women into prison. We called it ''Disrupting the Prison Pipeline'' because we wanted to focus on positive action to really stop what was happening over the years.

Too, our session was attended by, I think, over 1,000 people who were at that town hall that morning. And we discussed the disparities in education, health, including mental health and substance abuse, how poverty and unemployment in the criminal justice system, the disparities in those areas create a pathway to incarceration rather than college for so many in the African-American community.

We had wonderful speakers. We had Reggie Weaver, the president of the National Education Association; Dr. Marian Wright Edelman, the president of the Children's Defense Fund; Dr. Beny Primm was a drug addiction expert from New York; Dr. Debra Prothrow Stith, a public health expert who focuses on violence prevention; attorney Rhonda Stewart from North Carolina, an expert on child and family judicial issues; Janks Morton, who is a writer in D.C. representing the media; and several ex-offenders who have made a dramatic turnaround in their lives.

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We want to thank them, as well as our moderator, Leon Harris, and the Members of Congress who participated; Congressman BOBBY SCOTT, who chairs the Crime Subcommittee of the Judiciary and has turned that into, has begun to focus that committee on prevention, which we have long looked forward to doing; DANNY DAVIS, who heads a subcommittee himself on health under the Government Reform Committee. But primarily he was there as the leader of the State of the Black Male Initiative that the CBC and the CBC Foundation have been working on and, of course, Chairman RANGEL, who brought the economic opportunity piece to that discussion. They brought their expertise, they brought the work that they're engaged in, both inside and out of Congress to help disrupt the prison pipeline.

What's clear is that there's too many communities where a young black male in this country has no alternative opportunities, nor is he provided with adequate opportunities to be able to succeed on the path to college. And the two unfortunate recent examples are the Jena high school students and Genarlo Wilson who is still in prison in Georgia. What we will do from here, though, Madam Speaker and colleagues, is to issue a report that incorporates the date, the key points of the discussion, and legislative recommendations, which would be a blueprint for the Congressional Black Caucus, as well as other elected leadership on State and local levels.

What we've heard from our panelists and the audience was a compelling call to action to indeed disrupt that prison pipeline.

The first health session, which I cochair every year with Congresswoman BARBARA LEE on HIV and AIDS, global HIV and AIDS focus on the growing role and the influence of the faith community in combating the HIV/AIDS crisis in the African American community. Ten years ago we called for a state of emergency and a minority AIDS initiative for our community and other communities of color. This administration has taken it far away from the original intent of building the local capacity in our communities to address this epidemic. And the consensus in that conference was that we need a national plan, as we discussed with the Black AIDS Institute on the Hill last week; and it's time to reissue that call for the state of emergency and reclaim our minority AIDS initiative.

Also, on Thursday afternoon there was a great discussion on bringing corporate, State, and union leaders into the disparity elimination partnership. With the ongoing need for corporations to provide health care and the extreme pressures of its rising costs, they will be looking for ways to cut those costs. The health coverage will continue to be a major cause of contention as unions negotiate contracts, and States are beginning to take coverage for all of their residents into their own hands.

We called on business, union and State leaders, we called them together for this dialogue because we want to make sure that as all of this begins to take some kind of shape into a health care reform initiative, that closing the gaps in health care and in health status that's faced by racial and ethnic minorities and rural residents in this country, that those issues would be at the center of that reform; and we intend for that to be an ongoing dialogue.

The last session that I'm going to mention is the Friday session on demanding opportunity and justice for African American health care providers. It spoke to challenges that are almost as disturbing as those we discussed in the prison pipeline discussion. Our keynote speaker, Dr. Sullivan, gave us an update on the still low representation of African Americans and other minorities in health professions schools and in practice, far below our representation in the Nation and woefully inadequate to meet the needs of our diverse society. We heard from hospital administrators, doctors, dentists and others, including students, about the barriers to getting into the health profession school and staying there. Those stories were bad enough. But there was more. We then heard from African American doctors and other health providers, those in practice, about the difficulties they face in staying in practice, given exclusions from certain facilities, faculties and organizations, unfair investigations and sanctions that hold them to a far higher standard than other providers, and also disparities in reimbursement.

What we heard signals a looming crisis that must be prevented if we are ever to eliminate health disparities, if we're ever to improve health care for everyone in this country, and if we're ever to stop the skyrocketing rise in health care costs. Those are just three of the many outstanding issue forums and brain trusts that informed, inspired, and invoked action on the part of the black community.

As I close, I want to thank all of my CBC colleagues, including you, Madam Speaker, for your support. Because of your hard work and that of your staff, we had one of the best annual legislative conferences ever and I want to thank all of the speakers, the exhibitors, and all who attended from all over the country, and even some from beyond and outside of our country, from the Caribbean, from Africa and other areas of the world. Because of the input that you brought, and the support that you gave to the conference, we, as a community, stand more ready than ever to unleash our power.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Thank you, Madam Chair, DONNA CHRISTENSEN, the Delegate from the Virgin Islands, one of the co-chairs for the ALC Conference.

It gives me great pleasure at this time to yield 5 minutes to my colleague and good friend, DIANE WATSON from California, our former ambassador to Micronesia.

Ms. WATSON. Thank you, Congresswoman STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES; and thank you, Madam Speaker.

I want to congratulate Congressman MEEK, Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, and CAROLYN CHEEKS KILPATRICK for putting together a most excellent Congressional Black Caucus annual legislative week. The event was very well attended, and the many issue forums were informative and enlightening.

I held three issue forums, one on African American entrepreneurship in South Africa, and one on African American celebrities and their too often unreported commitment to social issues.

And my third panel, entitled ''Finding Justice for the Black Cherokee Indian Freedmen,'' looked at the current Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma's efforts to expel its black Cherokee citizens. I was pleased to have a number of Cherokee citizens, including Joe Byrd, the former principal chief of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, Jon Velie, attorney for the Freedmen, and Marilyn Vann, president of the Freedmen Descendants Association.

In the year 2000, the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma attempted to disenfranchise its Freedmen descendants. The circumstances were nearly identical to the current efforts of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma to rid itself of descendants of the Freedmen who are rightfully citizens of Cherokee Nation. The Bureau of Indian Affairs took a proactive stance against the Seminoles, cutting off their funding for nearly 2 years and also suspending their franchise to conduct gaming.

Interestingly, the Bureau of Indian Affairs first declared the Cherokee Freedmen situation identical to that of the Seminole Freedmen. Then the bureau did a 180-degree flip flop, taking a hands-off approach to Cherokee Freedmen. The BIA chose to shirk its fiduciary responsibility, even as the Freedmen's rights were obviously being trampled on by the Cherokee leadership.

In March of 2007, the Cherokee Nation held an election to expel the Cherokee Freedmen, in violation of the 1866 treaty which granted full citizenship

rights to Cherokee Freedmen shortly after the Civil War. That is when the plight of the Cherokee Freedmen first came to my attention.

I immediately wrote a letter to Assistant Secretary Artman of the Bureau of Indian Affairs requesting an interpretation of the vote. The letter was signed by 25 of my congressional colleagues. The response I received from Secretary Artman almost a month later was unsatisfactory. In effect, the Secretary said that the bureau had not taken any administrative action and would continue its careful evaluation of all facets of this matter. In effect, I was told that the BIA would continue to monitor a situation that didn't need further monitoring, but immediate action.

It is only when I discovered that the BIA would not move proactively, that it would not forcibly and vigorously stand up for and protect the rights of Cherokee Freedmen as it had done for the Seminole Freedmen, I introduced H.R. 2824 to sever the United States relations with the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma until such time that it restores full citizenship rights to Cherokee Freedmen.

My legislation has been characterized by Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma as a termination bill, which is blatantly false. There is not one sentence in the legislation that addresses terminating the Cherokee Nation's Federal recognition status.

The Cherokee Nation has made the argument that Congress should not intervene until the courts have resolved the matter. It made this point the center piece of its public relations campaign to disenfranchise the Freedmen descendents. But the past actions of the Cherokee Nation belie its commitment to the rule of law. After the Cherokee Nation's tribal courts ruled in favor of Lucy Allen, a Freedmen descendant who sued for citizenship, the Cherokee Nation's leadership chose to dissolve the court and packed the newly constituted court with cronies who proceeded to approve a referendum to disenfranchise the Freedmen.

The Cherokee Nation's leadership states that funding cuts will hurt many Cherokees who depend on Federal funding. This past Friday, coinciding with the day of my issue forum, the Cherokee Nation took out a full page ad in Roll Call and in the Hill making this claim. What the Cherokee Nation doesn't tell you is that it has already spent $2.7 million or more lobbying against Freedmen and that the Cherokee Tribal Council recently debated allocating $4 million to lobby against the Freedmen. What they don't tell you is that a lot of this money has gone and will go to pay for services of high-priced public relations firms. It's too bad that the Cherokee Nation will not use its money to help those in its tribe who really need assistance, but instead will use millions of dollars to launch a hateful and vitriolic attack against African descendents of the Cherokee Nation who form a minority of its, there are only 2,800, they're a minority among its 270,000 thousand Members.

And finally, my legislation was not an attack on Indian sovereignty or the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma's sovereignty.

The Cherokee Nation receives roughly $300 million a year from the Federal Government. It also conducts highly lucrative gaming operations with a Federal gaming charter. The sovereign right to discriminate with our taxpayers' dollars is not a right at all. It's illegal.

The Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma argues that it should be treated like other tribes and have the exclusive right to determine its citizenship. Because the Cherokees signed a treaty with the Confederate States of America and fought against the United States to defend slavery, the conditions of the treaty of 1866 and reconstituting the relationship with the United States was that the former slaves and their descendents, called the Freedmen, would be citizens with full rights. My legislation only seeks redress for the Cherokee Nation for the restoration of their treaty rights that entitle them to citizenship, to vote, to hold office and to have equal rights with other Cherokee citizens.

Madam Speaker and Representative STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES, I appreciate the time you have given us, and I think we were very successful this weekend in gathering information and enlightening our public who attended from across the country and around our Nation. Thank you very much.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the subject of this Special Order today, the annual legislative conference of the Congressional Black Caucus.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. At this time it gives me great pleasure to have the opportunity to yield 5 minutes to my colleague and good friend from the great State of North Carolina, the immediate past Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, Mr. MEL WATT.

Mr. WATT. Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I thank my colleague, STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES from Ohio, for yielding time. I don't think it will take me 5 minutes to do this, but I did want to spend a little bit of time talking about the annual legislative conference that was conducted by the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation this past weekend.

I heard the comments of my colleague from California, Ms. DIANE WATSON, and I was fortunate to be able to sit in on one of her issues forums related to the Cherokee Freedmen, and I thought it was a very balanced and productive session, and very informative.

I've been privileged to be a part of the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation's annual legislative weekend for all 15 years that I have served in Congress. And I would have to say that the first 13 of those years I did my piece of the conference by conducting a discussion and issues forum on the Voting Rights Act, access to the vote, and I participated in various issues related to the Judiciary Committee. But last year and the year before last, I was honored to serve as the Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, and I took a different perspective during those 2 years because it gave me an opportunity, as Chair of the caucus, not only to do my own issues forum, but it was part of, I viewed it as part of my responsibility to drop in on all of the issues forums and brain trust discussions that were going on.

And I can tell you firsthand that there was nowhere in the world that there were more thoughtful provocative discussions going on about the state of black America, our role in the United States, our role in education, justice, our role internationally, than take place at the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation's annual legislative conference.

That is the place to be to discuss the issues that impact our community, and I saw it firsthand, from issues related to the hip hop generation to the confidence of our African American youth, to the prison pipeline that, unfortunately, has been created, to the disparities that exist in health care and education and even in our international foreign policy.

So I'm honored to have been able to have viewed the weekend from a different perspective for the last 2 years.

But I will tell you, Madam Speaker, and my colleague, Representative TUBBS JONES, that I was honored to get back to being able to do just my thing again this year. And we had a delightful discussion about the Voting Rights Act in my issues forum.

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Last year we had just passed the 25-year reauthorization of the Voting Rights Act, and so we took that year to kind of pat ourselves on the back and talk about what we had just accomplished. But we knew the onslaught would be coming immediately. And within that 1-year period, there has been a concerted effort, litigation has been filed, which is a direct frontal attack on the Voting Rights Act and its reauthorization.

So the first part of my issues related to that legal attack, which had just been argued in a court of appeals about 2 weeks ago, and I had the lawyer from the NAACP Legal Defense Fund there at my brain trust to talk about that attack and its likelihood for success. And I'm happy to report that we do not believe it is a serious attack, although there will certainly be others to come.

That presentation was followed by a presentation by Donna Brazile on the various methods that have been used throughout the country to discourage minority participation in the voting process and what we plan to do about it in the 2007 election and, more importantly perhaps, in the 2008 Presidential election cycle, some of the strategies that we plan to follow to combat those efforts to diminish and reduce minority participation in the voting process.

And then our third panelist was a director of a board of elections in Florida who talked about the desirability of creating a paper trail so that people who do show up and vote at the polls can reliably be certain that their vote will be counted and properly assessed.

So we just had three panelists. They did outstanding jobs. We had ample time for discussion and participation by the attendees at the conference and at our issues forum. It was a delightful experience and one that I look forward to being around next year at this time to replicate.

I again applaud you for convening this Special Order tonight to allow us the opportunity to talk about not only the fun things that happened at the foundation's annual legislative conference but, more importantly, the wonderful substantive discussions that take place around every issue that impact our community.

With that I will thank our convener this evening.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. I had a recent discussion with our colleague KEITH ELLISON from Minnesota, and he was telling me that in the seventh circuit that it had been granted to go to the Supreme Court on a voter ID. That will be an interesting case to watch as it goes forward as well.

Mr. WATT. We did talk about that, and we are watching that case very carefully, as well as another case out of North Carolina, which is an attack on whether the Voting Rights Act protects congressional districts that are not majority minority, such as the one I represent, which is only 40 percent or so African American, and the ones that are represented by most of the members of the Congressional Black Caucus today.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Madam Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman for his leadership on getting the Voting Rights Act reauthorized, Congressman MEL WATT of North Carolina.

It gives me great pleasure at this time to yield to my colleague and good friend, a former judge from the great State of Texas, Congresswoman SHEILA JACKSON-LEE.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, let me thank my distinguished colleague and friend, chairwoman of the Ethics Committee from Ohio STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES, for more than this one night. I think that we are back in the saddle again, and I applaud the fact that the Congressional Black Caucus, the conscience of the Congress, is now reporting the ions and pages and, if you will, thousands upon thousands of items that we work on and solve on a daily basis here in the United States Congress. So I want to thank her for guiding this for a period of time, and I want to then acknowledge the chairpersons of the 37th Annual Legislative Conference, the Honorable DONNA CHRISTENSEN and G.K. BUTTERFIELD, who did an outstanding job. And as well might I acknowledge and thank, and I know that he will be speaking soon, the chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, Chairman KENDRICK MEEK, and thank him for his leadership and also for the opportunity to now journey on the foundation board as a new member. As I am a new member of the foundation board, I am delighted to be able to collaborate with him on some of the many, many issues that the board will tackle.

Success; inspirational; exciting; fun; learned; and, of course, message giving. That was the 37th annual legislative session that we just finished here in Washington, D.C.

Allow me to acknowledge the importance of the Voting Rights session that MEL WATT and I, having served on the Judiciary Committee, worked on as we moved to reauthorize the Voting Rights legislation in the last session.

