Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, 1 month ago a grave injustice was perpetrated on the American people. We were deeply saddened by the loss of several thousand brave Americans who will be missed terribly by their friends and families. In a community as close-knit as Rhode Island, our stinging loss was even more personal.

I would like to take this opportunity to remember seven men and women from our great State who we lost in this tragedy.

David Angell was a native of Rhode Island who rose to prominence in the television industry and was the executive producer of the popular show ''Frazier,'' a wonderful tribute to his talent and hard work. He was traveling with his wife, Lynn, back to California after vacationing in New England with his brother, Kenneth A. Angell, former auxiliary bishop for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Providence.

Carol Bouchard lived in my hometown of Warwick, and worked as an emergency services secretary at Kent County Memorial Hospital. I spoke to her husband of 2 years, who wants everyone to know what a wonderful woman Carol was.

She was traveling with her friend, Renee Newell from the City of Cranston, who was a customer service agent for American Airlines. Renee's husband of 10 years, Paul, would like people to know that she was not only a dedicated wife and mother, but also a proud airline employee. These two friends were combining a business trip for Renee with a brief vacation in Las Vegas.

Michael Gould was an employee of Cantor Fitzgerald on the 104th floor of the World Trade Center. He grew up in Newport, Rhode Island, where his mother still resides. After graduating from Villanova University in 1994, he went to work in the financial sector, first in New York and then in San Francisco. Michael had just returned to New York in June.

Amy Jarret, of North Smithfield, worked as a dedicated flight attendant for United Airlines. She began working there after she graduated from Villanova University. She was aboard the Boston to Los Angeles Flight 175.

Sean Nassaney of Pawtucket, Rhode Island, was 25 years old and already a sales manager for American Power Conversion. He graduated cum laude from Bryant College in 1998, spent a year in Australia, and then enrolled in the MBA program at Providence College. Sean and his girlfriend, Lynn Goodchild, were on United Flight 175 en route to Hawaii.

Mr. Speaker, these men and women are only a few of the victims of the tragedy that struck America 1 month ago. They will be sadly missed. Today, I want to honor and remember and celebrate their lives. As our Nation copes with the events of September 11, we should take comfort in the knowledge that the American principles of freedom and tolerance, democracy, will not be overcome by terrorism.

I offer my sincere condolences and support to the family and friends of David and Lynn Angell, Carol Bouchard, Sean Nassaney, Amy Jarret, Renee Newell, and Michael Gould, and to all of those who have lost loved ones in the tragedy of September 11. We remain confident, though, that together we will persevere.

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.)

AMERICA'S SECURITY IN THE AIRLINE INDUSTRY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. INSLEE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, this evening several of us have come to the floor to talk about what many of us believe is the most pressing responsibility of the U.S. Congress right now; that is, our security, and particularly our security in our airline industry.

We believe that Congress should act very promptly; in fact, the other Chamber has passed a bill. But to date, although we are 30 days past September 11-plus, we still have not had a vote in this Chamber to increase how we deal with safety in our airlines. That is extremely disappointing, because we have had a lot of other votes here in the House in the last month, but we still have not dealt with some very, very huge holes in our airline security provisions.

Tonight, we are going to start by talking about perhaps one of the most glaring loopholes in our airline security system, and that is the loophole that unfortunately allows bags with explosive devices to go into the luggage compartments of airplanes.

The sad fact is that Congress needs to act and act promptly and aggressively to make sure that baggage that goes into the belly of an airplane is screened for explosive devices. The reason we need to act is that the airlines themselves have not provided a comprehensive 100 percent screening by any measure, any technology, even a visual inspection of the bags that go into the luggage compartment of our airlines. It is a glaring omission, and Congress needs to act.

We believe that we ought to this week include in our airline security package a provision that, by law, requires 100 percent of the bags, not just the carry-on bags, which are currently screened, but in fact the bags that go down the conveyer belt and go into the belly of our aircraft, to be screened. Right now only a small percentage, only a small percentage of those bags are screened by x-ray or other technology for explosive devices.

Mr. Speaker, I have to tell the Members, it is clear to me that the American public has an expectation that bombs are going to be kept out of the baggage that goes on the airplanes with them. That is a reasonable expectation, it is a commonsense expectation, but it is not being met by the airline industry. So the U.S. House of Representatives this week needs to pass a bill and a statute that will require that we use the technology to in fact do that screening.

The good news is that we have excellent technology that can do this. We have several types of machines that, with a very high degree of confidence, can determine whether there is an explosive device in the baggage before it gets on the airplane. We simply need a law that will in fact require that those machines be used universally. We have 100 percent coverage in this regard.

We have introduced or the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. STRICKLAND) and about 30 others of us have introduced a bill, the Baggage Screening Act, which will accomplish that. We hope that this bill, or the fundamentals of it, will be included in the airline security bill when it comes to the floor this week.

But there are a host of airline security issues, and I would like to yield to the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. LANGEVIN), who has been showing leadership on this issue, for his comments.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me.

I, too, would like to join with my colleagues, and many other colleagues, in calling for greater security at our airlines.

September 11 was a tragic day in this Nation's history. Let us take a strong lesson that we need to join together and focus attention on the problem of airline security to reinstill confidence in our travelers, in the knowledge that when they board an aircraft they do so in safety, and that they will arrive safely to their destination.

