

bombers who have murdered scores of innocent Israeli men, women, and children.

Through it all, Israel has endured. As the only democracy in the region, it continues to be a beacon of hope and a model for her neighbors. It has been said that the strength of a nation is determined by the caliber of its people. There is perhaps no better example of this truth than the State of Israel and the Israeli people, vivid examples of conviction, courage, and faith; a people who served as an example for us all to emulate, as our own Nation had to come to grips with the horrors of terrorism following the deplorable attacks on our country on September 11. The bond between our nations and our people have never been stronger.

The United States could not ask for a better friend and ally in the region. The Israeli people know they will always be able to depend on the U.S. and the American people. I extend my best wishes and congratulations to the people of the State of Israel on their 55th Independence Day.

ASIAN PACIFIC ISLANDER MONTH

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

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Asian Pacific Islander Month. This national celebration, which started in 1977, continues to highlight and bring awareness to the many accomplishments and contributions that the Asian-Pacific Americans have made to this country.

The month of May was selected for this very important celebration to commemorate the immigration of the first Japanese immigrants to the United States in 1843. As of the last census, there are an estimated 12.5 million Asian-Pacific Islanders in the United States. Representing the largest Vietnamese population outside of Vietnam, I know firsthand the richness of the culture and beauty that they, along with the rest of the Asian communities, bring to this Nation.

For generations, Asian-Pacific Americans have sacrifice for this country, and they have contributed to our growth and to our prosperity. This national celebration is a great way to honor all of their achievements.

JOB CREATION

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

Mr. BALLENGER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support the President's leadership on the Job and Growth Tax Act. There are too many Americans still looking for work. As its first order of business, this Congress helped by extending unemployment benefits in January. Now it is time to help American

businesses create the jobs that these Americans need and want. Displaced workers have looked for employment for too long. We need a plan to encourage small business owners to expand and hire new people.

North Carolina's 10th district has been struck hard by the economic downturn. Our Unifour area's unemployment rate almost quadrupled in 2 years' time. Tax relief and fiscal restraint can help turn the tide and restore our economic vitality.

It is wrong for this Congress to play partisan politics with the future of employment of millions of Americans. Relief to American businesses will allow them to grow, providing new job opportunities.

Americans need paychecks, not handouts. The Jobs and Growth Tax Act will get us there.

PASS ELDER JUSTICE ACT OF 2003

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

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, we recognize older Americans each May. This May we must address the unpleasant fact that too many of our elders are beaten, neglected, and extorted. Like other family crimes such as child abuse and domestic abuse, elder abuse has existed for too long in the dark shadows of our society. Elder abuse remains underreported, underresearched, and underenforced. As high as 5 million elderly cases of abuse occur in nursing homes, nursing institutions, and private homes each year; but 80 percent never get reported.

In my home State of Illinois, 186 nursing home residents actually died of starvation, dehydration, or infected wounds in 1999 alone.

In response, with the gentleman from New York (Mr. KING), I will introduce the Elder Justice Act which makes elderly abuse a Federal crime, helps law enforcement work hand in hand with our health and social service agencies that have always fought alone against this type of neglect. It is a bipartisan bill. We have a number of Republicans here in the House, and 12 Republicans and 11 Democrats who are also introducing a bill in the Senate.

Mr. Speaker, the most meaningful way to honor our elder Americans this month is to pass the Elder Justice Act.

FRENCH VISAS TO THE IRAQI REGIME

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

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, right after September 11, France voiced its support in the war on terrorism. Lately, we are hearing a different story. It has been reported that the French Government secretly supplied fleeing Iraqi officials with passports in Syria to allow

them to escape to Europe. The French passports allowed the wanted Iraqis to move freely among 12 European Union countries.

There are also reports which indicate that a French company covertly sold spare military parts to Iraq in the weeks before the war and that a French oil company was working with a Russian oil firm to conclude a deal with Saddam's government in the days before military action began March 19.

All of this has undermined our efforts to root out terrorists in Iraq and capture members of the brutal Iraqi regime. If France wants to be an ally in the war on terrorism, it is time it started to act like one.

PASS THE TAX RELIEF PACKAGE NOW

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

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, it is written, if you owe taxes, pay taxes. No law-abiding American anywhere would argue the point. But one of my predecessors in this Chamber, Jack Kemp, also famously said, what you tax you get less of, what you subsidize you get more of.

Today in America as our economy continues to list under the strain of overtaxation and overregulation for the past decade, we are taxing capital gains and investment in savings; and eastern Indiana, that I serve here in Washington, is getting less for it.

Families, small businesses and family farms are hurting as jobs evaporate in communities across eastern Indiana. Many in this town are playing politics, demagoguing the President's drive to pass additional tax relief and put Americans back to work; but it is time to set politics aside. We need to bring real tax relief on income inheritance, marriage, savings and investment in America. We need to turn this economy around. Our recovery is stalled. Our Nation is impatient. It is time we heed the President's call for economic renewal and pass the tax relief package now.

ADRIATIC TREATY SIGNED

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

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to inform the House about the signing of the Adriatic treaty last Friday in the Albanian capital of Tirana. This agreement was signed by Secretary of State Powell and the foreign ministers of Albania, Croatia, and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the three currently-remaining NATO aspirant nations.

The Adriatic Charter pledges the United States to support efforts by Albania, Croatia, and Macedonia to join NATO and other Euro-Atlantic institutions. In this agreement, the three aspirant nations commit themselves to

accelerate their democratic reforms, protect human rights, implement market-oriented economic policies, and enhance their mutual cooperation.