And just to bring to the attention of my colleagues, the reason why that is so important is because it seems that race again is becoming a dividing issue in America. And I just want to remind my colleagues, or maybe bring it to your attention, I am going to sort of merge it into the review of the particular sessions that I had, but I just want to announce to my colleagues that Ward Connelly has managed to get the question of affirmative action on the ballot of nine States. My understanding is that that question which revolves around race will be on the Presidential-year elections. It is my understanding that it will be on the ballot in November of 2008. I am going to investigate that issue, but I wanted to just bring that to the table because a number of our sessions had to do with trying to grapple with this question of race. And certainly the Voting Rights Act and the interpretations that the Supreme Court will make on additional cases involving race really emphasize that.

And I must say that I enjoyed cohosting a series of sessions with BOBBY SCOTT. There was a session that, although I was detained, I was able to get in for a brief moment, but I want to compliment him and acknowledge that one of the aspects that was spoken about was the recent decision dealing with race in schools on the Supreme Court. So you can imagine if there are ballot issues dealing with affirmative action, it just converges on a number of these issues. And that session really emphasized the wrongness of the decision as it relates to the results, meaning that Brown versus Board of Education might be challenged under that decision. Something for us to be concerned about.

So I enjoyed participating in that one and thought it was a very important, instructive session, as well as cochairing the child welfare section with DANNY DAVIS. And the one point I want to mention that came out of that that really cries out for legislation is the fact that foster children age out of protection, age out of a home at age 18. And for those of us who have children that know that we are still mothering them at 21, 22, 23, 24, and they have a home, our children can come back to a home or have a roof over their head that we may have, but foster children get out of the system. There is no obligation to provide them with housing or schooling or anything. What a tragedy, which is why you see that many foster children are homeless, many foster children can't finish college. They get no stipend, and it is a crisis. And it was an outstanding series with Historically Black Colleges.

Let me then indicate that the series that I had involved the energy brain trust, which was historic. And let me quickly say that we had representatives from Shell and CAMAC energy and the CEO of CITGO; from Venezuela, the Venezuelan ambassador; the ambassador from Algeria; Milton Scott, who owns a very important African American energy company; Steve Hightower, African American, owner of an energy company; George Person; Lisa Jackson; Gary Heminger; Hugh Depland from BP; Gary from Marathon; Frank Stewart from the American Association of Blacks in Energy; Willie Trotty. And the key element, high gasoline prices and high utility costs, building bridges. We have a commitment to convene the energy brain trust at the OTC, the Offshore Technology Conference, in Houston, but the main thing we have a commitment to is getting African Americans in the ownership wealth part of energy and making sure that there are African Americans in the corporate aspects of these major Fortune 500 companies and, as well, increasing more ownership.

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Lastly, we did a provocative session on hip hop, ''The Culture of a People, the Language of a People,'' and it actually got people talking. Julianne Malveaux, the president of Bennett College. Azim Rashid, senior VP of operations at Warner Music. J. Xavier, 350-time performer, 15-year-old clean hip hop artist. An Tun Muhammad, the president of The Real Hip Hop Network. Asha Jenning, Igniting Media Accountability. Madhatter of the Box Station in Houston, and JMAC. And then Reverend Ben Chavis and Charles LeBoef.

Let me conclude by saying that we opened up the door of communication to understand hip hop from both perspectives in art, but also accountability. I look forward to continuing those sessions.

But more importantly let me thank the convener, because we were able to say it was vital, it was important, and there was so much learning going on. Now we're going forward with the legislative initiative for the CBC legislative weekend.

I yield back to the distinguished gentlelady. Thank you for the time.

The issue of energy is one of the most important national security issues which face our nation due to our increasing dependence on foreign sources of energy, often times from volatile parts of the world. My braintrust seeks to highlight and remedy the lack of adequate outreach to and participation by the African American community in America's energy industry, which is exacerbated by the inherent barriers present in the energy industry to African American students, workers, entrepreneurs, and investors along with the disparate impact the energy industry has on minority populations, consumers and neighborhoods, both in terms of prices and environmental justice.

There is no issue more integral to our nation's economic and national security than energy independence. This Energy Braintrust, which is comprised of some of the most prominent members of America's energy industry, is designed to be a clarion call to action, in order to build bridges and synergies between the African-American community and America's energy industry.

The purpose of this Braintrust will not only be the discussion of, but more importantly, the transformation of dialogue into action and legislation to address and bolster the relationships between the energy industry and African American consumers, entrepreneurs, investors, workers, and students. My hope and expectation is that six months from now each of today's presenters will join me to collectively and individually issue a plan of benchmarks, goals, and pathways to build concrete and coherent bridges and synergies between the African American community and America's energy industry. Moreover, part of this plan will be a formal mechanism such as a progress report to measure how each of today's prominent panelists and the companies they represent implement and achieve the benchmarks they helped to develop. This will ensure that we transform today's substantive discussion into pragmatic action.

Energy is the lifeblood of every economy, especially ours. Producing more of it leads to more good jobs, cheaper goods, lower fuel prices, and greater economic and national security. However, the U.S. is more than 60 percent dependent on foreign sources of energy, twice as dependent today as we were just 30 years ago. America's growing and dangerous energy dependence has resulted in the loss of hundreds of thousands of good American jobs, skyrocketing consumer prices, and vulnerabilities in our national security.

Energy imports now make up one-third of America's trade deficit. America must improve the supply-demand imbalance, lower consumer prices, and increase jobs by producing more of its own energy resources. With my district of Houston being the energy capital of the world, the energy industry in Houston exemplifies the stakeholders who must be instrumental in devising a pragmatic strategy for resolving our national energy crisis.

At this point in history, the energy industry is at a critical turning point where we can become active agents of change in our collective futures. America's dependence of foreign oil has led us to precarious position in terms of foreign policy and national security, while the youth of our nation have not received sufficient means to move to us a new direction.

Because I represent the city of Houston, the energy capital of the world, I realize that many oil and gas companies provide many jobs for many of my constituents and serve a valuable need. The energy industry in Houston exemplifies the stakeholders who must be instrumental in devising a pragmatic strategy for resolving our national energy crisis. It is crucial that while seeking solutions to secure more energy independence within this country, we strike a balance that will still support an environment for continued growth in the oil and gas industry, which I might add, creates millions of jobs across the entire country.

We have many more miles to go before we achieve energy independence. Consequently, I am willing, able, and eager to continue working with Houston's and our nation's energy industry to ensure that we are moving expeditiously on the path to crafting an environmentally sound and economically viable energy policy. Furthermore, I think it is imperative that part of this policy includes increased involvement by small, minority and women owned businesses, and independent energy companies in this process because they represent some of the hard working Americans and Houstonians who are on the forefront of energy efficient strategies to achieving energy independence.

I will conclude by also emphasizing that renewable and alternate sources of energy must be part of our energy future in order to achieve energy independence. Replacing oil imports with domestic alternatives such as traditional and cellulosic ethanol can not only help reduce the $180 billion that oil contributes to our annual trade deficit, it can end our addiction to foreign oil. According to the Department of Agriculture, biomass can displace 30 percent of our Nation's petroleum consumption.

Along with traditional production of ethanol from corn, cellulosic ethanol can be produced domestically from a variety of feedstocks, including switchgrass, corn stalks and municipal solid wastes, which are available throughout our nation. Cellulosic ethanol also relies on its own byproducts to fuel the refining process, yielding a positive energy balance. Whereas the potential production of traditional corn-based ethanol is about 10 billion gallons per year, the potential production of cellulosic ethanol is estimated to be 60 billion gallons per year.

I will close by emphasizing that we must be balanced and prudent in our approach to address our energy needs. By ensuring access to the African-American community and investing in renewable energy, I believe we can be partners with the responsible members of America's energy producing community present today to achieve our collective goal of reaching energy independence and increased inclusion of the African-American community.

CHILDREN'S ISSUES FORUM: HIP HOP: THE CULTURE OF A PEOPLE

The Annual Legislative Conference is an opportunity for us to discuss and engage with some of the difficult issues that face us as a community and as a nation, This year, it was my honor and pleasure to host a Children's Issues Forum entitled "The Language of Hip Hop: The Culture of a People," This timely and thought-provoking discussion and examination of the impact, both positive and negative, of hip hop on our community featured panelists from the hip hop industry, as well as activists and academics.

As a Member of the Congressional Black Caucus, Chairwoman of the Congressional Children's Caucus, and most importantly a mother, it is my priority to address issues relating to the health and well-being of African American youth in this country. I recognize that Hip Hop culture has had a tremendous influence on the artistic and musical expression of America's youth today. However, many view the culture of Hip Hop as a negative and provocative phenomenon due to some of the negative images and harsh lyrics that some artists use to express themselves. I believe that before we condemn Hip Hop, we must first try to understand it. The Children's Braintrust sought to reach such understanding.

Throughout history, music originating from America's Black communities has always had an accompanying subculture reflective of the political, social and economic conditions of the time. Rap is no different. The history of our music often exemplifies a deeper reflection of the goings on in society—from Billie Holiday's solemn song characterizing those who were lynched as "Strange Fruit" to Nina Simone's musical commentary in "Mississippi G——D——" expressing her disdain for the rampant killings in the South, to Tupac's expression of sincere compassion for poor black women, whom he urged to "keep your head up" despite the fact that society has turned its back on you.

Hip hop is the culture from which rap emerged. Hip hop is a lifestyle with its own language, style of dress, music and mind set that is continuously evolving. We have seen hip hop go from competitive freestyling to breakdancing battles to East Coast-West Coast rivalry. Surely, we lost two extremely talented individuals in Tupac and Biggie, much too soon. We all know their lives did not have to end so violently. But knowing this, we must ask ourselves, why does the violence continue to take so many of our youth?

My Children's Issues Forum was an opportunity to talk with each other, rather than at each other. Panelists and participants came together to discuss solutions, and to look for a way forward that embraces the hip hop artists in their quest to fulfill their dreams but rejects the lethal language that often lends itself to less than desirable outcomes for our children. More and more, we see some of the negative messages affecting the way young people make decisions about engaging in sexual activity, drug use and using violence as a means to resolve conflict. The self esteem and desire of many young listeners to achieve greatness are being deflated by stereotypes and explicit lyrics in some Hip Hop lyrics.

While I uphold America's fundamental right to freedom of speech and believe that artists have a right to creative expression, a middle ground needs to be sought in order to allow artists to create music without demeaning and degrading others. It is difficult to progress as a community if we never take the time to carefully dissect the influence of Hip Hop on our children.

During my forum, panelists examined whether Hip Hop language is culture, creativity

or crisis, and explored the "Stop Snitchin" phenomenon that has had a negative impact on communities across the nation. This important Issues Forum was a substantial first step toward reaching a solution. The ALC is about fostering positive and creative change, and the Children's Braintrust made great strides toward making our communities safer for our children.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. It gives me great pleasure at this time to yield 3 minutes to the Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, and my great friend and son in the House of Representatives, Congressman KENDRICK MEEK, from the great State of Florida, Miami, Florida.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Thank you so much, Madam Chair. And thank you, Ms. LEE, for saying thank you and showing your appreciation.

I know we have some Members that want to speak, and Madam Chair, I'm going to have to leave the floor soon, so I just want to mention two or three things.

One, I want to thank those great Americans that participated in our conference. And I think that some of the brain trusts that were held, from what I'm hearing from e-mails and telephone calls, were some of the best that we've had. That means hats off to those that put on those brain trusts and issue forums; that means one of the 43 members of the Congressional Black Caucus, individually they were able to do it.

And we were also able to shed light on ''Unleashing Our Power.'' It wasn't just a title of members of the Congressional Black Caucus. It was for those participants, black, white, male and female, that attended the conference, to leave empowered to go back to their State, back to their local community, and even in their own home, and unleash their power as it relates to education, health care, so on and so on.

One thing that I can tell you that was very, very good this year, and we were able to work very hard, is making a lot of young people feel welcome with our Emerging Leaders Initiative. Our apprenticeship program has been a really successful program. We had a lot of people that participated. We had high school students that participated; we had college and recent graduates that came to this conference. And I look forward, Madam Chair, to future years where we can be able to continue to have a successful weekend. This was obviously a large fund-raiser for our scholarship program, for our internship program. These are kids that wouldn't ordinarily have an opportunity to be a part of anything here in Washington, D.C., to serve as interns in Members' offices or committees.

So everything happened the way that it should. There are always things that we can work on to make it better next year. But as it relates to the substance, Madam Chair, I am so pleased that people walked away with more knowledge than when they walked in and were inspired by what they heard. And I took the opportunity to go into Mr. PAYNE's Africa brain trust. Very powerful. He had heads of state come in to address people who needed to know more about the African countries that are there.

So with that, Madam Chair, thank you. I want to thank you. We co-sponsored the ALC a couple of years ago together, co-chaired it. I want to thank you for your leadership, and thank you for hosting this hour.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. I thank you, Mr. Chair. It is always great working with you.

At this time, I would like to yield 4 minutes to my colleague and good friend from the great State of Virginia, Congressman BOBBY SCOTT, who has been a leader in and around so many issues. It is great to yield to you.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. I would like to thank the lady from Ohio for convening this Special Order so that we can talk about the great weekend that we had.

The gentleman from Florida, KENDRICK MEEK, did a tremendous job as chairman of the foundation. CAROLYN CHEEKS KILPATRICK from Michigan did a great job as chairman of the caucus; DONNA CHRISTENSEN from the Virgin Islands and G.K. BUTTERFIELD of North Carolina leading the legislative weekend.

We had dozens of important legislative seminars, foreign affairs, armed services and veterans, transportation, health care, education, housing, social services, financial issues, civil rights, voting rights. Every aspect of legislation that you can imagine, we had the nationally recognized experts. They were open to the public, the public had an opportunity for questions and answers and input. These were great workshops. I participated in four of them. The town hall forum entitled ''The Cradle to Prison Pipeline'' that talked about the unfortunate situation where so many of our young people start off and gradually, slowly but surely, get in trouble, drop out of school and end up in prison, and how with appropriate investments, strategic investments we can change that pipeline to a cradle-to-college pipeline, which is so much better for humanity, so much better for our communities, and that we could do that in a cost effective way.

I participated in a budget forum where we had budget experts talk about the fact that in 1993 we began eliminating the deficit. By the year 2000 we had gone into surplus. And, in fact, in 2001, we had a projected $5.5 trillion surplus over 10 years, and how, unfortunately, over the last few years we have converted that $5.5 trillion surplus to a $3 trillion deficit, a swing of $8.5 trillion. And how, with appropriate changes and some of the changes we're trying to make in Congress today, we can change that back to where we have the surplus and save Social Security, invest in health care, education and other important investments.

We had a great workshop on education with the education brain trust. We had one session on desegregation of schools and how, notwithstanding the Seattle and Louisville cases, we can still, with a little hard work, make sure those schools are desegregated.

We focused on the importance of early childhood education and the elementary and secondary education and Higher Education Act. We were able to make sure that we invested appropriately in education to make sure that we have a better community.

We also had another workshop on the judiciary, juvenile justice and the importance of making the choice between reducing crime and playing politics. We need to make sure that we reduce crime. You were very active in law school admissions, to make sure that law schools' admissions policy was not discriminatory.

Great workshops, judiciary, education, budget. The other important workshops. It was a great educational weekend.

Madam Chair, I would like to thank you for your hard work and leadership and also the ability to bring us together so that we could discuss the great work that was done over the weekend.

Thank you very much, and I yield back.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Thank you to the gentleman from Virginia for his comments.

It gives me great pleasure at this time to have the opportunity to yield 3½ minutes to my colleague and good friend from the great State of New Jersey, who serves on the International Relations Committee and is just a leader in the international arena, my colleague and good friend, DONALD PAYNE.

Mr. PAYNE. Let me thank you again for your great work, Congresswoman JONES, she does a fantastic job, and for all of the leaders that you have heard mentioned. And I would like to commend Dr. Elsie Scott for really bringing the foundation forward. Of course, our chairperson MEEKS and KILPATRICK and G.K. BUTTERFIELD and CHRISTENSEN.