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of things that we can do to improve airline security, the most important of which, I think, as a first step, is that we federalize airline screeners.

We want people there who are totally focused on ensuring the utmost safety for those who are entering the airports and who are entering our airlines, who will be boarding our planes. We want people there that are motivated not by a company that is only motivated by profits, but are there, again, totally focused on security. Federalizing those employees is the best way to get us there.

Mr. Speaker, as my colleagues stated, we have dealt with a number of bills since September 11. We need now to take up this issue in legislation in improving our airline security.

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for sharing those ideas.

If people heard the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. LANGEVIN) talking about the tragedy and some of the folks lost September 11, it seems to me that it is incumbent on us to get ahead of the wave of terrorism to prevent this from occurring.

We are confident that in the airline security bill that the House will pass we are going to deal effectively with the manner of this horrendous attack; namely, someone getting into the cockpit.

We have already started to introduce into the industry some measures to keep people out of the cockpit. On the flight I was on from Seattle to Dulles yesterday, there was a bar, a new bar that they have put across the door that United is putting on to keep people from bashing down the door.

□ 2030

So we think we are going to be successful in preventing people from intruding in the cockpit, getting ahold of these planes and turning them into missiles, but what we are concerned about, we are concerned if the U.S. House does not act about the next type of strategy and tactic that the terrorists could use, which potentially could be to put a bomb in an airplane, and unless we have a hundred percent screening of baggage that goes into the luggage compartment, we are not going to have a degree of confidence that we need to make sure that airlines are safe.

So we need to get ahead of the terrorists, not be one step behind them. We need to be one step ahead of them, and we have certainly learned since the Lockerbie bombing that this is a necessary step.

I would like to yield to the cosponsor of the Baggage Screening Act and leader on this issue, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. STRICKLAND).

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my friend from Washington State for yielding.

The fact is that we believe the American traveling public has a right to be fully informed about the safety and security measures that are available to them, as well as those that are not in place, as they make decisions regarding whether they want to fly on an airplane. The fact is that today flying is somewhat safer than it was prior to September 11, but there is so much more that we need to do that we have not yet done.

Every flight should have a marshal on that flight that is trained and armed and fully prepared to protect the passengers and the pilots. That is basic.

Every flight should be a flight where the baggage that is carried on board has been thoroughly screened so that we know that knives or guns or other weapons have not been taken aboard that airplane.

Another thing that needs to be done, and quite frankly where there is great resistance, is making sure that all the luggage that is placed in the belly of that plane, in the cargo space, is thoroughly inspected before it is placed on that plane.

Last week, when we discussed this matter in this Chamber, we talked about the fact that we are currently inspecting approximately 5 percent of the luggage that is being placed in the cargo sections of airplanes. And the next day, I got a call from a young man from the State of New York; and he said, Congressman, I am outraged, because I am planning a vacation in November. And I plan to take my family on an airplane. I had no idea that the luggage that is placed on the airlines is not currently checked.

The fact is that most of it is not checked, and we will never be as safe and secure as we can be and should be until we address this gaping hole in our security system.

I would like to share with my friend from Washington State an editorial that was in today's Columbus, Ohio, Dispatch newspaper. They asked the question, ''What security?'' And I would read just a few paragraphs from this editorial.

The editorial begins: ''Last week, Americans learned about corporations engaging in what has to be the most outrageous disregard for public safety displayed by any business in years. As Americans now know, travelers who believe that baggage was routinely X-rayed were enjoying a false sense of security.''

The fact is that most Americans, I think, believe that when they go to an airport and they check their baggage they assume that before that baggage is placed on that airplane that it will be screened; and it is not. What happened over Lockerbie, Scotland, which cost so many young lives, was a suitcase bomb that had been placed in the cargo of that airplane. And last week we met with two fathers who lost sons in that terrible tragedy. One lost a 20-year-old son and one lost a 24-year-old son. These two fathers stood outside this Capitol building and shared with us the fact that they had worked for the last 13 years trying to get this changed so that other parents would not have to face the kind of sadness and tragedy that they faced.

Yet the airlines have consistently fought this commonsense procedure. We need to do this, and we need to make this a part of the airline security bill that this House passes.

Before I yield back to my friend, I would just like to say this. We have done a lot in this Chamber since September 11. We have dealt with a lot of things. We passed a $15 billion bailout for the airline industry. We have attended to some other national needs, but the American people want to feel they are safe. And people who fly on our airlines want to feel that we have done everything that we can practically do to make sure they are safe.

Yet there is great resistance in this Chamber, and I am sad to say that most of that resistance is coming from the leadership on the other side of the aisle. They do not want to federalize this security force. They do not want to pass this legislation that will guarantee that all luggage is screened.

I would just like to share one other paragraph from the Columbus Dispatch editorial before I yield my time back.

The editorial ends this way: ''Will there be no end to the revelations of how poorly the Federal Government, airport security workers, and airlines have handled the job of protecting passengers? How many other rules are not being enforced? How much evidence do House Republicans need to convince them that only a top-notch security force, paid by the taxpayers and not hired by the low-bid contractors, will make the airlines as safe as possible? A bill passed by the Senate and pending in the House would federalize airport security. The House should stop playing politics with this essential legislation and pass it.''

I say amen to what the Columbus Dispatch has written in their editorial. This is something we need to do, and we need to do it expeditiously. And lives can be saved if we act; and I believe if we fail to act, American lives will be lost.

I yield back to my friend from Washington State.

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. STRICKLAND), always a good voice for common sense; and this is basically common sense. When I have talked to people about this, they say, of course they should be screened, there is absolutely no reason not to screen this; and I appreciate the gentleman's comments.

I just want to share one piece of good news on this issue.

The good news is that through American genius of developing technology, we have machines that work tremendously. They can screen somewhere between 500 and 800 bags an hour. They have an extremely high rate of success in finding explosive materials. All we have to do is make sure they are in the airports and they are turned on.

Several years ago, the Federal Government gave the airlines about $400 million worth of these machines, about 100 plus of these machines. Unfortunately, many of them sat there and have not been used. So incredibly, the Federal Government has given the airlines these machines and they have sat there in a corner and people are not using them.

The good news is that the FAA has ordered people to start using those as close to 100 percent as they can now, but we need to get more of these wonderful machines. Put American technology to work. There is good news here if we will do our jobs.

Mr. Speaker, I want to yield to the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. LARSON). I want to note too that Connecticut is the home of our insurance industry.

There is an aspect of the economic security for the whole country in making sure we do not let bombs get into

baggage, that is, if another plane or two goes down, not only will we have insurance claims, we will have a loss of the whole airline industry. We need the airline industry to get behind this bill to say that all of us should be participating in the screening. A man from the insurance industry I know understands that.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. LARSON).

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the gentleman from Washington (Mr. INSLEE) for his outstanding leadership on this issue. I rise to associate myself with the comments of him and the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. LANGEVIN) and the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. STRICKLAND), the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE), and the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. SHOWS), which follow in what the gentleman has rightly put forward is a very commonsense approach.

Since September 11, clearly the world as we have known previously has changed in dramatic fashion. Thomas Friedman wrote in The New York Times that if we are to point fingers and look for blame, one of the areas we ought to look to is failure of imagination, failure to think through the potential of what could happen.

This very commonsense proposal does not require an awful lot of imagination. What it requires is the will to step forward and recognize in a very pragmatic fashion what needs to be done in the country immediately. And as we take up the issue of airport security, whether it be marshals on planes, whether it be cockpit security, whether it be the use of greater technology, this is something that the American public is insisting upon.

We cannot expect to go forward and have tourism continue at its pace previously or commerce and business to travel across this Nation if we are not willing in this body to put forward legislation that as the gentleman has put forward, would provide us with the most up-to-date technological ability of screening and also federalizing our airports in such a manner that we know we are getting the kind of scrutiny and security that the American public demands.

Why do they demand it? Because our televisions, our cable TV broadcasts are replete with what has happened since September 11. And the concerns have been put out there. They were eloquently stated by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. STRICKLAND), and these need to be addressed in a very commonsense manner. To move away from an important security issue at a time when we are focusing on homeland defense just makes no sense whatsoever.

I conduct hearings back in my district and have met with local municipal officials. Truly this is another area of frontline defense. And if we are not taking every precaution necessary at our airports to make sure that people are safe and secure while traveling, then who but to blame then the United States Congress for not taking the appropriate action.

I commend the gentleman for his persistency in this issue. For more often than not in a legislative body it is persistency that counts. It is making sure that the public understands that this issue is not going to go away, and it is incumbent upon the public to contact their local Congressman.

So for those of you who are listening tonight and are interested in this subject matter, do not write the gentleman from Washington (Mr. INSLEE). He is a supporter of this. Write your local Congressman. Talk about this importance too with them. Send them a letter. Call them on the telephone. The pressure has to come from the bottom up in order for us to move legislation in this body.

If there is one lesson that we have learned, the silver lining in September 11, is a renewed interest on the part of the public, an understanding that we no longer can be passive participants and defer responsibility to someone else, but have to take the steps ourselves to get involved in our community, to get involved in our State, to get involved in our Nation. We can do that very easily by picking up the phone, by writing a letter, by sending an e-mail and supporting this key piece of legislation.

Again, I want to commend the gentleman from Washington (Mr. INSLEE) for his outstanding work in this area and his persistency.

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman very much for that eloquent comment. I agree, we have no genius here. This is a commonsense idea, and we will try to be persistent.

I have got to note, I think the question if the House fails in this charge to do this, people are going to ask why are we spending millions of dollars to make sure people have the nail clippers taken away from them when they go through the passenger screening system. And then we have a big barn door that is open that allows people to put 40 pounds of C4 explosive in their bags and take down the plane. The does not make any sense whatsoever.

The reason the people need to know this sort of dirty little secret here, the reason this has not happened to date is the airlines have not wanted to spend a buck to do this. We are talking about maybe $2 a passenger to do this. That security is worth $2 a passenger. Believe me, I think I can state that I have 600,000 constituents, and I think every one of them agrees with this proposition. We need to make sure that voice is heard.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. INSLEE. I will yield to the gentleman.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. It has not been missed on a number of us as well that since September 11, we have spent an awful lot of time focusing on homeland defense and first responders and appropriately so.