Let me also commend our speaker pro tempore this evening for the great work that YVETTE CLARKE, a new Member from Brooklyn, who has come into this House and has brought vitality and excitement. And we know that she will do an outstanding job as she moves that district forward. It's a great pleasure to have you with us.

Let me just say that I dealt with three areas, BOBBY SCOTT, DANNY DAVIS and our brain trust on education. Then I had the Head Start part. Then we had two other workshops and brain trusts, one, ''We Don't Do February.'' And that is about integrating African American history into the regular curriculum so that when we hear about Patrick Henry and Nathan Hale, we will hear about Crispus Attucks and Peter Salem. When we hear about the Rough Riders, we will know about the

Buffalo Soldiers. So the Amistad Committee of New Jersey is integrating African history into the regular textbooks.

Then, of course, as you all know, we deal with the Africa brain trust, the theme, ''The New Africa: Opportunities and Challenges,'' President Wade of Senegal and former President Obasanjo of Nigeria, and Under Secretary Henrietta Fore, Ambassador Ali, AU Ambassador to the U.S. And we had Dr. Adasena, who was representing Kofi Annan's new group on the ''Greening of Africa.'' And Ambassador Lyman, former Ambassador from the U.S. to South Africa and Nigeria. And Dr. Juma from Harvard talking about education.

So we really had standing room only. I recall 19 years ago, when I started the brain trust, we had a difficult time. We used to run in the halls and just drag people, beg them to come in. Now, unless you're there before 9 o'clock, you're not going to get a seat. So it shows that the Congressional Black Caucus, the constituency for Africa has grown very strong, and the members of the caucus are so supportive of the efforts we're doing, not only in Africa but in the Caribbean. And in Latin America, where Afro-Latinos are saying we want our share, too. We have, in Brazil now, an affirmative action program where in their colleges, they will have to admit the qualified blacks who've been ignored, and in Columbia.

So we have seen in the ''hands across the ocean,'' as I often say, that the blood that connects us is much thicker than the water that separates us.

So with that, I will yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Thank you, Congressman PAYNE, from the great State of New Jersey.

I am going to close out this hour and take these last couple minutes. One of the things that you make a mistake about when you leave a Special Order is you yield to everybody, and you forget to talk about your own workshops. So very quickly, I am going to talk about the two workshops that I did. The first one was ''African American Athletes: Roles, Representation, and Expectations.'' It was a wonderful opportunity where I had the opportunity to host Jim Brown, the former Cleveland Browns player, renowned athlete, to talk about things he has been doing around outreach and mentoring. I had Keven Davis, a partner at Garvey, Schubert & Barer, who provided an overview of how African American athletes are represented in financial transactions. Carlos Flemming, a VP of IMG, who represents Venus and Serena Williams. Everett Glenn, the president and CEO of Entertainment & Sports Plus, who is an agent. Ken Harvey, president and CEO of JAKA Consulting, a former NFL player and a representative. Jacquelyn Nance, who is the executive director of the LeBron James Family Foundation. And finally, William Rhoden, who is the author of ''Forty Million Dollar Slaves,'' and is a sportswriter for the New York Times. And I particularly want to thank him for taking care of the workshop while I was required to be here on the floor voting on some other issues. It was a great opportunity, and we talked about a lot of issues around African American athletes.

My second forum was focused on the declining enrollment of African Americans in law schools across the Nation. My panel consisted of Christopher Johnson of General Motors; Vanita Banks, the president-elect of the National Bar Association; John Nussbaumer, associate dean of Thomas Cooley Law School; Dwayne Murray, the Grand Polemarch of Kappa Alpha Psi; John Brittain, a lawyer from the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights; Karen Weaver, associate dean for academic affairs and diversity; and Pauline Schneider, on behalf of the ABA. She's at Orrick & Harrington.

And the quick issue around law schools is that African Americans do have a decline in enrollment and that ABA is responsible for accreditation.

So with that, Madam Speaker, I want to yield back my time and say thank you to Speaker PELOSI for giving the CBC this Special Order to focus on the ALC weekend. It's not a party; it's a legislative conference with great import for all people across the country.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, last week the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation held its 2007 Annual Legislative Conference.

Each year, I have convened the Science and Technology Braintrust. The Braintrust is a discussion forum aimed at bringing together America's brightest minds to share idea on how to diversify our science and technology workforce.

I have remained committed to hosting this Braintrust each year, because I believe that engaging young people in the fields of science and technology is one of the most important things we can do for the future success of America.

With India and China producing more than five times the number of engineers, computer scientists and information technology professions in 2005 than we did, our nation is losing its competitive edge.

The Sciene Committee ushered through a $33.6 billion package of Innovation policies that are designed to help early career researchers, better train math and science teachers, and encourage industry and universities to partner with local high schools to improve science instruction.

Having a dialogue with students and with the science education community is another way to exchange ideas and assess the needs of our population.

My Braintrust consisted of two panels. The first panel consisted of high-level individuals who have risen to great heights in technology and engineering fields. They provided an executive perspective of the educational experiences that are needed for tomorrow's high-tech graduate to be globally competitive.

Panel 2 featured bright, innovative minds from individuals who work with technology in unique ways. The goal was to convince everyone here that a career in math, science or engineering can be fulfilling, challenging and fun.

Madam Speaker, more than 150 local, African American high school students attended my Braintrust, and many of them participated in the discussion by interacting directly with the panelists.

It is my feeling that a few hearts and minds were changed that day, in the Science Committee hearing room. If only one student was influenced toward a career in science, technology, engineering or mathematics, I will be satisfied. This focus has been a major goal of my work as an elected official.

In the 1990s, we responded to the digital age with breakthroughs in computer science and information technology.

Tomorrow's greatest challenge will be to meet the needs of the Innovation Age. We must compete at a global level.

CONGRESSWOMAN EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON'S SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY BRAINTRUST—EDUCATION AND SKILLS NEEDED FOR THE DIGITAL TO INNOVATION AGE

PANEL ONE

EDUCATION AND SKILLS FOR TOMORROW'S HIGH-TECH GRADUATE:

THE EXECUTIVE PERSPECTIVE

Moderator: Sam Ford, Reporter, ABC7/WJLA-TV

Panelists: Dr. Samuel Metters, CEO, Metter Industries, Inc. Mr. Scott Mills, President, BET Networks. Dr. Cheryl Shavers, CEO, Global Smarts, Inc. Mr. John Thompson, Sr. VP and General Manager, BestBuy.com.

PANEL TWO

INNOVATORS AT THE CUTTING EDGE

Moderator: Derek Lloyd, Professor and Senior Network Systems Engineer, Howard University.

Panelists: Ms. Lyn Stanfield, Strategic Relations Manager, Apple Inc. Mr. Darrell Davis, Director, DEA South Central Laboratory. Mr. Rob Garza and Mr. Eric Hilton, Thievery Corporation band. Dr. Anna McGowan, Manager, NASA Langley.

NEW FISCAL YEAR

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. It is such a pleasure to come to the floor tonight as we start a new fiscal year for the U.S. Government.

A new year is a time where you get to look back at what happened last year, where you get to redirect your focus and talk about what your priorities are going to be and the goals that you want to set.

□ 2045

Now, we all do that with our families as we get to the end of the calendar year and start the new calendar year in January. It is a time that we enjoy.

I hope for each of us, as Members of the House, as we start this fiscal year, that we will put some attention on what we spend and how we spend.

Now, Madam Speaker, over the weekend, I had the opportunity to do a town hall with some of my constituents. We

got together yesterday afternoon after church over lunch. One of them said, ''Do you know, I have been reading Alan Greenspan's book. My goodness, it is amazing to me, absolutely amazing to me what Congress spends, how much money they spend. It is amazing to me that we have seen this debt skyrocket through the '70s, through the '80s and begin to level off through the '90s but still continue to grow. It is amazing to me that decisions are made that grow that debt. It is amazing to me that earmarks are out of control. Explain earmarks.''

My constituent posed this question before the group because, like so many, once he looked at the issue, he realized that every time we grow a program, every time some new program comes along, every time Congress stands and says, ''We must meet this need,'' that there are two costs to that program. Of course, there is the dollars cost, and then there is also the opportunity cost, because if Government steps in and meets that need, the private or not-for-profit sector is not going to step in and meet that need. So my constituent posed this for the group to talk about. I said, ''What a great discussion to have. This is the last day of the fiscal year for the U.S. Government. Tomorrow is a new day. They turn a page in the book and start a new slate with the new budget.''

Now, my constituent said that he would have loved to have seen the U.S. Government get to the end of the year and brag about how much money they had saved. But in reality, he knows that probably there is going to be more bragging done about special projects that go back home to the district in the form of earmarks.

So we talked a little bit yesterday, Madam Speaker, about priorities, about earmarks and about how earmarks came to be. When communities have trouble coming in and going through the process, they will say, ''Oh, can you help us, Member of Congress, to get this set aside in the bill? Can you help us to find this money?'' Quite frankly, Madam Speaker, we all know not all earmarks are bad. It is the abuse of earmarks that are bad. As I came back this afternoon, I found on my desk a copy of Congressional Quarterly Weekly. You can find this at cq.com if someone wants to pull it up. In the article, they are citing that there were 7,000 specific House-passed earmarks in just eight of the bills. There were 500 sought by the White House; roughly 1,000 were identified with more than one sponsor. That left 5,670 earmarks worth a combined $44.2 billion, each linked with a single House Member. And then it goes on and talks a little bit about how many and how much are here in the earmarks game and a little bit about who gets what. But it is the process and the abuse of that earmark process that has our constituents confused, frustrated and, rightfully, a little bit angry.

We know that many of us have pushed for greater transparency in this earmark process. We have pushed for changes, for knowing what is taking place in our earmarks so that people know what is in those bills when they come to the House floor, so that it is easy to find, to pair it up, to know who is asking for what, where it is going to be located or what program it is going to go to, and then how much of the taxpayer money is being spent.

Madam Speaker, it is not our money. It is not government's money. It is the taxpayers' money. So like my constituent who posed the question yesterday, ''Tell me how much you are spending and how you go about spending it and explain these earmarks,'' those are questions that, yes, indeed, they have the right to ask, and we as Members of Congress should be answering those questions and discussing what is in those bills, what is in those appropriations bills, and what we find in those earmarks.

Now, I will have to say that this is a year when we have started our fiscal year on what is called a continuing resolution, and we passed that last year. I will say that the new majority did a good job of bringing a fairly clean continuing resolution before us so that we were running today, so that we didn't have to shut government down. What the continuing resolution basically does is it takes last year's funding numbers and rolls them forward. A lot of people would like to see us hold everything at exactly the same spending level it was. That is not all bad. But the new majority was not able to get one single spending bill through both Houses and to the President to be signed, so that is why we are operating on the continuing resolution.

We have seemed to have time to talk about global warming and pass bills pertaining to global warming or conservation. We have named post offices. We have expanded programs. We have passed billions in new authorizations and new spending. But we did not get the budget done, so we are on a concurrent resolution.

It is our new fiscal year. We are going to spend a little bit of time tonight talking about how we spend that money and looking at what takes place through this earmark process and why we, as Republicans, and why we, as members of the Republican Study Committee, are continuing our push for earmark transparency and earmark reform.

Madam Speaker, at this time, I would like to yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HENSARLING) who is chairman of the Republican Study Committee, and I yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. HENSARLING. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, I certainly appreciate the gentlewoman's leadership at the Republican Study Committee, Congress's conservative caucus. It is a very timely issue that we are discussing today since, indeed, today is the first day of the fiscal year for the Federal Government. I think for many of us it is easy to sum up the actions of the new Democrat majority; that is, they spend too much and they tax too much. It bodes ill for the future of our Nation.

I think that it is important that we step back for a moment and figure out just how much of the people's money is being spent. And it is the people's money. It is not the government's money. It is the people's money. Today, right now, the last figure I saw is that the Federal Government is now spending $23,289 per family of four. This is just about the highest level that has been spent since World War II. Since I have been on the face of the planet, since I was born, the Federal budget has grown four to five times faster than the family budget. Ultimately, it is the family budget that has to pay for that. Since we have been in this 110th Congress with the new Democrat majority, rarely does a day go by that there is not a new opportunity to begin a new government program on top of the roughly 10,000 Federal programs spread across 600 agencies that already exist. It kind of begs the question: How much government is enough? Because we know that as government grows, our freedoms and our opportunities contract. This is supposed to be the land of opportunity. This is supposed to be the land of freedom. Yet, all we do under this new Democrat majority rule is add program after program after program.

Madam Speaker, unfortunately all of this new spending imposes a new tax burden on the American people. In the budget that the Democrat majority passed, they included in it the single highest tax increase in American history. When fully implemented over a 5-year period, this budget will impose approximately $3,000 of additional taxes on the average American family. Now, every single day we come to this floor and we debate. And our friends on the other side of the aisle, the Democrats, want to talk about great investments in education, great investments in housing, and great investments in nutrition that they are going to use all this money for. Well, the challenge is, though, that every time that they increase some Federal budget, they are having to decrease some family budget to take it, and right now to the tune of $3,000 per American family.

Madam Speaker, I often hear from people in the Fifth District of Texas that I represent. I take great pride in representing these people who have entrusted me with their representation in Congress. I hear from people like the Flores family in Garland, Texas. I heard this lady say, ''I am a divorced mother with a child in college and a child in day care. An increase in taxes of this magnitude would wipe out hope of the first college graduate in the family. Don't let this happen. Let's hold the budget down.''

So, again, what we have here is the Democrats are taking money away

from a family budget in order to give it to some Federal budget. We are not always debating how much money we are going to spend on these items, but we are debating who is going to do the spending. Democrats in Washington want the bureaucrats in Washington to do the spending. Republicans want families to do the spending, the people who actually roll up their sleeves and work hard. They work hard trying to make ends meet. They have got decisions that they have to make around the kitchen table. And this is just one example. I hear from lots of my constituents.

I heard from the Lopez family in Mesquite, ''I would like to let you know that if our taxes are increased, this may mean that we could not continue to finance our child's education.'' I heard from the Winters family in Tennessee Colony, ''Stop the wasteful spending. I am retired and disabled. I am raising three grandchildren. Sometimes I can't afford my own medicine.'' And here we are, this new Democrat majority wants to take $3,000 a year away from these hardworking families to fuel their budget, not these families' budgets, but the Federal budget.

Now, ultimately, though, it is not just the tax increase that we see right over the horizon that is so challenging. It is what is going to happen to future generations. And rarely does a day occur that somebody doesn't come to the floor and talk about the need to help the least of these. Well, I often think that the least of these are those who cannot vote and those yet to be born. They don't seem to have a say-so in this great debate that we are having today.

For example, don't take my word for it, but all this spending that we have seen in Washington, here is the result. Don't take my word for it, but we, right now, are literally on the verge of doing something to the next generation that has never been done before: imposing such a draconian economic burden on them, something that has never been done before, that according to the Comptroller General, the chief fiduciary officer in America, we are on the verge of being the very first generation in America's history to leave the next generation with a lower standard of living.

□ 2100

As the father of a 5-year-old and a 4-year-old, I will not sit idly by and let that happen.

Again, Mr. Speaker, don't take my word for it. Listen to the words of our Chairman of the Federal Reserve, who said: ''Without early and meaningful action to address Federal spending, the U.S. economy could be seriously weakened, with future generations bearing much of the cost.''

Listen to the GAO, the General Accountability Office. They talk about government spending, particularly entitlement spending as a ''fiscal cancer'' that threatens ''catastrophic consequences for our country and could bankrupt America.''

Listen to the famous economist, Robert Samuelson, who writes frequently in newspapers all across the Nation. He says: ''The rising cost of government retirement programs could either increase taxes or budget deficits so much that they could reduce economic growth, and this could trigger an economic and political death spiral.''

The Congressional Budget Office, the Office of Management and Budget, the General Accountability Office, the liberal Brookings Institution, the conservative Heritage Foundation, they all agree that spending is out of control: And what is going to happen is in the next generation either the Federal Government will consist of nothing to speak of but Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security; or you're going to have to double taxes on our children and grandchildren just to balance the budget.

Now we see that hurricane coming over the horizon, we see it coming towards us, and yet this Democrat majority every single day adds to the problem. Just last week the Democrat majority took an insurance program, the National Flood Insurance Program, that is already going broke, was supposed to be self-sustaining through premiums, it's $20 billion in the red, and they add additional coverage to it that could expose the taxpayer to $17 trillion, $17 trillion of new liability in just one program alone.

So that is why it's so important that we start tackling the pennies and the nickels and the dimes, because we are talking about the priorities of American families, we are talking about their opportunities, we are talking about their ability to send their children to college, we are talking about their ability to save that nest egg, to launch their version of the American Dream and start their new business. We are talking about their ability to pay for their health insurance premiums.

Again, Mr. Speaker, every time you increase the Federal budget, you're having to decrease some family budget. I just often wonder when will the madness stop. When will we finally figure out that this isn't investment in the future, that is divesting our children's future by spending all of this money? The Federal budget should not be allowed to grow beyond the family budget's ability to pay for it.

That is why conservatives in the Republican Study Committee, the House Conservative Caucus, support a limitation on the growth of the Federal Government, to force Congress to decide amongst some of these priorities among these competing 10,000 Federal programs. Mr. Speaker, I defy any man, woman or child in America to tell me what they all do; 10,000 of them. It reminds me of what President Reagan once said: ''There is nothing as close to eternal life on Earth as a Federal program.'' They all cost money, and they take away from our children's future.

So that is why I am so happy that members of the Republican Study Committee have gathered here this evening to talk about the challenges of spending for the future generations and to get together to ensure that we let the American people know that we are working to hold the line on spending, to bring more accountability, to bring more transparency, to try to stave off this tax increase of $3,000 per American family, and that's for the families today. And we are fighting just as hard, if not harder, to ensure that the children and grandchildren of today's taxpayers are not saddled with a doubling of their taxation so that they would see a lower standard of living. That is not the America that we grew up in. That is not the moral obligation we have. We cannot be that first generation in America's history to leave the next generation with a lower standard of living.

That is why I am happy to join my fellow members of the Republic Study Committee who have come here to debate this important subject tonight. I especially want to thank the gentlewoman from Tennessee for her leadership in this hour.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas for his remarks. He does such a wonderful job in directing the activities of the Republican Study Committee. You can find out a little bit more about the Republican Study Committee going into Mr. HENSARLING's Web site, House.gov/Hensarling, and enter in ''Republican Study Committee.'' It will take you there to some of our activity and the work we are doing.

We also have a little ''money monitor'' that we use every single week, update it, to show you what the majority in the House is spending, show you how this is going to affect your budget. As he said, the priority is the family budget, to be certain that families have the opportunity to decide how and when they want to spend their money.

As the gentleman from Texas said, unfortunately, since World War II what we have seen is the Federal budget has grown four to five times faster than the family budget. The Federal budget growing four to five times faster than the family budget. That is exactly opposite of what our Founding Fathers would want.

I hope that my colleagues across the aisle will join us, join with us as we fight the growth of this budget, as we fight the growth of spending. When it is a new fiscal year, it is a good time to sit down and review this and say, okay, when we get to the end of the fiscal year, what do we want to look back and say we accomplished? Wouldn't it be a great thing if we were to say this is what we were able to save, this is how we were able to find ways to reduce the size and cut what government spends? So we invite our friend across the aisle to come over and join us and work on this issue.

I would like at this time to yield to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr.

PRICE), who has been a stalwart in working on the earmark issues, the earmark reform, and a real leader in the push for earmark reform, greater transparency and more fiscal accountability from the House.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend from Tennessee for yielding and for her leadership on this issue, and I am pleased to join my friend from Texas, as well as my good friend from North Carolina, who is yet to come. I appreciate her bringing great focus to this issue, because, Mr. Speaker, if the casual observer were to give you a description of what they thought was going on here in Washington, they would say, Oh, well, they are being much more responsible. They are not spending as much money as they have in the past. All sorts of wonderful things are happening. They would say so because this new majority has captured what I have called ''Orwellian democracy.'' They are talking the talk, Mr. Speaker, but they are not walking the walk.

So I appreciate my friend from Tennessee for taking the leadership and making certain that we bring focus to what truly is happening here in Washington under this new leadership.

Our good friends on the other side of the aisle, as you say, this is the first day of the new fiscal year. It is a great opportunity to look back and see what has happened over the last fiscal year that they have been in charge and to look forward. But if what has happened to date is any harbinger of what is to come in the future, Mr. Speaker, we have got real problems, because, as you know, Mr. Speaker, not a single appropriations bill of the 12 annual appropriations bills has made it to the President's desk yet, and we are done with the last fiscal year. The new fiscal year has begun today.

They didn't make it to the President's desk because this new majority has picked up right where they left off when they were last in the majority back in 1994 with more taxing and more spending. It is the spending that has our attention tonight, and through so many different areas.

This new majority is interested in spending over $23 billion in new money, new Federal money, and that is just the beginning. That is just the beginning. That is what they have appropriated, not what they have authorized to be spent, which is truly hundreds of billions of dollars. But $23 billion is what separates responsible spending from the new majority, which is why we haven't gotten any of the appropriations bills to the President's desk and signed.

What we are talking about tonight is a portion of all of that, and that is the issue of earmarks, the issue of special projects, the issue of spending that gets into bills, oftentimes late at night and oftentimes behind closed doors; little projects that one Member or two in Congress make certain are inserted into bills. It is an earmark process, it is a special project process that we on our side, when we were in the majority recognized, albeit a little late, but recognized that it had significant potential for huge abuse. Some of our former colleagues, in fact, have different residences right now because of that abuse. They violated the law and were held to account.

So what we did as a majority before the end of last year was to pass a rule that said that all earmarks, all special projects, had to be disclosed. Whether they were in tax bills, whether they were in authorizing bills or whether they were in appropriations bills, every one of them had to be disclosed: who asked for it and how much did they ask for.

Mr. Speaker, that makes a lot of sense, doesn't it? It is called sunshine. Sunshine for earmarks, we called it. It is what the American people desire. It is what the American people deserve. It is what my constituents home in Georgia say that is what we want. We want to know who is asking for these things.

We instituted this program. One would have thought, given the talk that we heard from this new majority, that when they took over that would have been one of those commonsense reforms they would have continued. That would have made a whole lot of sense.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, as you know, that is not what happened. In fact, there was to be no disclosure of individuals who requested earmarks, as my friend from Tennessee knows; and we fought, Republicans fought tooth and nail to make certain that disclosure occurred in appropriations bills before any were passed. This happened in May and June of this year.

Finally, finally, the new majority relented and said, Okay, we will allow for disclosure of who is asking for those earmarks, but that is not true for authorizing bills or tax bills. So what we see in these bills, as my friend from Texas cited, is these projects that get pushed into these bills that have special rewards for certain Members of Congress and their districts. We see it in all sorts of bills.

Mr. Speaker, as you will remember, last week we passed in this House of Representatives the SCHIP bill, the State Children's Health Insurance Program bill. One wouldn't think that you would need to sway Members' votes on that from a majority standpoint. Just let the bill stand or fall on its merits. The issue of those merits is another debate. But what we saw in that bill were earmarks, special projects for Members on the majority side to sway their vote.

Mr. Speaker, that is not what my constituents want; it is not what the American people want.

That might not even be so bad if they were disclosed, if people knew what was happening; if the Member had to stand in this Chamber before his or her colleagues and offer the justification for those programs, if they would stand before their constituents at home and offer justification for those programs.

But one of the things that really gets in the craw of my constituents, and I know those of my good friend from Tennessee, is the arrogance with which this new majority has fashioned these programs, the incredible arrogance, once again, saying one thing and doing another.

As my friend from Tennessee, Mrs. BLACKBURN stated, you can get this kind of information at CQ.com, Mr. Speaker, if you like. You may not have seen it. I would ask you to look it up.

They had an article today, as a matter of fact, asking: ''Do you want to know how your tax dollars are being spent in Washington?'' And the response is: ''Tough (expletive).'' They are quoting a very powerful Member of the majority party.

That is what is so distressing, Mr. Speaker. There is an arrogance about this majority. There is an arrogance that exceeds anything that anybody has ever seen in this Chamber, and there is a culture of excessive Washington spending that I believe the American people are sick and tired of.

So when you see this kind of activity going on in the committees, in the authorizing committees and in the tax committees and in the appropriations committees, where Members of this Congress are attempting to hide from their constituents and from other Members of Congress what is in these bills, who is asking for it, how much money and how do I identify it, and when a reporter in fact asks a very senior Member of the majority party how to find out ''how much money for which projects are in this bill,'' that Member of Congress says, ''Tough (expletive).''

□ 2115

Mr. Speaker, that is not befitting of this House. That is not befitting of the institution that you and I were elected to hold a seat in. That is not befitting of the responsibilities that our constituents desire us to have when we come to this House of Representatives.

So what is the solution? Mr. Speaker, the solution at this point in time for this issue is H. Res. 479. We have a resolution that we would like to get debated on this floor, to have a debate on this floor that says just what we have talked about, to disclose who is asking for these special projects, who is asking for these earmarks, whether it is in appropriation bills, authorizing bills or tax bills. It is a resolution that sits in one of the committees controlled by the majority side. There is an opportunity for all Members of this House to say we ought to be voting on that. It is called a discharge petition. There we have 193 Members who signed to bring that resolution to the floor and debate it and vote on it. It takes 218, which is the majority here. So it is going to take some Democrats. So 193 Members have signed that discharge petition. Not a single Democrat has signed that discharge petition.

So, Mr. Speaker, I challenge my colleagues on the other side of the aisle who said during their campaign and even come to the floor of this Chamber and say now: We want earmarks disclosed. We want people to know who has been asking for these special projects. So sign the discharge petition, and it will give us a great opportunity to debate this issue on the floor of the house during a legislative session, during a time when we are talking about adopting legislation and making certain that sunshine is present for earmarks.

So I want to commend my friend from Tennessee for her leadership on this issue, for bringing this issue into focus, and for making certain that we fight day in and day out on behalf of the American taxpayer whose money it is that we are given the responsibility for.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Georgia so very much. We have started our new fiscal year, and the new majority was not able to get one single spending bill to the President's desk, so we do operate on a continuing resolution.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, some of us who want to reduce what the Federal Government spends, holding the spending at last year's level is not such a bad idea. We kind of like doing that. But for a new majority who said we are going to have transparency and openness, to come in and continue to spend more and more and more, not less, but more. More of the taxpayers' money, putting more of it into earmarks.

The gentleman referenced the cq.com article which referenced 7,000 earmarks in eight bills; 5,670 of those earmarks with a combined worth of $4.2 billion linked to individual House Members. And the concern with that, as my constituent said, how much you spend and how you spend it and concern over the earmarks.

You know, we have seen quite a bit of hypocrisy from the new leadership. As the gentleman from Georgia said, we do have House Resolution 479. This is something people can go on and pull up on the Internet and take a look at it. We are trying to get that voted on, forcing the transparency issue and restoring those rules that we passed last year to make certain that an individual's name is there, that you can find what individuals are earmarking, not trying to hide this, but you can find it and know who is asking for what in that budget.

We have 193 signatures on the discharge petition so we can force it out of committee, force it to the floor, and force a debate for the American people so they know what is going to be spent here in the House.

I encourage our Members to take a look at that legislation and to come join us on this first day of the new fiscal year. Again, I encourage our colleagues from the other side of the aisle to embrace the issue of reducing what the Federal Government spends, to embrace transparency in these earmarks, and to work for earmark reform, to join us in continuing to work for earmark reform.

Mr. Speaker, I want to yield to Dr. VIRGINIA FOXX from North Carolina who certainly has conservative credentials and understands so very clearly how to work with earmarks, how to work with Federal budgeting and making certain that we remain true to our conservative principles as we address our Federal budget issues.

Ms. FOXX. I am very grateful to you, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. HENSARLING and Mr. PRICE. I was enjoying listening to you all speak about this issue and helping to educate the American people about what we are dealing with here, particularly as it relates to the numbers that Congressman HENSARLING is so good at doing.

It probably won't surprise anybody that a September Gallup Poll revealed that Americans' trust in the Federal Government is at a low ebb. Today, most Americans trust the Federal Government less than they did during the Watergate scandal. At the same time, a new Reuter's poll found that Congress has an all-time low approval rating of 11 percent.

I am extraordinarily proud to represent the Fifth Congressional District of North Carolina in the Congress. I am not proud that is the way that Americans feel, though, about the Congress of the United States. I think there are many reasons that people feel that way about the Congress. I think that one of the main reasons that people feel that way is because last year the Democrats who ran for office and who became the new majority in this Congress after 12 years made a lot of promises.

Republicans were not perfect in the 12 years they were in control of the Congress. Lots of mistakes were made. Republicans, some Republicans, forgot their way, lost their way and strayed from the conservative principles that got them into the majority.

Democrats promised they would be different. They would run the most bipartisan, most fiscally conservative Congress that had ever been seen. They promised lots and lots of things, and they have broken all of those promises. That's why I think that the attitude toward the American people is so negative toward the Congress these days. They are disappointed.

You know, as children we are brought up to believe the promises that are made to us. I think one of the greatest disappointments people have is when they are promised something, particularly by their elected officials, and then the elected officials break those promises. I think that is what has happened.

What we are seeing here is, time after time, things that the Democrats said in the campaign last year, they have gone back on. I am going to give one quote here from Speaker PELOSI from 9–16–06 at a news conference: ''We have to have the fullest possible disclosure, and it has to be on earmarks in appropriations, in authorizations and in taxation. And it has to be across the board, with no escape hatches.''

In fact, what has happened is the Republicans had to take the Democrats kicking and screaming into revealing what their earmarks were. In fact, I was here on the floor with an amendment on the floor for 22 hours back in June when we were dealing with the homeland security bill to say to the Democrats: It is time you lived up to your promise. You've got to disclose these earmarks.

They had planned not to disclose any of those earmarks until after the bills were passed, and then they were going to publish them in the month of August and let people try to figure out where the earmarks were. So I think, again, a major part of the problem that we are having with the attitude of the American people towards Congress is they are disappointed in us.

Republicans last year passed legislation that made all of our earmarks transparent. There are differences of opinion on whether we should have earmarks or not. I think the Constitution gives us not just the right but the responsibility to spend money the way we think it should be spent through the Congress. That is our responsibility. However, everything should be transparent. Everything should be out there.

If I ask for special project money, I should be proud enough of that money to say where it is going. But not everybody wants to do that. What the Democrats have done is they have hidden their earmarks in legislation. We finally were able to force them into revealing earmarks in appropriations bills, but not even in all appropriations bills have they disclosed them.

Reference has been made tonight to earmarks in the SCHIP bill last week. Every time a bill passes this House practically, we find there are earmarks buried in those bills written in such a way it is very difficult to discern where those earmarks are.

Republicans don't believe in that. We believe if you are going to have earmarks, they need to be transparent, and I think that is the direction in which we should be going. And I believe doing that will help the American people feel better toward what the Congress is doing, and we need to build trust with the American people in order for us to be able to do the work we need to do.

But what the Democrats have been doing is trading earmarks for votes. Again, it seems impossible to think that with the majority they have they would need to do that, but they have been doing it. What they are doing is taking taxpayer money, money that we confiscate from the taxpayers of this country, and then spend it on projects that we think are projects that should be funded. We don't need to be doing that, and we particularly don't need to be doing that unless we are willing to show exactly where we are doing it.