It was not the FBI, the CIA, the FAA, or the Armed Services that responded first in the New York, in the fields of Pennsylvania, or the Pentagon. It was our frontline individuals. I have met with them. If we talk to people back in our home district, and they will quote us. Take a look at the budget as it exists today in the Federal Government as it relates to terrorism and how we are prepared, we have appropriated about $8.9 billion, only $300 million of which gets outside of the Beltway.

To the gentleman's point about the reluctance of the airlines and the need for the Federal Government to step forward here, is that this truly is a frontline initiative that is going to need the funding. Now, if that requires, as the gentleman rightly points out, $2 or $3 more to make sure the cockpit is secure, to make sure we have the kind of technology available at our airports so the people feel safe and secure, I think the American public needs to hear that debate and that dialogue.

□ 2045

I believe they are ready to step forward and make sure we embrace safety and security. That is what September 11 has done, it has gelled us together as a Nation in patriotic fervor, yes, but also with the notion of what to do beyond this; to make sure in that time-honored tradition of the Boy Scouts that we are prepared, and the gentleman's bill prepares us for that future. And, again, I want to commend the gentleman.

Mr. INSLEE. I may note, too, that we hope, particularly for smaller airports, that there is Federal assistance in financing this thing. These machines are not inexpensive. They are extremely effective, but they are not inexpensive. And particularly for our airports that have limited revenues, we hope the Federal Government will help in the acquisition.

We are going to have a stimulus bill to help stimulate the economy. We need to stimulate some safety and create some jobs building these machines. And to those people in the airline industry that say it will take too long to build these, we built 12,000 B–24s in 3½ to 4 years during World War II. We can build a few hundred of these machines in the next several months to a year, and we ought to be doing that right away.

I want to thank the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. LARSON), and I now want to yield to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) for her comments.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I would almost say that I am sorry I had to meet my colleague this way, this week, this time; but I am certainly pleased to join my colleagues for what I consider to be a very, very important challenge that we have to face.

There have been some different discussions and different challenges since September 11; and if my colleagues will bear with me for a moment, they will

understand the thrust of my remarks about why we have to be here today to talk about the federalization of the security systems at our airports and for our airlines.

Since September 11, we have confronted the new question of how do we secure the American people, the American people who trust us and who have confidence in us and who entrust us with the responsibilities of government. No one could have predicted, at least we are not casting any accusations on the terrible and heinous acts of September 11, but what the American people can ask us for today is that we act today with deliberateness and factualness and we act to do the right thing.

Yesterday, in my district, after hearing of the terrible incident with Senator DASCHLE, interestingly enough I was meeting with my emergency personnel, with physicians, talking about anthrax. And as we were sitting in a meeting, several incidents occurred in our own meeting. A woman got a substance in the mail; the 911 operator said go straight to the hospital. She takes the envelope and winds up shutting down the hospital and having to decontaminate the patients. So new decisions have to be made, quick decisions have to be made. And later on tonight we will be discussing this whole issue of dealing with the Afghan women and children and trying to nurture them. That means that we are looking at the world through different glasses.

I cannot understand for the life of me, as so many of us get called and interviewed, I got a news reporter calling me about what am I doing about security in my office, how are my employees handling anthrax; and I said I want them to be safe and secure, we are following the instructions, but most of all I want them not to panic, to be calm. But no one is asking about why the Senate voted 100 to one to pass a bill providing a safe pathway for the thousands and thousands and millions and millions of passengers, men, women and children, families being united with grandmothers and grandfathers, aunts and uncles, going to colleges and visiting their young people at colleges, college people coming home for holidays; and yet we cannot take this bill up in the House of Representatives. No one seems to think that that is an important enough headline to ask the question.

My good friend from Ohio mentioned something, and probably someone is out whispering why did he say that, friends on the other side of the aisle; but there comes a time when you must stand up for the American people. I believe that we have been most gracious and most committed and most patriotic working with the President, working with our colleagues on the other side, saying that we are going to face terrorism and we are going to look it in the eye and they are not going to intimidate us. But I am sorry, I am overwhelmed; and that is not a good word, because it means you are not acting.

But I think we are acting tonight, and the gentleman is acting; and we are going to get this bill heard. That we could have a vote so strong in the United States Senate, here we are talking about bicameral and working together, and yet we come to the House of Representatives, 435 Members in the people's House, who do not even get a chance to debate this issue, to be able to stand up for the American people and tell them we are going to check those airline bags, those bags going into the airplane.

I came in from Dulles, and I was looking at the Japanese airline counter; and if I am not mistaken, I saw an X-ray machine outside that counter. I did not see it outside our counters, but I saw an X-ray machine and it had Japanese language on it, so it means people getting on that plane, their bags were going through an additional X-ray machine. This is unseemly. And I believe it is time now that we get the headlines of the Nation's newspapers. I know the gentleman just read an op-ed piece from the Columbus Dispatch, but I believe it is time for our newspapers from Houston to Seattle to San Francisco to New York to begin to look at the real issues that are confronting the American public.

People are still not getting on the planes. And I am the first one to say I do not want to create panic or hysteria. I want my constituents to fly. I am getting on a plane every day. But there must be this sense of obligation and responsibility that we have.

New language on the floor of the House today. We are talking about helping the Afghan women and children and talking about the terrible Taliban and how we want to make sure they are no longer in charge. But as we do those things and talk about anthrax and safety and postal rules and regulations, I think it is important that we bring this bill to the floor of the House.

Let me just simply yield to the gentleman for a question, but first I want to make a point about this bipartisanship. I am as committed as anyone. I think we are going to have a debate on the economic stimulus package. There are some disagreements there. And I think the American people need to understand that this is in keeping with democracy and what is the right thing to do; legislation that we worked on totally different, but I am bringing in on a bipartisan point, H. Con. Res. 228, dealing with prioritizing the children who lost parents on that day, trying to get them the Federal benefits. That bill is languishing here in the House; we cannot seem to get that to the forefront and to the attention thereof.

Here we are with the bill of the gentleman from Washington (Mr. INSLEE), and I want to ask, because I think I have the right numbers correct, I know there was a bill we passed 96 to one in the Senate; but I believe the bill on security was 100 to one, and the gentleman can correct me, but what has been the response and where are we in moving this bill through the House? Will Members of the House have the opportunity to work on behalf of their constituents to answer the concerns. As we are stopped at airports all the time, the concessionaires are telling me get more people flying, and I am trying to do that; but what is the status of the legislation that we are trying to do here in the House?

Mr. INSLEE. Well, the gentlewoman is correct. It was 100 to zero, unanimous, in the Senate; yet we still have not had a chance to vote on a security bill. And that is incredible, because if this bill was brought to the floor, we are confident it would pass with overwhelming bipartisan support. This bill has bipartisan support, the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS), the gentlewoman from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA), who is a leader on this subject, has supported this concept. We will pass this bill with bipartisan support. The problem is that, unfortunately, some of the leadership in this Chamber, in the majority party, does not want this bill and the potential federalization of this issue to occur, to even have a vote on it. And I think that is most unfortunate because we would pass this bill if we had a chance to do it.

I have to tell my colleagues that the people I talk to want to see the Federal Government assure the flying public that they have security. And just like we have Federal employees running the FBI, just like we have Federal employees running the FDA, we ought to have Federal assurance and Federal officers who are certified and trained and paid so that they do not have a 400 percent turnover, like the people do now running the airports, so they have a high level of security.

We have police officers work for us that work for the city, we have fire department people that work for the city, and these people ought to work for us so that we do not have this private enterprise in the mix. Now, there is nothing wrong with private enterprise; but when it comes to security, this is not a theoretical experiment. We had an experiment and it ended on September 11. It failed that model.

Mr. STRICKLAND. Would the gentleman yield for just a moment?

Mr. INSLEE. Certainly.

Mr. STRICKLAND. The fact is the American people want us to do this. The American people want to be safe when they fly. Most American citizens that I have talked to, who have flown, some of them for many years, have operated under the belief that when they took a bag and they checked it in at the airport that it was screened for explosives before it was placed aboard that airplane.

I think this is something that members of both parties want. And as the gentleman said, if we had a chance to vote, I am absolutely confident that we

would pass this bill overwhelmingly. But the fact is that a very small minority of the majority, those in positions of leadership, are preventing this legislation from coming to the floor for a thorough debate and a vote. It just simply is wrong.

I believe as the American people find out what is happening they will become enraged and they will start expressing themselves, so that eventually we will get this bill passed; but we need to do it sooner rather than later.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. If the gentleman will yield.

Mr. INSLEE. Yes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. I want to follow through on the gentleman's point. We have had some success with airports opening; but I am told even today, in visiting National Airport, the Nation's jewel as it relates to air travel, and certainly the recognition that we are looking terrorists in the eye and we are not going to be intimidated, that it is practically empty. A part of the reason, of course, is it deals with rules they are trying to construct, but also the desire to fly and coming into this area. I am almost sure that with the headline banner of the new federalizing of the security, it would make a world of difference.

I do want to just note that none of us are condemning the hardworking individuals who are doing that job now. We appreciate the work they are doing, with the training they had, many of them coming from our respective communities. I want them to know I appreciate them and respect them. I would hope some of them would be put in a position to be trained, elevated, promoted, and given career opportunities. This is not an argument about those people who are acting and performing at the level of their training.

In fact, this morning, coming up here, I saw that they were putting people off the counter because they need so many people. I recognized people from the counter who were just standing trying to be security. That is not fair to them. And they are doing that because there is so much load.

So what I would simply say, this is an effort not to in any way denigrate anyone who is doing the job within the realm of their capacity and training. This is to say that we now speak a different language, we have a better way to do it, and the way to do it is to provide the federalization. And it really is shameful that we would use the issue of working people and that we do not want more Federal employees as an issue to prevent safety here in the United States.

I thank the gentleman for yielding to me.

Mr. INSLEE. I will yield to the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. SHOWS) in a second, but that is a very important point. Basically, what we have seen is what happens when you try to do security on the cheap. And we have had this porous system, and I want to tell my colleagues how porous it is. I will read one thing, and perhaps the gentleman from Mississippi will want to comment on it.