What is happening is, again, we forced them to say we are going to do it on appropriations bills, but they still have not agreed to do them on authorizing bills or on tax bills. But we have to have that. We have to have transparency and truth in all of the legislation that we have passing out of this House.

I support the discharge petition that has been signed. I was one of the first people to come here and sign that discharge petition. It is going to be very difficult, but we are going to be putting the Democrats who call themselves the Blue Dogs, call themselves conservatives, this is going to be a defining moment for them. Are you really a conservative or are you just a tax-and-spend liberal who tries to fool the people in your district that are conservative when you don't put your name on the line to bring these bills up so that we can see exactly how you are going to vote on them. You can talk a good game, but the real point is: Are you willing to vote for this legislation? Are you willing to sign a discharge petition? And so far none have been willing to do that.

We are on the first day of a new fiscal year, and we have a reckoning with the American people. No appropriations bills have passed the Congress this year. We are operating on a continuing resolution. I agree, a continuing resolution that keeps spending at last year's level is better than increasing spending. But the Democratic majority have not lived up to their promises. They have broken every single one. It is time we call them to account.

I want to thank Congresswoman BLACKBURN for leading this hour tonight and for bringing this matter to the public yet again, because I think taking care of this matter of earmarks, taking care of this pork barrel spending is something that the American people want us to do, and it is high time we did it.

□ 2130

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from North Carolina, and she is precisely on target with her remarks.

A year ago, we had some of the senior House Democrats that joined us Republicans in calling for earmark reform in Congress, saying new transparency rules should apply to all earmarks, not just on appropriations bills, but on tax bills, on authorizing bills, transparency for all earmarks of any kind. And House Republicans later delivered those reforms last year when we were still in the majority.

But now that we have the new Democrat majority, they have retreated from those promises. They've gutted the reforms implemented by the Republicans, and they are denying Members the ability to have a full debate on those earmarks.

As the gentlewoman from North Carolina said, this is so unfortunate that this is what they're doing in the House because the people do expect better from us, and as she said, there were promises that were made and there are promises that have been broken.

I want to yield once again to the gentleman from Texas, our Republican Study Committee chairman, Mr. HENSARLING for a few more comments on the earmark issue.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlelady for yielding, and earmarks are a very important part of the debate about spending in Washington, D.C. We know that the people are overtaxed and are overtaxed because Washington spends too much.

Now, some people say, well, earmarks are just a small portion of the Federal budget. You know, that may be true, but Mr. Speaker, if you look closely at the numbers today under this Democrat leadership, more money is being spent on congressional earmarks than it is the entirety of our veterans health care system. Now, that's a travesty. This body should be ashamed of that fact, that more money is going to these congressional earmarks than they are going for our veterans health care system. There are still needs in that system, but instead, under this Democrat leadership, the earmark machine continues to roll.

Now, when they became the majority party, they claimed they would do better. In fact, our Speaker, Speaker PELOSI, was quoted as saying she would just as soon do without earmarks; though, I've noticed in the latest copy of Congressional Quarterly Weekly she's in the top 10 out of 435 Members when it comes to digging in the trough for more pork, for more congressional earmarks.

Now, people understand that earmarks too often represent a triumph of seniority over merit. Too often they represent a triumph of secrecy over transparency, and too often they represent a triumph of special interest over the public interest.

Now, again, I'm not here to say that all earmarks are bad, but the process is broken. The Democrats claimed they would clean it up, but instead, they've created huge new loopholes in the system.

If you want to go on a pork lean diet, you just can't cut out the sausage. You've got to cut out the bacon and the ham as well, and so when people hear about appropriation earmarks and authorizing earmarks and tax earmarks, what they need to know is what the majority said they were going to do and what they did are two different things.

So I wish I were eloquent enough to have thought of this myself, but to quote a colleague on the Senate side, Senator TOM COBURN of Oklahoma, Earmarks are the gateway drug to spending addiction. And that's why this fight is so important, and it's so disappointing when the Democrats, in some cases rightfully, criticized the Republicans in the last Congress, but we cleaned up the system. At a bare minimum, we brought transparency and accountability to the system, and they've rolled that back.

Now, it was mentioned earlier on the floor this evening that one of the first acts the Democrats had, they asked the entire House of Representatives to pass massive spending bills. They would hide in them earmarks and only later would they be revealed what the House voted on. Thankfully, under the Republicans, we came to the floor and we brought transparency to the debate, and the Democrats were forced to reverse themselves. So at least on a small portion of earmarks, known as the appropriations earmarks, there is at least a modicum of transparency now.

We need to have that great disinfectant of sunshine brought on to this system because earmarks are the gateway drug to spending addiction. They create the culture of spending, and we'll never be able to protect the family budget from the Federal budget until we deal with that culture of spending.

Earmarks, again by definition, have nothing to do with merit. They take merit, they take competition, they take competitive bidding out of the process, and instead what happens is senior Members, typically in smoke-filled rooms in the back of the Capitol, are somehow able to arrange these special earmarks.

Most recently, under the Democrat leadership, there was something like 30 Members of Congress managed to get a special funding stream for hospitals in their district that no one else, no other hospital in America was able to receive. Again, a triumph of seniority over merit, a triumph of secrecy over transparency.

It has to do with the culture of spending, and if we're going to save the next generation from having a lower standard of living than we have because we are on a pathway right now just with the government we have to double taxes in the next generation, unconscionable, immoral, and yet the Democrat leadership continues with this culture of spending.

The earmark machine is alive and well as represented by the cover story right here, Mr. Speaker, in Congressional Quarterly Weekly. I wish every American could read that to see what is happening in this earmark process.

Every time some Member of Congress comes to the floor requesting a new earmark, guess where that money is coming from, Mr. Speaker. Either they're taking it out of the Social Security trust fund, robbing seniors of the hard-earned money that they put into it, or it's going to be part of this $3,000 a year tax increase that the Democrats put into their budget, the single largest tax increase in American history. Or if they choose not to tax it, there's only one other thing they can do, Mr. Speaker, pass on the debt to our children and grandchildren.

And that's why I appreciate the gentlewoman from Tennessee. I appreciate

all the members of the Republican Study Committee coming to the floor tonight to add more transparency to this earmark debate, because unless we have transparency and accountability, we won't reduce the number of earmarks, and until we reduce the number of earmarks, we won't be able to change the culture of spending and be able to give the next generation greater freedom and greater opportunity than we've enjoyed.

Mr. Speaker, I hope people have watched this debate carefully, and for those who wish to know even more, I would invite them to go to the Web site of the Republican Study Committee that I have the honor to chair, at www.house.gov/hensarling/rsc, and learn a great deal more about the spending patterns of the Federal Government and how often the people's money is squandered and taken away from their future and their American dream.

But there's a better way. There's a better way under conservative principles to make sure that we do not allow the Federal budget to grow beyond the family budgets and be able to pay for it, that we don't pass debt on to future generations and that we reform these earmarks and make the Democrats remain good to their word.

So, again, I thank the gentlewoman from Tennessee for her great leadership in the conservative movement in the House, with her eloquent and articulate voice for her leadership on this subject.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. I thank the gentleman from Texas, and Mr. Speaker, as we come to the close of our hour that we have had tonight where we put the focus on spending and put the focus on earmarks, I would remind my colleagues that a couple of months back Republicans successfully forced the Democrats to restore two critical GOP reforms from last year, and that was disclosing earmarks and their sponsors before spending bills are voted on on the floor and then the right to challenge those bills on the floor. Those were important changes we made last year, and we forced those to be reinstituted so that we could begin to have some debate. Now, they may try to cover up some of those. We're going to keep digging and playing hide-and-seek and figure out who all of those earmarks belong to.

I want to give you a couple of quotes that tie into this. From the AP, ''Democratic leaders gave in to Republican demands that lawmakers be allowed to challenge individual Member-requested projects from the final version of each appropriations bill.'' That's from June 14.

From June 18 of this year from the Charleston Post-Courier, ''A House compromise achieved Thursday night shows that the worthy cause of earmark reform is far from lost. When the Speaker recently signaled a retreat from her repeated vows to fix that problem, House Republican leaders cried foul.''

We called for that accountability. The cost to the taxpayer for earmarks not being disclosed is hundreds of millions of dollars of additional spending.

I hope that as we start this new year that our colleagues across the aisle will reach out to us, that they will join us in signing the discharge petition on Leader Boehner's bill, H.R. 479, and get the 218 signatures we need so that we can come to this floor so that we can have a debate and ensure the public that all taxpayer-funded earmarks are publicly disclosed and subject to challenge and debate on this floor. The future of our children, the future of this government depends on getting our spending under control.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the time this evening. I thank you for the opportunity to address the issue of out-of-control earmarks and the need for earmark reform by this body.

NATIONAL SECURITY AND AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CUELLAR). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRABACHER) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Speaker, tonight I'd like to share a few thoughts about national security and about American foreign policy. We have many challenges that confront us today, and we live in perplexing times, but we also live in a time when there are great challenges as well as great opportunities, as long as we, the American people, have the courage to live up to our potential as a country that could lead the world into a better way than we have known throughout the history of humankind.

We are indeed in a new millennium, and this new millennium, coupled with the technological capabilities that we have and the vast wealth that is available to the free societies of the world today make it possible that we can build a better world than any human being has ever known. But, again, a lot of this has to fall back on the United States of America and our willingness as Americans to live up to the responsibility that we've been handed.

Ronald Reagan used to say that America has a very special role to play in this world. He used to say that because we Americans are a very special kind of people. We are not of one race. We're not of one religion nor one ethnic group, but instead, we are made up of people who come from every part of this planet and every racial background and worship God in every way that you can imagine. And in fact, there are many atheists who don't worship God at all and have that right, but we've come here to live in freedom and to show the world and to lead the world as a country that's made up of people from all over, that lead the world toward that direction which will enable it to overcome those trials and tribulations, those hatreds, ancient hatreds that have plagued mankind for so long.

And yes, today, the United States is the great superpower, thanks of course a lot to Ronald Reagan who I just talked about. The fact that during the Cold War he was willing to act responsibly to make tough decisions, in a way that ended the Cold War in a very real sense, he oversaw the demise of communism in the Soviet Union. It was Ronald Reagan who everyone knows brought down the Berlin Wall and not George Herbert Walker Bush, George W. Bush's father.

□ 2145

But as the Berlin Wall came down because of the policies of Ronald Reagan, we too must make the right decisions to ensure that the challenges that we face today are overcome in time for the next generation to enjoy greater freedom and to free themselves from the threats of fear that we face today. This will not happen unless we act responsibly, unless we act with courage, but, most importantly, unless we stand up and proclaim that, yes, we are from every nation of the world and every race and every religion, and we are the ones who will promote freedom and liberty on this planet. It is that alliance that we can have with those people in every country, that we have are, as I say, those people within our own society who can reach out to every country with that message, that we are allied with those good and decent people throughout the world who would stand with us to create a world where human freedom and liberty and justice and treating people with respect is something that is commonplace rather than the exception.

Sometimes it's a little difficult to think of a world becoming free, and the expansion of liberty and justice in this world, when we hear the reports that we heard today coming out of Burma. Burma, for these last 4 decades, has lived under tyranny, a horrible, horrible tyranny. It has been a closed society. Burma is a country that is so rich in natural resources that after the Second World War it was thought that Burma would be the breadbasket of Asia, that Burma would indeed be one of the richest countries of Asia.

Instead, Burma has sunk year after year, suffering from tyranny but, as a result of that tyranny, its people have lived in deprivation and in hunger and in want that was never ever thought would happen. No one ever thought that would happen after the Second World War.

But if we have learned anything from Burma and from the other countries that are poor today, it is that poverty is not created by too big a population. Poverty is not created by even a scarcity of resources, natural resources. Poverty is created because of tyranny. Tyranny and dictatorship bring corruption and bring about a strangling of those creative impulses within any society and those productive people within every society that will build, that will create the wealth necessary to uplift the people of any society. Instead,

tyranny drags them down, no matter how prosperous the country could be in terms of its natural resources.

The report today is that Burma had its chance, or perhaps it still does, but that the ruling regime, the gangsters that have run that country for decades, have now unleashed their firepower upon the Buddhist monks and the other people in that society who are calling for a liberalization of the Burmese regime. Apparently, thousands of people have been slaughtered.

In fact, an intelligence officer for the Burmese military has defected, and he now is reporting to Western newspapers that it was his orders, by his commanding officers, to round up hundreds, if not thousands of monks, and put them in trucks and take them into the deep jungle and murder them and dump their bodies in the jungle.

He could not do that, and so he defected. He grabbed his child and ran for the border. It is time for the other military officers in Burma and the police not just to take their children and run because they can't obey an order, but to realize that the orders they are being given by their generals, their so-called generals, are not lawful orders. It is time for the army of Burma to side with the people of Burma.

Any military leaders in Burma today who side with the people will become national heroes and will be renowned and remembered by their people for generations to come. They will receive the gratitude not only of the people of Burma, but to all the good and decent people of the world. The soldiers in Burma and the police in Burma should turn their guns on their generals. They should side with the people of Burma, their fathers, their mothers, their brothers and sisters who want honest government and clean government. They should not be slaughtering their fellow family members who want nothing more than clean, honest, Democratic government.

The regime, as I say, is headed by what they call generals, but these are not generals. These are gangsters who have put on military uniforms. No Burmese soldier owes them any allegiance. These generals, these gangsters, have sold out their country and their countrymen to foreign interests, namely, the Chinese. Yes, the dictatorship in Beijing is treating the government, which means the generals, in Burma as if Burma was a vassal state of China.

In exchange for the $1.5 billion worth of military equipment that China has given Burma, the Burmese gangsters who run that country are permitted, the government in Beijing and the Chinese, to rape the natural resources of the people of Burma, the teakwood, the gems, the uranium, the rich minerals that Burma has are being taken away. They are being eliminated from the future of the people of that country in order to pay for the weapons that repress the people of that country. The Chinese have demanded of the Burmese Government a facility on their ocean so that they can be in a position to outflank India and to interfere with the trade, ocean trade in that part of the world.

All of this is being given away by those leaders, so-called leaders in Burma. They are giving away the rightful legacy of the people of Burma to Chinese outsiders, gangsters in China now in league with gangsters of Burma.

This is the type of relationship that China will have with other countries if we permit them. And it is clear, for those of us who are looking, that the military troops that are now shooting down those who seek democracy in Burma would not be doing so if the Chinese would have objected and sent any message to their Burmese stooges not to shoot and not to commit violence against those who are peacefully advocating change, democratic change in Burma.

Yes, they have a regime. But unlike in other countries, like we faced in another issue which I will talk about in Iraq, in Burma, there is an alternative. There is an alternative to the Burmese dictatorship. Aung San Suu Kyi, a Nobel Prize winner, won with her party elections back in the 1990s when the generals were so deluded that they believed their own propaganda in thinking they were more popular than they were, and they permitted a free election. In that free election, they were wiped out.

The fact is that Aung San Suu Kyi of Burma and the people of Burma went to polls and the people of Burma overwhelmingly supported democratic reform and Aung San Suu Kyi. The election was, of course, immediately discarded; the generals mobilized their troops. Aung San Suu Kyi was sent into House arrest.

Aung San Suu Kyi, I went to Burma and met her several years ago, one of the great heroes of our time, a saintly person, someone who is depending on us like the people of Burma to make a strong stand. If nothing else, the American people must let the people of Burma know that we are on their side, and we must let the ruling junta know that we oppose them and we oppose their oppression of the Burmese people.

This should be clear to them, and we must make sure that those Burmese generals and those military officers who were committing atrocities against the people of Burma realize they are not just murdering their fellow Burmese, they are committing crimes against humanity, and they will be followed and pursued just like the Nazis before them, and they will be held accountable and brought to justice.