This is from the New York Times of October 12, a month after the tragedy. It says, ''The security company that was fined $1.2 million last year and put on probation for hiring convicted felons to screen passengers at Philadelphia National Airport has continued to hire screeners without checking whether they have criminal records, the United States attorney says. Prosecutors also said the company,'' and I will leave out its name just for the moment, ''had failed to fire the felons it had already hired and lied to the government about the background checks it was supposed to be conducting.''

That is an experiment that we had when we did not have a federalized system of dealing with airline security. That has failed and we need to move forward. It is regrettable that the leadership of this Chamber has not allowed the majority will to fix this problem.

With that I wish to yield to a great leader both on this issue and others, and the star of our class in 1998, the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. SHOWS).

□ 2100

Mr. SHOWS. Mr. Speaker, I agree with what the gentleman from Washington is talking about. Being a highway commissioner from the State of Mississippi, we used to accept the lowest bids on contract work for our highway department, the lowest bidder getting the job.

Basically what has happened in the airline industry, they are competing against each other. They know if they pay the screeners more money than others are paying, guess who is not going to get the job. We need to work out some kind of mechanism to make sure that the best qualified people get the job.

People have to feel safe to fly. It is ridiculous to think we can give billions of dollars to the airline industry, which I voted for because I want to help the airlines. I know what it means to our country and our commerce in this country, but for us to do that and not do the things that we need to do to make the people feel safe to fly, and I can tell my colleagues what we can do. We can take a lot less money and put that money into making people feel safe when they get on the plane, and we will see the airline industry come back. People will adjust to what it takes to get prepared to get on an airplane. Once they know that they have to have their bags packed a certain way, they have to get there early enough, people will adjust because they like the convenience and speed of flying. They can get to their destination in a day or half a day.

But it is like walking in a neighborhood that one does not feel safe in, people are going to go around that neighborhood. Until the people feel safe on these airlines, and it is just the bill that the gentleman from Washington (Mr. INSLEE) is talking about. And I wish the media would get onto this. The media is telling bin Laden and the Taliban more things than I want them to know. Why is the media not talking about this?

Mr. Speaker, I have asked the media to get involved and help promote, and ''promote'' may be the wrong word, but what is wrong with helping the American people feel safe on the plane? What is wrong with having Federal employees doing so many other jobs, and we are not talking about a huge number that is going to be added. We just added billions to what we are talking about. We want to improve the airlines, and we do not want to see National desolate, we do not want to see Orlando desolate, and we want to see Mississippi and Florida tourism growing, and the only way to do that is to make people feel safe. If they feel safe, they will fly.

Also what country or what state lives in the most dangerous part of the world, and that is Israel. How many planes have they lost or been hijacked in the last 10–12 years?

We are the only country that does not pay our screeners and have them as State or Federal employees. Are we so much smarter than everybody else that we do something that nobody else does. I admit that the United States of America is the best country in the world, but we do not have to reinvent the wheel. We can look at what works for Israel and Europe and see what has happened to them and what has happened to us.

In closing, I would like to say that we need to promote the well-being of our people traveling for the good of this country, for the good of airlines. I was in the airport this morning flying out of Jackson, Mississippi. An employee, this is one of the people that actually worked there, I know who he is, he said, please ask them to federalize these jobs so we can recruit. And I am not saying that the ones that are there are not good people, but they are paid the minimum wage. How much interest can they have in their job if they are being paid minimum wage.

Mr. Speaker, we have a lot of things that we need to correct, and one of them is what the gentleman is discussing, inspecting every bag. A lot of people think every bag is being screened right now, and they are not. If every bag is not screened, this is going to make travelers even more wary of getting on a plane. Let us screen every bag and put the equipment in there. Let us get the employees that screen the bags federalized and get them to where they can make a decent living and we will not have to make another bailout because people will fly again.

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, the low pay and lack of training has resulted in 300 and 400 percent turnover in the folks that do the job. What expectation can one have when the business has 400 percent turnover of its employees.

I was talking to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. MCDERMOTT). He said when he got on the plane yesterday, he took his metallic objects, his phone and watch, and he tried to put them in a little cup while he walked through the Magnometer, but there was no cup. So he walked through holding his metallic objects. Of course the Magnometer went off like it is supposed to do. The gentleman from Washington went back to go through the Magnometer again and the person said, go ahead, I see that you are holding the metal, and that is what set it off. But the fellow who was doing the screening did not realize that he could have had a grenade and a .45 caliber Smith & Wesson, and he did not send this passenger back through the Magnometer. That is the lack of attention, precision, acuity that makes this a poor system at the front end much less at the back end.

And the gentleman mentioned that not all of the bags are screened. Almost 90 percent of the bags are not screened. This is a huge, huge failure. Right now we are paying attention to the front door where the passengers walk on, and we have a back door that is totally open in the baggage hold.

Mr. SHOWS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to say I think personally 6 months from now if we do not do something to give the flying public confidence, we are going to be looking at another bailout. I do not believe that airlines can survive under the environment that is happening now. People are still not flying.

I do not want to come back 6 to 8 months from now and have airline after airline going out of business, and we have States' revenue dropping, and us not have done our job. We ought to have the opportunity to do that.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for organizing this special order.