I am calling on our government to freeze any assets that any leader of the Burmese Government might have, and our government should be working with other governments to issue arrest warrants for any member of the Burmese Government who travels abroad.

Furthermore, we must join with other nations and suggest that China is not doing its part and is playing a horrible role when it comes to freedom in Burma, as it will play the same role in the Philippines and elsewhere as its strength as a country grows.

China has prevented the United Nations from stopping the atrocities that are now going on, as we speak, in Burma. China has been pulling the strings. The Burmese regime would never have opened fire without permission in Beijing. The people of Burma should know that. The people of the world should know that.

It is time for the people in the United States to quit closing their eyes to the monstrous nature of the Beijing regime. Without that regime, the Burmese dictators, the gangsters in Burma, would not be able to succeed in holding down that population and by brutalizing their people.

I have a piece of legislation before the Congress, and I would ask my colleagues to join me. The legislation is H.R. 610. It is a bill suggesting that we go on record as being in favor of boycotting the upcoming Olympics to be held in China.

There is no reason, while China remains the world's worst human rights abuser, and that includes Burma, I might add, the Chinese are the world's worst human rights abuser, and why should we ever hold an Olympics, which stands for some of the higher aspirations of humankind, why should we ever hold an Olympics in China while it has that type of monstrously dictatorial government. Yes, in China they not only are involved with repressing the people of Burma, but they are deeply involved with criminal acts against their own people, especially against religious believers.

Isn't it fascinating that in Burma, those who would try to lead the country to a better and more Democratic way are those Buddhist monks who now, in a very peaceful way, have presented their case and are answered with an iron fist. They are answered by bullets, they are answered by brutality.

In China, it's the same. We have people of the religious faith, whether they are Muslims in the far reaches of China or whether they are people in Tibet, who have been so brutalized, or other religious believers, Christians, Catholics, and, yes, the Falun Gong, the Falun Gong who have a spiritual belief that is somewhat similar to yoga and somewhat meditation. Yet, this very simple and pacifist religion has been vilified by the communist party of China, and thousands and thousands of Falun Gong practitioners believing in meditation and yoga have been arrested. They are picked up, and they disappear.

The women are raped in prison; they are murdered. Perhaps worst of all, when they disappear, they are sent to prisons, and now we have reports coming out of those prisons that Falun Gong prisoners, people who are pacifists, who are simply believing in meditation and yoga, they are, what, they

are being murdered for their organ parts which are then being sold. Sometimes they sell them to Americans who come there. Falun Gong prisoners are killed right before a doctor, who would then remove the cornea from their eye and sell it to people in the West who spend thousands of dollars to get these body parts.

If there is anything more ghoulish than this, even the Nazis, I don't think, could sink that low, but they sank about as low as one could ever expect. But that is the type of thing that goes on today, and we are giving the Chinese the ability to hold the Olympics, to cover up, to put a good face on this type of monstrous regime.

It is time for the people of the United States Congress to join with me in agreeing that as long as China is doing, number one, what it's doing in Burma and in Darfur, where they are again behind the scenes playing a horrible role, it is time for us to join together and say we will not participate in an Olympics hosted by such a criminal government.

□ 2200

And I am happy to announce today NEIL ABERCROMBIE, my colleague from Hawaii, has joined me in supporting this legislation.

China, of course, even beyond, if it was simply a nondictatorship, there would be major problems with China. China is a predatory nation. China is a nation, for example, it is a nation, as a nation state it's huge, and it has more territorial claims than any other major power in the world. China has been built into a huge power, an economic power, which is now being translated into military power. Even though it has claims against India, huge areas of India and Russia, large areas of the ocean are claimed by China. If one remembers, it was just a few years ago when one of our planes, our surveillance planes flying in international waters was forced down in China, and they claimed that their territorial waters extended way beyond anything the United States would recognize. And all they wanted for us to get the crew back was for us to apologize and to acknowledge that we were in their territory.

What does that mean? They would have murdered these American military personnel in order to assert their claim to huge areas of ocean. In fact, they claim the ocean right up to the shore line of the Philippines. They claim the Sprattley Islands, which are only 100 miles from the Philippines and 500 to 600 miles from China. Huge areas, as I say, of India and of Russia.

This is a country that we have built an economy over these last two decades, we have built from a weak country, we now have created a Frankenstein monster. And when I say ''we,'' I mean the policies of the United States Government have uplifted the economic capabilities of a country that has had no liberalization, no political reform of their dictatorial system.

We were told for 20 years, when I first got here, vote for most favored nation status for China, because if we interact with China economically, they will liberalize. What they need to do is, we have to prove to them not to fear us. This is a reoccurring theme by which people who live in democratic societies fool themselves into thinking that the criminals who run other governments, dictatorships are in some way motivated by the same motives that people are in free societies, that people in free societies will fear someone, thus they will agree to certain expenditures, military expenditures.

The Chinese know exactly who we are and who they are. The Chinese people are not the enemy. Those people in Beijing want to hold on to power, just as the dictators in Burma want to hold on to power. And as we move forward and try to determine what our policy should be in the future, let us note the policies of trying to engage China economically, permitting huge transfers of dollars of capital assets, of technology, of American know-how, of opening our markets, even though their markets were closed, letting them manipulate the currency, letting them get away with policies that shifted wealth from the United States into China. That did not have a positive impact on their government. Their government is still corrupt. Their government is still a government of criminal dictators, people who oppress their people and, as I say, are the worst human rights abusers in the world.

So first and foremost, in dealing with China, as in dealing with Burma, we must differentiate how we treat a dictatorship and how we treat a democratic country. Those leaders in China should not be granted the status of acceptability that goes with hosting the Olympics with our blessing.

Yet, we have, for the last two decades, seen an army of American corporate leaders rushing to China to invest and build factories and in partnership with the Chinese Government set up these factories and create manufacturing units that sell goods back to the United States, putting American workers out of work, selling goods back to the United States that have such poor standards that some of them are made of toxic material, as we've just seen with Mattel Toys, American corporate leaders, who are looking for two, three, maybe 4 years' worth of big profit for themselves, then they can cut and run and go off to their vacationland homes and enjoy themselves.

Those corporate leaders have created a monster with the blessing of the United States Government, because it's been our policy to permit them to transfer the technology, the know-how, and the investment dollars that were needed to build China into what it is today. And today, the Chinese are destroying the manufacturing base of the United States, and we have turned a blind eye to the fact that they manipulate the currency, that they manipulate access to their markets, and that they steal American intellectual property. We have turned a blind eye to that, just as we have turned a blind eye to the fact that the Chinese repress their own people.

And when you talk to these corporate leaders who've gone over there and built this monster, created this Nazi-like government, you ask them, they say, well, you know, when we do more and more economic interaction, we have more business; that's what's going to create more liberalism and reform there. How many times have we heard that? We've been listening to that for 20 years. The first speech I heard about this on the floor for most favored nation status for China was saying just that 20 years ago, yet it never happens. This is called the ''hug a Nazi, make a liberal theory.'' Just get close to them and they won't fear you anymore.

Well, the fact is China has been getting worse since, over these last two decades. It was Tiananmen Square that was the turning point. Up until Tiananmen Square, there was a legitimate reason for us to try to build the economy of China, to create closer ties, because there was an evolution going on, both economically and politically in China. And when it reached a point, at Tiananmen Square, you might say the tipping point, the United States didn't stand up. The Chinese gangsters, just like in Burma, where the military regime had to make its decision, was it going to open fire on their own people, the Chinese Government was facing this decision, and our government did nothing and we said nothing.

It is my contention that had George Herbert Walker Bush, then President of the United States, sent a message to China and to the Chinese leaders that if you murder and try to slaughter the democratic movement in China, we are withdrawing from our economic cooperation that we have agreed to, they would not have done so. And I will tell you tonight, Ronald Reagan would have sent that letter in a millisecond. Ronald Reagan would have been told that the democratic movement was on the verge of success, but they would be slaughtered if they sent the troops in and they need to send a message to the leadership of China saying that we are going to withdraw our economic cooperation with them if they, indeed, mowed down their own people. Reagan would have done it.

This President Bush's father did not; and thus we have had, in the last two decades, not a transition to democracy, but only a growing of their economy, which now gives them greater military capabilities and gives them greater wealth from which to try to undermine the United States.

And, again, as we look at this threat, what is really important is the same thing that's important in Burma and elsewhere, the basic message that we need to understand tonight, that when confronting regimes like China and

Burma, and confronting radical Islam that hates America, let's remember that it is the people who want to live decent lives and live in democracy who are America's greatest allies. The people of China, the people of China are the ones we must ally ourselves with. They need to know that we are on their side. They need to know that the people of the United States and the people of China all long to treat people decently and to live in freedom and justice. The people of China will be on our side if we are on their side. The people of Burma are on our side as long as they know we are on their side. Good and decent people throughout the world know this.

But, instead, we have been so busy building an economic infrastructure that permits wealth to flow to China that we have not bothered to make the demands on the government or to create, to help create the democratic movements within China that would move their government from within.

One example, by the way, of how we have done this is the fact that we have built a conveyor system for trade across our oceans, especially across the Pacific, especially from Shanghai into the ports that I represent, Long Beach and Los Angeles. We have built, with American taxpayer dollars, an incredibly efficient system so that American businessmen could go and set up factories in China, manufacture their goods over there, and ship them to the United States via a system that we've paid for, and come into our market and undercut our own American working people and our own American manufacturers who've stayed at home. We built this for them.

That's why I've long been an advocate of a container fee system so that at least, at the very least, if they're going to send containers filled with goods here, why should we build the ports and spend billions of dollars of infrastructure so that they can very efficiently send containers filled with goods into our society and undercut our own manufacturers?

I have not received the support that I believe that idea justifies. In fact, you see people in both the Democratic Party and the Republican Party, oh poo-pooing that as if it was a tax on the American people. We are not charging those American manufacturers who go to China. We're not. We are subsidizing them in their shipment of goods here to undercut our own people. That makes no sense. But it makes sense to those businessmen. It makes not only sense; it makes dollars for them. And as I say, they make a really quick profit; 4 or 5 years and they're done. They're even done with their own companies after 4 or 5 years. But we are the ones with our manufacturing base destroyed who have to pick up the pieces.

In my own city, in Huntington Beach, where I live, a manufacturer of paint and coatings was the person who sold the coatings to Mattel Toys for Barbie dolls. And in the year 2000, Mattel Toys gave an award to this company as the number one supplier for Mattel Toys. And then Mattel Toys sold out to the Chinese, decided to manufacture everything in China. The Chinese came to this gentleman and said, give us the formula for your coatings, and we will be partners. As soon as he gave them the formula, the Chinese disappeared. They disappeared, and he was never able to get a hold of them. And next thing you know, they aren't using his formula. They're using lead in the formula. And my children at home, who have Barbie dolls now, and all the other American children who have Barbie dolls, may have been infected with lead poisoning because Mattel Toys took the easy way out, along with the other American manufacturers who went to China in order to not pay our own American workers a decent wage.

□ 2215

They want to get a 10 percent or 20 percent higher profit in China rather than paying American workers a decent wage and having half as much profit. Who is paying the price for us? The American people in the end will pay the price as China grows into a massive, economic, and military power, which goes with that.

Of course, during the Clinton years, what did we find? There was not only technology transfer in the economic area, but they had actually polluted our political system as well. Campaign contributions flowing into the American political system and American missile technology leaking out in the other direction. The scandal during the Clinton years of American missile technology being transferred to the Chinese through Hughes and Lorel Corporation is a disgrace. And the evidence of Chinese influence and especially financial support during that election makes that even worse.

But we need to make sure that we bypass our own business leaders, bypass the leadership, the gangsters that run Beijing and Burma and like countries, and go directly to the people throughout the world with our message of hope, democracy, liberty, and justice. The people of Burma and the people of China are our greatest allies. These Burmese soldiers now have to make a decision as to whether they will fire upon their own people. The Chinese people should not permit their children, and they only have one child per family, to go into the military so that it can be used to suppress their own people.

This is not unlike the war we fight today, not with Burma or China but, of course, with radical Islam. China is not an enemy today. China is an adversary today, a very powerful adversary. We are, in fact, making that adversary so powerful, it's becoming frightening. But we are at war with radical Islam. We are at war with radical Islam. And again let me note that when I say that, I emphasize that Muslims throughout the world who do not hate America, Muslims throughout the world who love their faith, as they should, which it has meant very much to their lives and over a billion people, Muslims throughout the world who know that their prayer time and their other religious ceremonies and beliefs have meant a lot to their life and have added great depth to their life, those people are not our enemies. Those people are our friends.

We believe in freedom of religion. We respect other people's religion. We ask only that other people respect our religion. And, by the way, our respect for religion doesn't just go to other faiths, but it goes to people who don't believe in God at all, who don't choose to worship.

Our Founding Fathers did not come here, as some of my conservative friends say, to create a Christian Nation. We came here to create a Nation where freedom of religion was respected and that we acknowledged God but we did not in any way want to force those beliefs on those who were nonbelievers.

It is right that the people of Islam worship the way they choose, whether here or abroad. Those people who only want that freedom and are willing to grant that to others are our friends. But a radical fringe which hates everything we stand for has now arisen in the Muslim world.

Let me note that during the 1920s we had terrorists and in years past we had terrorists who were Christians. In 1920, the biggest political force in this country was the Ku Klux Klan. The Ku Klux Klan, as we know, carried around banners with crosses and declaring their love of Christianity. And the fact is that Christian churches in the South did not condemn the Ku Klux Klan, as they should have. The good and decent people of the American South, when they knew that these Klansmen were murdering people, they were terrorizing the black population, murdering them, hanging them, all kinds of torture that was going on in our country against our own black population, the Christian people did not stand up in those areas when they knew that the Klansmen were right there in church with them.

Well, that was a hundred years ago. Our Muslim brothers we are expecting to do better than we did when it came to the Klan because al Qaeda is the Ku Klux Klan of Islam. Al Qaeda are the hate mongers. Al Qaeda are those who would bring people who believe in God and put them at war with one another rather than trying to bring them together in peace and brotherhood.

In Afghanistan after 9/11, the United States went to Afghanistan and allied itself with moderate Muslims. During the 1990s, there was a mistake by this government just as we made a mistake with China. We tried to work with the Taliban. In fact, during the Clinton administration, the Taliban came into

being. And, in fact, it is very easy to see the historical record that the Clinton administration reached an agreement with Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, and our government was involved in creating the Taliban.

During that time period, I was a Member of Congress, and because I had spent time in Afghanistan during the war against the Soviets, I spent considerable time in Afghanistan working with those people who would oppose the Taliban. I begged the powers that be that they support King Zahir Shaw, a moderate Muslim, a man who was much beloved by all Afghans, to support his return. And, instead, our government, under Madeleine Albright and all the others of the Clinton administration, did what? They decided to go along with the Saudis and to go along with the Pakistanis in creating a religious force, that they said because the people of Afghanistan are devout, this is what will draw them together, by supporting religious fanatics.

I told them at the time it was ridiculous. I told them that it would backfire on them during the war with the Soviets. The Pakistanis had passed on aid to Hikmatyar Gulbadin, a horrendous terrorist who was, again, a radical Islamist. But there were many others whom we helped during the war against the Soviets. I was there with them. And whether it was Abdul Haq or Commander Massoud or others like them, there were many others, Galani's forces and others, who were very, very mainstream Islamic people who were not anti-Western but were just trying to free their own country from the atheistic dictatorship of the communists, and we helped them. But after that, as we walked away, when the Soviets walked away, we made this deal with the Saudis and with the Pakistanis to let them finance the reconstruction and determine who would be in power in Afghanistan, and that is when the Taliban was born, as I say, at that time over my serious objections, and I spent 5 years going in and out of Afghanistan meeting with those people who would later become the Northern Alliance.

So as we look back on Afghanistan now, years after the Taliban has been defeated and al Qaeda was driven out of that country, let us remember the success that we had was because we went to the people.

There is a mistaken belief that we are not ''winning'' in Iraq because we didn't have enough boots on the ground. We didn't send in enough American troops. Well, in fact, we had probably 100 boots on the ground when Kabul was liberated from the Taliban and al Qaeda forces in the aftermath of 9/11. In fact, that liberation of Afghanistan was accomplished with very few American soldiers on the frontlines. In fact, the people of Afghanistan liberated themselves, and we did not liberate them. And we went into that war, and we reached agreements with those leaders, tribal leaders. They are often called warlords, but that was the Northern Alliance. And it was the Northern Alliance and those good people in Afghanistan who worked with me in the Mujahideen to fight against the Soviets. Those are the people who drove out the Taliban.

When we went into Iraq, it was a different story, unfortunately. Mistakes have been made, yes. Mistakes have been made in Iraq. There is no doubt. We sent in a military force, a strong military force, and they did their job. What did not happen was the political job that was necessary to complement the fact that we had dispossessed Saddam Hussein of his military might. Instead of making agreements as we did in Afghanistan with the tribal leaders, we did not, as we did in Afghanistan, reach out to the local powers that be that were moderate Muslims, and there are many moderate Muslims in Iraq. What we instead did was tell the people of Iraq that we were going to rebuild their entire country and that, for example, there would be no room. Mr. Bremer is quoted as saying to tribal leaders that there would be no room in a modern democratic Iraq for tribalism. Thus in our effort to make the decision for those people, rather than going to the people and their leaders ourselves, we have put ourselves in what has been a horrific quagmire.

How we extricate ourselves from Iraq will go a long way in defining what type of world my children live in and, in fact, what kind of world the young people who are with us today will have. If we try to pull out precipitously and look like we are running away, if we look like we are surrendering, if it looks like we have been defeated, we will embolden those people in Iraq who hate everything about the United States, and we will embolden the radical Islamists throughout the world. There is no doubt about that. That is not to say, again, that we should not be admitting our mistakes and doing what we can to extricate ourselves in a responsible way. That is why I have been supporting General Petraeus and his efforts to have a phased withdrawal, a responsible phased withdrawal, that will then permit those elements within Iraq that do not want to be ruled by radical Islam or those elements that would like to be friends of the West to give them a chance to step up. If we are viewed as retreating and abandoning those people, there will be a heavy price to pay.

And let us admit that with the mistakes that I have already mentioned, it is a tempting target for people involved in our political system to use what is going on in Iraq as a political vehicle in the upcoming elections.

Now, the people here in Congress, we have to search our souls to make sure what we are doing is based not on political motives but instead is based on what is the long-term interest of the people of the United States.

I go down and welcome home the troops, the reservists and National Guard, all the time that come in and out and leave Iraq or are coming back from Iraq, and I welcome them back, and I know, because I have supported this effort, that I must pay special attention. But let us note that we have to be doing this and looking at this and analyzing what is happening in a nonpolitical way. I am afraid that there are some forces at play that would try to politicize what is going on in Iraq.

Those people who oppose our efforts to have a phased withdrawal, would like immediate withdrawal from Iraq, those people who see America as the big problem in the world instead of as the world's only hope, those people cannot attack American soldiers because they realize that all Americans are proud of the men and women who are defending our country in uniform. But what we are witnessing now is what I would consider a maneuver on the part of those who, if they could, would attack American military troops. What they are doing is attacking American security companies who have been brought to Iraq to try to supplement our war effort there. By and large these American security companies are made up of people who have perhaps 10 times the experience of our own soldiers. American security companies like Blackwater, for example, hire on special forces and other extraordinarily well-trained American military personnel when they retire from the military so that their skills can still be put to use in the defense of our country and in the promotion of human freedom.

□ 2230

Their personnel are essential to the success of any of our military goals, but they're also essential to the success of a phased pull-out of Iraq. Otherwise, there will be no buffer. Otherwise, there is no means for us to have the type of withdrawal with success. Otherwise, it is a retreat.

Blackwater, as I say, has been working now, I think, since 1997. It's run by a young man named Eric Prince. He inherited his money. And the fact is he could have done a lot of other things with his money and made a lot more money. He could have gone to China and made 10 times the profit that he makes by creating a security company that would work side by side with American forces and American diplomats overseas to try to offer protection to our country and to those State Department and other people who are working in the United States Government overseas. He could have gone and made much more money.

Instead, now he's being called, I've seen him called ''murderer,'' I've seen the people in Blackwater being called ''thugs,'' when in fact almost every one of these people who work for Blackwater, like Eric himself, are former Special Forces people. Eric was a Navy SEAL for 5 years. And then, rather than just living the life of luxury that he could have done when he

inherited his money, he decided to do something good for his country. Those people who are retiring from our military and have good pensions, yes, they could live the life of Riley; they could go fishing every day. But, instead, they are putting their skills to use by putting their lives in danger for us. Yet, they are being attacked unmercifully by people who just basically oppose the fact that this President got us involved in Iraq in the first place.

We should not be taking it out on the people of Blackwater. Those men and women who are in Blackwater are very honorable people. And not to say they haven't made some mistakes, just as our own military personnel have made mistakes; but, in fact, Blackwater probably has a better record than our own military because they are, as I say, they are people with vastly more experience than that of our own soldiers and sailors and airmen.

So tomorrow there will be a hearing on Blackwater. I would hope that Blackwater and the people of Blackwater, those people who have made enormous contributions to the safety and security of our operations in Afghanistan and in Iraq, that they are not brutalized, that they're treated fairly, and that we do not permit the politicalization of this fight with radical Islam and this effort that now goes on in Iraq to be used in a way that will, number one, hurt brave people who are risking their lives for us, but at the same time, undermine our efforts for the long-term security of our country so that we will have a phased withdrawal that will give the good people of this world a chance.

We need to give the people of Burma a chance. We need to give the people of China a chance. We need to give the people of Iraq a chance. They are our greatest allies.

The people of the world who would live in democracy and see America as a positive force and, fortunately, many of them see America as a positive force, yet many people here in the United States for some reason do not share that opinion of their own country and believe that the United States is a negative force in the world. And that's what motivates many of them in their actions when it comes to Blackwater and it comes to this war.

Finally, let me note this: this President has made a lot of mistakes. And I have supported the President when he has been right; I have been opposed to him when he's wrong. This President seems to be headstrong, and I think that's a pleasant way of putting it. That does not mean that all the decisions that he has made have been wrong. We need to support him when he's right; we need to try to work with him and try to steer American policy when he is wrong. The idea of a phased withdrawal from Iraq is right.

But this President did not get us in this war with radical Islam. This war that we are in with radical Islam was created in the previous administration. We need to document that. It needs to be documented what the policies of the Clinton administration were towards the Taliban. I will be giving a speech in the next few weeks again detailing that, about how I pled, as a senior member of the International Relations Committee, for the documents from Madeleine Albright to prove what our policy was towards the Taliban; why it was that we were giving our foreign aid to the Taliban in radical Islamic areas of Afghanistan and giving short shrift to Commander Massoud and the pro-Western Muslims in Afghanistan.

We need to document these things. We need to document whether or not bin Laden was someone who could have been handled, if we were courageous enough to do it, 5 years, 10 years before 9/11.

We know now that some of the documents that the 9/11 Commission was supposed to read were not available to them. We had a commission that went to study why we had 9/11, but yet we know today that the National Security Adviser to President Bill Clinton stole documents out of the National Archives to prevent that commission, the 9/11 Commission, from seeing certain information that would be relevant to the war on terrorism. Part of his agreement, Sandy Berger, the National Security Adviser to President Clinton, when his theft was discovered, he volunteered, as part of his plea agreement, to give a lie detector test to the Justice Department if so requested to determine exactly what were the documents that he stole from the National Archives.

At the beginning of this year, a majority of Republican Members of this body signed a letter to the Justice Department, under the leadership of TOM DAVIS, asking the Justice Department to give that polygraph test, after so many years, I think it's been 4 years, it could be 3. For 3 years Sandy Berger has not been given the polygraph test to see exactly what documents he stole from the National Archives.

It is time for the American people to demand that we know what caused 9/11, and we will not know that until Sandy Berger, the National Security Adviser to the Clinton administration, is given a polygraph test, which won't happen until the Department of Justice gives that polygraph test and demands it.

Today, I am calling upon the new Attorney General to put Sandy Berger on the line, to give him a polygraph test and determine what documents he stole from the National Archives and to give us a full accounting of what led up to 9/11, what happened during the Clinton administration that was so heinous that Sandy Berger, the National Security Adviser to the President, would risk everything, would risk his reputation and go into the National Archives and steal documents.

Could it be that during the Clinton years that, for example, there was evidence of technology transfers and Chinese involvement in our political system? Could it be that a Gorelick memo, who at that time the lady was an important player in the Clinton administration, she had a mandate that domestic and international intelligence groups and law enforcement could not work together, could that have something to do with a Chinese connection?

What did Sandy Berger steal from the National Archives? We need to know. We should not be ignored. If this was a Republican, I can tell you that every newspaper in the country would be clamoring until we found out exactly what documents were stolen from the National Archives by the President's National Security Adviser.

So, tonight, I hope that my colleagues would join me, number one, in telling the people of Burma we're on their side; and joining me in calling for a boycott of the Beijing Olympics; of supporting a phased withdrawal, responsible withdrawal from Iraq; supporting our people both in uniform and in our protective companies like Blackwater, making sure we do not mistreat them; and finally, join me in calling for the truth in what Sandy Berger, the National Security Adviser for Bill Clinton, stole from the Archives. He needs to be given his polygraph test. The Justice Department needs to act.

So with those requests for my fellow colleagues, I now yield back the balance of my time.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Ms. CARSON (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for today and until October 15 on account of convalescence.

Mr. CONYERS (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for today.

Mr. KIND (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for today on account of family events.

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 Mrs. JONES of Ohio) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Ms. WOOLSEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DEFAZIO, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. HALL of New York, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. HARE, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. MICHAUD, for 5 minutes, today.

Mrs. MALONEY of New York, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. BURTON of Indiana, for 5 minutes, today and October 2, 3, and 4.

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida, for 5 minutes, today.

ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

Ms. Lorraine C. Miller, Clerk of the House, reported and found truly enrolled bills and joint resolutions of the House of the following title, which were thereupon signed by the Speaker:

H.R. 976. An act to amend title XXI of the Social Security Act to extend and improve the Children's Health Insurance Program, and for other purposes.

H.R. 3625. An act to make permanent the waiver authority of the Secretary of Education with respect to student financial assistance during a war or other military operation or national emergency.

H.R. 3668. An act to provide for the extension of transitional medical assistance (TMA), the abstinence education program, and the qualifying individuals (QI) program, for other purposes.

H.J. Res. 43. Joint resolution increasing the statutory limit on the public debt.

H.J. Res. 52. Joint resolution making continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 2008, and for other purposes.

BILLS PRESENTED TO THE PRESIDENT

Lorraine C. Miller, Clerk of the House reports that on September 26, 2007 she presented to the President of the United States, for his approval, the following bills.

H.R. 3375. To extend the trade adjustment assistance program under the Trade Act of 1974 for 3 months.

H.R. 3580. To amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to revise and extend the user-fee programs for prescription drugs and for medical devices, to enhance the postmarket authorities of the Food and Drug Administration with respect to the safety of drugs, and for other purposes.

Lorraine C. Miller, Clerk of the House reports that on September 28, 2007 she presented to the President of the United States, for his approval, the following bills.

H.J. Res. 43. Increasing the statutory limit on the public debt.

H.J. Res. 52. Making continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 2008, and for other purposes.

H.R. 3668. To provide for the extension of transitional medical assistance (TMA), the abstinence education program, and the qualifying individuals (QI) program, and for other purposes.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 40 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Tuesday, October 2, 2007, at 9 a.m., for morning-hour debate.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 8 of rule XII, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

3520. A letter from the Chief Counsel, FEMA, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Final Flood Elevation Determinations — received September 4, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

3521. A letter from the Chief Counsel, FEMA, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Suspension of Community Eligibility [Docket No. FEMA-7983] received September 4, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

3522. A letter from the Chief Counsel, FEMA, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Suspension of Community Eligibility [Docket No. FEMA-7985] received September 4, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

3523. A letter from the Director, Office of Congressional Affairs, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — Medical Use of Byproduct Material — Minor Corrections and Clarifications (RIN: 3150-AI14) received September 4, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3524. A letter from the Deputy Assistant Secretary, OFCCP, Department of Labor, transmitting the Department's final rule — Affirmative Action and Nondiscrimination Obligations of Contractors and Subcontractors Regarding Disabled Veterans, Recently Separated Veterans, Other Protected Veterans, and Armed Forces Service Medal Veterans (RIN: 1215-AB46) received August 9, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

3525. A letter from the Associate Administrator, Office of Federal Procurement Policy, Office of Management and Budget, transmitting the Office's final rule — Cost Accounting Standards Board (CAS) Changes to Acquisition Thresholds — received August 6, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

3526. A letter from the Associate Administrator, Office of Federal Procurement Policy, Office of Management and Budget, transmitting the Office's final rule — Cost Accounting Standards Board; Time and Material and Labor Hour (T&M/LH) Contracts for Commercial Items — received August 6, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

3527. A letter from the Acting Director Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Magnuson-Stevens Act Provisions; Fisheries Off West Coast States; Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery; Biennial Specifications and Management Measures; Inseason Adjustments; Correction [Docket No. 060824226-6322-02] (RIN: 0648-AV69) received September 4, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

3528. A letter from the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Operations, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Fisheries Off West Coast States; Highly Migratory Species Fisheries [Docket number: 070718330-7330-02; I.D. 022807F] (RIN: 0648-AU73) received September 4, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

3529. A letter from the Acting Chief, Regulatory Management Division, Office of the Executive Secretariat, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Removal of Temporary Adjustment of the Immigration and Naturalization Benefit Applications and Petition Fee Schedule [Docket No. USCIS-2007-0040; CIS No. 2417-07] (RIN: 1615-AB61) received September 4, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

3530. A letter from the Director, Regulations & Ruling Div., Department of the Treasury, transmitting the Department's final rule — Firearms Excise Tax; Exemption for Small Manufacturers, Producers, and Importers [T.D. TTB-62] (RIN: 1513-AB25) received September 12, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

3531. A letter from the Director, Regulations & Rulings Div., Department of the Treasury, transmitting the Department's final rule — Materials and Processes Authorized for the Treatment of Wine and Juice (2004R-517P) [T.D. TTB-61; Re: T.D. TTB-17] (RIN: 1513-AA96) received September 12, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

3532. A letter from the SSA Regulations Officer, Social Security Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Amendments to the Quick Disability Determination Process [Docket No. SSA 2007-0032] (RIN: 0960-AG47) received September 17, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

3533. A letter from the Acting Regulations Officer, Social Security Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Technical Updates to Applicability of the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Reduced Benefit Rate for Individuals Residing in Medical Treatment Facilities [Docket No. SSA-2006-0103] (RIN: 0960-AF99) received September 12, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

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. RANGEL: Committee on Ways and Means. H.R. 3648. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exclude discharges of indebtedness on principal residences from gross income, and for other purpose; with an amendment (Rept. 110–356). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union.