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. STRICKLAND).

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, I believe most Americans have thought that when they go to an airport and they check their luggage, that it is screened before it is put on that airplane. I think it is a surprise to a lot of American travelers when they find that those bags have not been screened.

I would like to share one other paragraph from this Columbus Dispatch editorial on airline safety.

This is in today's Columbus Dispatch. They say ''The U.S. Transportation Department's Inspector General reported just last Thursday that observations at seven of the Nation's 20 highest risk airports found nearly no screening of checked bags.'' Now, some time ago, $441 million in tax money was used to buy 164 high tech bomb detection machines for about 50 airports and 20 airlines. These largely have been gathering dust or sitting in warehouses. That is why we need a law. We need to make this mandatory so that when we go to the airport and get on an airplane with our families, the people we care about, for vacation or business or for whatever reason, that we can believe that our government has taken those steps that are essentially necessary for us to be as safe as possible.

Until we do this, I believe the American public needs to know and to understand that there is a possibility that when they get on that airplane, it may have an explosive device in its cargo hold. The American people deserve that information. I do not want to scare people either. I want people to feel like they can fly and fly safely; but neither do I want to deceive or keep information from the public. The public needs to know that when they get on an airplane today, that it is likely that at least 95 percent of the luggage that is in the belly of that plane has not been screened for explosives.

I go back to what I have said before. If we pass this legislation, I believe American lives will be saved. If we neglect to do this, if we play politics with this issue, if we put it off and put it off, if we argue about whether or not we are going to pass a bill or have Federal employees and this matter is continually pushed aside, I believe the lives of American citizens will be lost. What we are dealing with here is a very serious matter.

Much of what we talk about in this Chamber and what we vote about does not have life or death implications, but this matter has life and death implications. That is why we should take it seriously. That is why I feel strongly that we should keep at this and every chance we have to come to the floor and talk about this issue, that we do it until the leadership on the other side of the aisle is willing to bring this bill to this floor so that we can have a vote.

We are the representatives of the American people. We have a responsibility to do all that we can to protect them. We deserve the right to have this legislation brought to this floor for a vote. It is unconscionable that the leadership on the other side of the aisle would prevent us from bringing this vital legislation before this Chamber.

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, that is what is disappointing about the current state of affairs. The House has been remarkably united. The Speaker has done a good job in trying to find a unified position in dealing with the international conflict.

Now we are in a situation where some of the folks in the majority leadership know we are going to pass this bill if it comes to a vote; and for that reason they will not allow a vote on it. There is no other reason to bring this for a vote. Certainly the American people's attention is focused on the issue of security. The only reason to not bring it to a vote is we are going to pass it on a bipartisan basis.

Unfortunately, folks have let ideology stand in the way of common sense. There is an ideology in some parts of this Chamber that says the Federal Government is evil and should not assume more responsibility. This is a responsibility that the Federal Government needs to assume for the benefit of its citizens. The failure of the current model, which is the airlines running the system, speaks volumes.

The other thing that I want to say is that we have to have Federal decision-making on this because if we are going to have a system that does not delay passengers, we have to have a consistent system. We cannot have one airline doing it one way, and a second airline doing it a different way. When we have connections, we have to have a consistent system. We cannot have a balkanized system.

The airlines do some things good, but they do not get together and decide things very well. They cannot even decide, after 10 years, what size of carry-on should be the maximum side. That is why the Federal Government needs to act.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. STRICKLAND).

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, we do not want our police officers to be privatized. We do not want our CIA or our FBI to be privatized. We do not want our firefighters to be privatized. We are talking about security here. Our airport security personnel should be professional. They should be accountable. They should be highly trained, and they should be government employees. The government should be responsible for their performance.

I think this is what the American people want. The Senate voted 100 to nothing. Every Republican and every Democrat in the Senate of this country voted to federalize this security force. Yet we are not getting an opportunity in this House Chamber even to bring the bill to the floor for a debate and vote. I do not believe that we will get that opportunity until the American people express themselves, until the American people let the leadership in this Chamber know how deeply and how strongly they feel about this issue.

Mr. INSLEE. I yield to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE).

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I want to follow up on the languishing of these large machines that are in a number of airports around the country. What a terrible tragedy. I happen to know firsthand of these particular machines.

One of the reasons given by some of the individuals I spoke to is we do not have a physical area large enough for the machine. That is a definitive and defined need for the Federal Government to step in and to indicate you do not have one, you make one because it all plays into securing the American skies, if you will.

I think the next point that I want to make is what have we been covering and hearing about over the last couple of days? Anthrax.

□ 2115

We have not been hearing about how do we prevent tragedies with anthrax, or measures that would have prevented what is occurring now. We are hearing of the number of incidences where people are bringing to the attention of the law enforcement authorities about this kind of powder and that kind of powder.

Part of it, of course, is misinformation. Part of it is not understanding what anthrax is, what it is and what it is not. Part of it is not having the information that the American people need to have, and this is what we are facing right now with federalizing the security. The American people are not hearing what the truth is about what is happening in the United States Congress.