REPORTED BILL SEQUENTIALLY REFERRED

Under clause 2 of rule XII, bills and reports were delivered to the Clerk for printing, and bills referred as follows:

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi: Committee on Homeland Security. H.R. 2830. A bill to authorize appropriations for the Coast Guard for fiscal year 2008, and for other purposes; with an amendment; referred to the Committees on Energy and Commerce, and Judiciary for a period ending not later than October 15, 2007, for consideration of such provisions of the bill and amendment as fall within the jurisdiction of those committees pursuant to clauses 1(f) and 1(k), rule X (Rept. 110–338, Pt. 2). Ordered to be printed.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. BISHOP of New York (for himself and Mrs. LOWEY):

H.R. 3707. A bill to authorize the establishment of a memorial to all victims of terrorism; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. BLUMENAUER (for himself and Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania):

H.R. 3708. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to increase the limitations on the amount excluded from the gross estate with respect to land subject to a qualified conservation easement; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. FILNER:

H.R. 3709. A bill to authorize inter-tribal transfers of authority in leases between the Ewiiaapaayp Band of Kumeyaay and the Viejas Band of Kumeyaay, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. HOLDEN:

H.R. 3710. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to establish an Office of Correctional Public Health; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. HOLDEN (for himself and Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia):

H.R. 3711. A bill to amend title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to eliminate the matching requirement for certain bulletproof armor vest purchases under the matching grant program for bulletproof armor vests; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. KAPTUR:

H.R. 3712. A bill to designate the Federal building and United States courthouse located at 1716 Spielbusch Avenue in Toledo, Ohio, as the ''James M. & Thomas W.L. Ashley Customs Building and United States Courthouse''; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mrs. MALONEY of New York (for herself, Mr. NADLER, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, and Mr. SHAYS):

H.R. 3713. A bill to ensure that the courts of the United States may provide an impartial forum for claims brought by United States citizens and others against any railroad organized as a separate legal entity, arising from the deportation of United States citizens and others to Nazi concentration camps on trains owned or operated by such railroad, and by the heirs and survivors of such persons; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. PENCE:

H.R. 3714. A bill to amend the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 to repeal restrictions relating to electioneering communications, and for other purposes; to the Committee on House Administration.

By Mr. SPACE (for himself and Mrs. GILLIBRAND):

H.R. 3715. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow long-distance rural commuters a deduction during periods when the local price of gasoline exceeds $3 per gallon; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. WALSH of New York:

H.R. 3716. A bill to amend the Consumer Product Safety Act to require independent safety certification of children's products, to increase the Consumer Product Safety Commission's inspection capability for imported products, and to prohibit hazardous imports based on manufacturing site, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. UDALL of Colorado (for himself, Ms. HOOLEY, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. LANTOS, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mrs. MALONEY of New York, Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, Mrs. CHRISTENSEN, Mr. KUCINICH, Mr. OBERSTAR, Mr. DEFAZIO, Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida, Ms. KILPATRICK, Mr. FATTAH, Mr. STARK, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. DOYLE, Ms. WATSON, and Ms. CLARKE):

H. Con. Res. 221. Concurrent resolution honoring all Americans serving in the Armed Forces of the United States and condemning the attack by broadcaster Rush Limbaugh on the integrity and professionalism of some of those Americans; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. PENCE (for himself and Mr. WALDEN of Oregon):

H. Res. 694. A resolution providing for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 2905) to prevent the Federal Communications Commission from repromulgating the fairness doctrine; to the Committee on Rules.

By Mr. CAMPBELL of California:

H. Res. 695. A resolution expressing the support for designation of a ''National Fire Fighter Appreciation Day'' to honor and celebrate the fire fighters of the United States; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. COSTA (for himself and Mr. GRIJALVA):

H. Res. 696. A resolution expressing gratitude for the foreign guest laborers, known as Braceros, who worked in the United States during the period from 1942 to 1964; to the Committee on Education and Labor.

By Mr. KAGEN (for himself, Mr. TAYLOR, Mr. STUPAK, Mr. SHULER, Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin, Mr. KIND, Mr. SENSENBRENNER, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. PETRI, Mr. WICKER, Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin, Mr. OBEY, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Mr. SPACE, Mr. PERLMUTTER, Mr. MITCHELL, Mr. CONAWAY, Mr. WEXLER, Mr. MCNERNEY, Mr. MEEK of Florida, Mr. CROWLEY, Mr. BACA, Mr. ELLSWORTH, Mr. KUCINICH, Mr. HOLT, Mrs. BOYDA of Kansas, Ms. BEAN, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. KLEIN of Florida, Mr. LAMPSON, Ms. WOOLSEY, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. PUTNAM, Mr. ALTMIRE, Mr. COSTA, Ms. DEGETTE, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. MICA, Mr. ROGERS of Michigan, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. LOEBSACK, Mr. DICKS, Mr. BOUSTANY, Mr. WELCH of Vermont, Mr. KILDEE, Mr. HODES, Mr. SALAZAR, Ms. BERKLEY, Mr. ACKERMAN, Ms. HARMAN, Mr. ABERCROMBIE, Mr. HARE, Ms. CLARKE, Mr. WEINER, Mr. ROTHMAN, Mr. OLVER, Mr. HALL of New York, Mr. NADLER, Ms. SUTTON, Mr. BOSWELL, Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut, Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York, Mr. DOYLE, Mr. HOLDEN, Mr. CARNEY, and Mr. PICKERING):

H. Res. 697. A resolution commending Green Bay Packers quarterback Brett Favre for establishing a National Football League record for most career touchdown passes, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. WALSH of New York (for himself and Mr. FARR):

H. Res. 698. A resolution commemorating the 200th anniversary of Congressional Cemetery; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions as follows:

H.R. 111: Mr. MCDERMOTT.
H.R. 138: Mr. DREIER and Mr. SESSIONS.
H.R. 271: Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California.
H.R. 280: Mr. GORDON.
H.R. 281: Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. MITCHELL, Ms. DELAURO, and Mr. COURTNEY.
H.R. 369: Mr. UDALL of Colorado.
H.R. 396: Mr. GOODE.
H.R. 621: Mr. KIRK.
H.R. 676: Mr. LANTOS.
H.R. 684: Mr. GORDON.
H.R. 718: Mr. BAKER.
H.R. 726: Mr. BOSWELL.
H.R. 741: Mr. LATHAM.
H.R. 743: Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida, Mr. ISRAEL, Mr. ANDREWS, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. GALLEGLY, Mr. TIAHRT, and Mr. CANTOR.
H.R. 758: Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. BOREN, Ms. NORTON, Mr. MEEKS of New York, Mr. RANGEL, and Mr. NADLER.
H.R. 767: Mr. LOBIONDO.
H.R. 782: Mr. GOODLATTE.
H.R. 891: Mr. LANTOS, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, and Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania.
H.R. 1029: Mr. CANTOR, Mr. INGLIS of South Carolina, and Mr. PASTOR.
H.R. 1043: Mr. SERRANO.
H.R. 1055: Ms. DEGETTE.
H.R. 1073: Mr. MCDERMOTT.
H.R. 1102: Mr. MILLER of Florida.
H.R. 1108: Mr. EDWARDS and Mr. ANDREWS.
H.R. 1166: Mr. GORDON.
H.R. 1228: Mr. YOUNG of Alaska.
H.R. 1229: Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida.
H.R. 1236: Mr. SNYDER, Mr. YARMUTH, and Mr. MATHESON.
H.R. 1264: Mrs. BACHMANN.
H.R. 1280: Mr. LYNCH.
H.R. 1329: Mr. MCCAUL of Texas.
H.R. 1346: Mr. WELCH of Vermont.
H.R. 1409: Mr. TERRY.
H.R. 1424: Mr. HILL.
H.R. 1514: Mrs. DAVIS of California.
H.R. 1553: Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas.
H.R. 1609: Mr. FORBES, Mr. WAMP, Mr. CONAWAY, Mr. SHERMAN, and Mr. SNYDER.
H.R. 1619: Mr. LEVIN.
H.R. 1667: Mr. FARR.
H.R. 1707: Mr. MORAN of Kansas.
H.R. 1738: Mr. GERLACH, Mr. CALVERT, and Mr. GALLEGLY.
H.R. 1828: Mr. GORDON.
H.R. 1843: Mr. COSTA and Mr. CUMMINGS.
H.R. 1886: Mr. JACKSON of Illinois.
H.R. 1919: Ms. DEGETTE and Mr. SESTAK.
H.R. 1992: Mr. LIPINSKI.
H.R. 2074: Mr. KIRK and Mr. CONYERS.
H.R. 2112: Mr. GRIJALVA.
H.R. 2169: Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. NADLER, Mr. WEINER, and Mr. FILNER.
H.R. 2185: Mr. BAIRD.
H.R. 2205: Mrs. MALONEY of New York.
H.R. 2266: Mrs. LOWEY, Mr. ISRAEL, and Ms. KILPATRICK.
H.R. 2417: Mr. NADLER.
H.R. 2425: Mr. SHULER.
H.R. 2452: Mr. CAPUANO and Ms. BALDWIN.
H.R. 2478: Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California.
H.R. 2490: Mr. SPACE.
H.R. 2596: Mr. DELAHUNT.
H.R. 2597: Mr. JONES of North Carolina.
H.R. 2620: Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas.
H.R. 2651: Mr. GRIJALVA.
H.R. 2668: Mr. ROTHMAN.
H.R. 2706: Mr. CAMPBELL of California.
H.R. 2711: Mr. HAYES and Mr. EVERETT.
H.R. 2792: Mrs. DAVIS of California.
H.R. 2828: Mr. CONYERS, Mr. MCCOTTER, Mr. NADLER, and Mr. MCCAUL of Texas.
H.R. 2832: Mr. MCNULTY.
H.R. 2840: Mr. TOWNS and Mr. ABERCROMBIE.
H.R. 2851: Mr. TIERNEY, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. DOYLE, Mr. ALTMIRE, and Ms. BALDWIN.
H.R. 2852: Mr. PASTOR.
H.R. 2878: Mr. GOODE, Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California, and Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California.
H.R. 2903: Mr. GORDON.
H.R. 2933: Mrs. BLACKBURN, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, and Mr. BURTON of Indiana.

H.R. 2954: Mr. BROUN of Georgia.
H.R. 3029: Mr. LEVIN.
H.R. 3140: Mr. KUHL of New York.
H.R. 3148: Mr. PENCE.
H.R. 3167: Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. HINCHEY, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Mr. KAGEN, and Mr. KENNEDY.
H.R. 3176: Mr. CONAWAY.
H.R. 3195: Mr. KLEIN of Florida, Mr. MURTHA, Mr. WEXLER, and Ms. LEE.
H.R. 3232: Mr. SHULER, Mr. ROSKAM, Mrs. CAPPS, Mr. ALLEN, Mr. SCHIFF, Mrs. EMERSON, Mr. HINOJOSA, Mr. DICKS, Ms. BORDALLO, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. RADANOVICH, Ms. HOOLEY, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. PASTOR, Mr. MAHONEY of Florida, Mr. WALDEN of Oregon, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. THOMPSON of California, and Mr. POMEROY.
H.R. 3256: Mr. GORDON.
H.R. 3262: Mr. MARSHALL.
H.R. 3329: Mrs. TAUSCHER.
H.R. 3341: Mr. MILLER of Florida.
H.R. 3360: Mr. GRIJALVA.
H.R. 3402: Mr. HIGGINS.
H.R. 3412: Mr. SMITH of Nebraska.
H.R. 3432: Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ and Mr. SERRANO.
H.R. 3446: Mr. KILDEE, Mr. KNOLLENBERG, Mr. MCCOTTER, and Mr. ROGERS of Michigan.
H.R. 3466: Ms. SUTTON.
H.R. 3467: Mr. SMITH of New Jersey.
H.R. 3498: Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California and Ms. SUTTON.
H.R. 3499: Ms. DEGETTE and Mrs. CAPPS.
H.R. 3512: Mr. HARE.
H.R. 3533: Mr. ISRAEL, Mr. COSTA, Ms. WATERS, and Ms. CLARKE.
H.R. 3543: Mr. FILNER.
H.R. 3544: Mr. SIRES, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California, Ms. MATSUI, Ms. NORTON, and Mr. BOUCHER.
H.R. 3558: Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. SAXTON, Mr. BACHUS, and Ms. BALDWIN.
H.R. 3583: Mr. MCCAUL of Texas, Mr. SHUSTER, Mr. CAMP of Michigan, Mr. GINGREY, Mr. KLINE of Minnesota, Mr. SOUDER, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. JORDAN, Mr. WESTMORELAND, Mr. KUHL of New York, Mr. GOODE, Mr. LINDER, Mr. LUCAS, and Mr. BROWN of South Carolina.
H.R. 3584: Mr. BURTON of Indiana, Mr. HOBSON, Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey, Mr. CRENSHAW, Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida, and Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN.
H.R. 3616: Mrs. BLACKBURN and Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky.
H.R. 3639: Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California and Mr. BERMAN.
H.R. 3648: Mr. GORDON, Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida, Mr. FATTAH, Mr. HOLT, and Ms. GIFFORDS.
H.R. 3660: Mr. KAGEN.
H.R. 3663: Mr. MORAN of Virginia, Mr. MCDERMOTT, and Mr. DEFAZIO.
H.R. 3674: Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota, and Mr. DINGELL.
H.R. 3675: Mr. MCKEON.
H.R. 3691: Mr. TOWNS.
H.R. 3695: Mr. FILNER and Mr. MCGOVERN.
H.R. 3703: Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts.
H. Con. Res. 122: Mr. HODES.
H. Con. Res. 137: Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida.
H. Con. Res. 197: Ms. LEE, Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. SERRANO, Mr. HINOJOSA, Mr. REYES, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Mr. ETHERIDGE, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. FILNER, Mr. COSTA, Mr. HONDA, Mr. STARK, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Mr. CROWLEY, Mr. ORTIZ, Mrs. CHRISTENSEN, Mr. TOWNS, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Mr. GONZALEZ, Mr. MORAN of Virginia, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. RODRIGUEZ, Mr. GUTIERREZ, Mr. CUELLAR, Mr. FORTUÑO, Mr. HARE, Ms. NORTON, Mr. CARDOZA, Mr. UDALL of Colorado, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Mr. SPRATT, and Mr. SIRES.
H. Con. Res. 198: Mr. FATTAH.
H. Con. Res. 200: Mr. KENNEDY and Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas.
H. Con. Res. 204: Mrs. MYRICK.
H. Res. 111: Mrs. TAUSCHER, Mr. LEVIN, and Mr. SHUSTER.
H. Res. 237: Mrs. BOYDA of Kansas and Mr. SCHIFF.
H. Res. 282: Mr. MCCOTTER, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. MOLLOHAN, and Mr. GORDON.
H. Res. 356: Mr. STARK.
H. Res. 373: Mr. SHERMAN.
H. Res. 415: Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California.
H. Res. 448: Mr. TOWNS, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. GORDON, Mrs. MYRICK, Mr. BOYD of Florida, Mr. TANNER, Mr. ENGEL, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, and Ms. DEGETTE.
H. Res. 537: Mr. HONDA.
H. Res. 573: Mr. UDALL of Colorado, Mr. KIRK, Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California, and Mr. FATTAH.
H. Res. 576: Ms. SLAUGHTER.
H. Res. 610: Ms. KILPATRICK.
H. Res. 616: Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD.
H. Res. 620: Mr. ROTHMAN.
H. Res. 630: Mr. ETHERIDGE.
H. Res. 676: Mr. MCCOTTER, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Ms. BERKLEY, Mr. SAXTON, Mr. UDALL of Colorado, Mr. POE, Mr. MILLER of Florida, and Mr. CALVERT.
H. Res. 679: Mr. CARNAHAN.
H. Res. 680: Mr. MCCOTTER, Mr. POE, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. SHIMKUS, and Mr. BUYER.
H. Res. 691: Mr. COOPER and Mr. SPACE.

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:

The amendment to be offered by Representative CONYERS or a designee to H.R. 2740, the MEJA Expansion and Enforcement Act of 2007, 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.