And though I do not expect for our media, both electronic and print, to be our advertisers, if this is not a time for civic duty, to be able to make headlines across the Nation, when are we going to vote on a bill passed by the Senate 100–0? When are we going to accept the responsibility, or the Federal Government or the Congress, to do what they are supposed to do and to help move this forward?

That is the point I think should be made tonight. I hope someone is listening. Because tomorrow we should wake up and we should see these kinds of headlines, because maybe if we had seen headlines explaining anthrax 4 weeks ago or being able to explain that you do not take an envelope and go to a hospital, what you do is you leave it contained, you call 911 or you call the authorities, you do not move this around, maybe some of the tragedies that have occurred, we might have avoided.

We want to, of course, secure all these things that are happening, but now we have a time or a chance to get in front of this issue of security for our airlines. How can we get in front of it? How can we be preventative? How can we be futuristic? We can pass this legislation, have it in place and secure the American people and secure the airways for the American people. I hope we have glaring headlines demanding a vote in the United States House of Representatives.

I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. INSLEE. We should assure the American people, too, that we can give 100 percent screening to make sure bombs are not in the belly of our airplanes and not increase the time it takes to get on an airplane.

The reason I know that is when you think about this, we screen carry-on baggage already. When you go through your little arched magnometer, you put your briefcase or your purse or whatever on the machine, it goes through; and it is x-rayed. That screens, it depends on what airport you are in, maybe 400, 600 passengers an hour. We x-ray hand-carried baggage already. What we need to do is to have screening for the baggage at the same rate, the same number of passengers per hour; and if we build that capacity, we are not going to slow down people getting on planes for 5 minutes.

Americans have an expectation of security and convenience. In this case, we can have those both as long as we can compel the Federal Government to take over decision-making about these systems to assure 100 percent screening. It takes this House to act; because, unfortunately, the airline industry for one reason or another has been incapable of that.

I yield to the gentleman from Ohio.

Mr. STRICKLAND. I would like to comment on my friend from Texas and her comment regarding the media and the need for public exposure. I believe it is beginning to happen. I go back to what I have said before here. I think one of the reasons we have not heard more about this is there has been an assumption, a belief, a false belief, that bags are currently being screened. I just point to this editorial in the Columbus, Ohio Dispatch of today, calling attention to this matter.

Last evening in Columbus, Channel 10 television had a program where they discussed this need for increased security and bags being checked. So I believe people are starting to understand that what they have assumed for a long time is not necessarily what is happening. And when you consider the fact that probably no more than 5 percent of the luggage that is placed in the belly of a plane is checked, that is alarming.

I have shared with my colleagues in the past the fact that I am not even certain that the current screening that is taking place is at all meaningful, because at Dulles International Airport last week, I checked in and put my bag down, and I was informed that my luggage had been randomly selected for further screening for explosives. And then I was asked to voluntarily take my bag down the corridor, go down another hallway, turn down another corridor, and there I would find the machine. I said to the person who gave me those instructions, what makes you think that I would voluntarily if I had an explosive in that luggage, voluntarily, without being escorted, with no one observing me, walk down the corridor and around and in back of this wall here to voluntarily have my bag screened if, in fact, it had explosives in it? Why would I not just decide to leave the airport and maybe come back in the afternoon when my bag may not be chosen at random for further screening for explosives?

So what we are doing now, at least certainly at Dulles International Airport, is meaningless in my judgment. We need a law, we need procedures, we need standards, we need training, we need decent pay for these people, and they need to be Federal employees. In that way, the traveling public can have a high level of security and a sense that we have done all that we can do to make sure that they are safe when they fly.

Mr. INSLEE. I want to thank my colleagues for this safety hour. We hope that the U.S. House listens to the American people and give them what they want, which is 100 percent screening. It will be a good day for the House if we do that.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 1305

Mr. SHOWS (during the special order of Mr. INSLEE). Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to have my name removed as a cosponsor of H.R. 1305.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SCHROCK). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Mississippi?

There was no objection.

AFGHAN WOMEN

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SCHROCK). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, the terrorist attacks of September 11 swept away our innocence and left us with grief and anger, anxiety and a resoluteness to make sure this does not happen again and to eradicate terrorism.

I just listened to part of a special order that the gentleman from Washington (Mr. INSLEE) had with regard to screening baggage. Security is critically important. We do have the technology to do it. I want to comment on my cosponsorship of that legislation and the need that we do something more about security, making sure that every bag is checked.

But also with regard to September 11, I rise before this body to recognize the women of Afghanistan. Later we are going to hear from the Women's Caucus, a special order. I want to thank the Women's Caucus and the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SOLIS) for initiating that special order, but I chose to speak at this point about the same issue.

Upon seizing power in 1996, the Taliban in Afghanistan instituted a system of gender apartheid over the women of Afghanistan. Under the Taliban, women have been stripped of their visibility, their voice, and their mobility. They are unable to participate in the workforce, attend schools or universities, and often prohibited from leaving their homes unless accompanied by a close male relative. The windows of their homes are often painted black; and they are all forced to wear a burqa, or chadari, which completely shrouds the body, leaving only a small, mesh-covered opening through which to see. Women are prohibited from being examined by male physicians while at the same time female doctors and nurses are prohibited from working.

Women have been brutally beaten, publicly flogged and killed for violating Taliban decrees. In Kabul and