Under the Adriatic Charter, the United States and these three countries pledge to consult whenever the security of one of them is threatened, and the aspirant countries promise to continue defense reforms and undertake steps to enhance border security so they can contribute to regional stability.

Mr. Speaker, the Adriatic Charter is one more important step toward President Bush's goal of a Europe whole and free from the Baltic to the Black Sea. I commend and congratulate the people of Albania, Croatia, and Macedonia on the occasion of the signing of the Adriatic Charter.

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AMBER ALERT

(Mrs. MILLER of Michigan asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor my colleagues in the House who helped to pass the recent Amber Alert legislation. Last week while I was home in Michigan I saw dramatic evidence of the impact this program can actually have.

Saturday afternoon, 3-year-old Jenna Hart was abducted as she sat in the back seat of her grandmother's car. Her grandmother had taken Jenna to the local Toys R Us to buy her precious granddaughter a few new toys. A man approached her in the parking lot and noted that her tire was flat and offered to fix it, which he did. He then got in the car and drove off with Jenna still strapped into her car seat in the back seat. The report of a missing little girl was issued and the Amber Alert system went into action. I saw the report on a local television station which described the make and the color of the car as well as the license plate number and, like everyone else, was keeping my eyes open looking for the suspect vehicle. Twenty-one hours later a man telephoned police and reported a suspect vehicle in the City of Detroit with a child in the back seat. It was Jenna. The little girl was returned to her family safe and sound, a vivid reminder that the actions that we take in this House can have a very positive impact on families across our Nation.

Because of the Amber Alert system and the watchfulness of thousands of interested citizens, little Jenna has been reunited with her family. May God bless her and her family.

IN RECOGNITION OF DENTON HIGH SCHOOL CHORALE

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

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, we probably should wish the gentlewoman from Michigan a happy birthday.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize students from my district who are part of the Denton High School Chorale. Last week they had the prestigious honor of performing at the Pentagon at the invitation of the Air Force History Office under the award-winning direction of Mrs. Anne Smith. This patriotic group of 40 students sent musical CDs to the Pentagon and to the New York firefighters to thank them for their hard work and sacrifice after the tragedy of September 11, 2001.

Additionally, the Denton High School Chorale wanted to show their appreciation in person by performing a variety of choral pieces, including their favorite, "Homeland." The choir sang to military personnel in the courtyard of the Pentagon for an hour. A goal of this tour, which included a performance at Carnegie Hall in New York City, was to foster in the students a deeper respect for America and why it must be protected. I know that those who heard their concert were touched by their thoughtfulness. One serviceman responded with a note thanking them for helping him to remember what he is fighting to protect every day.

During these extraordinary times, their actions bring honor to Denton High School, to the great State of Texas and to our great Nation.

REFORM NEEDED AT UNITED NATIONS

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

Mr. FOSSELLA. Mr. Speaker, as the President of the United States has indicated, the war against terror is far from over. The battle may be won but it is far from over. Therefore, I think it is important that the United Nations step up to the plate and reflect reality and serve in the positive role that it can. That is why I think H.R. 800 is a needed step toward reform at the United Nations. It reduces U.S. funding for United Nations commissions like the Commission on Human Rights which have been hijacked by terrorist nations. The latest outrage is Cuba. The dictatorship is in the midst of a brutal crackdown, having executed three men for trying to escape Cuba and imprisoned dozens of others for daring to speak out. The U.N. said nothing about the crackdown but elected Cuba to another term on the human rights panel. The current chair of that panel is Libya, that beacon of human rights. At the beginning of the year, Iraq was going to head the Conference on Disarmament. Iraq did not take over but remained on the commission. Iran chairs that conference. North Korea and Cuba also sit on the Disarmament Committee. This is all symptomatic of a culture of carelessness at

the U.N. It would not be as grave if not for the fact that the United States pays 22 percent of the United Nations' operating budget. Diplomacy and dialogue are important, but sometimes dollars are the only thing that makes sense.

DAANGEROUS 15-PASSENGER VANS

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

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw Members' attention to the dangers of 15passenger vans. These vans have been associated with more than 500 traffic fatalities since 1990. In 2001, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration found that when these vans are fully loaded they have a rollover risk that is six times higher than when there are only five people in the van. I have become alarmingly aware of the danger of these vans when a church group from my district rolled over 2½ times while driving to a religious retreat. Four passengers died in this tragic accident. Only later did I find out that these vans are infamous for getting out of the control of the driver and rolling over.

My colleagues can see firsthand what can happen when these vehicles lose control. This happened again last year when a van carrying firefighters who were on their way to fight a wildfire raging in Colorado lost control and rolled over more than four times, killing four of the firefighters.

These vans were initially designed to carry freight, not people, but now they are widely used by airports, hotels, and other organizations to transport customers and schoolchildren. I have introduced H.R. 1641, the Passenger Van Safety Act, along with Senator SNOWE, to make sure that these needless tragedies end and that the most precious cargo, our children, get home safe and sound.

I encourage my colleagues to join me and Senator SNOWE in cosponsoring this important safety bill.

JOBS AND ECONOMIC GROWTH PACKAGE

(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. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge my colleagues in the House to support a real jobs and economic growth package. It is time to bring much-needed stimulus to our economy and to bring renewed hope to American workers. There are currently several million Americans actively looking for work and unable to find it. For those individuals and those families, it is imperative that we do all that we can to put this willing, able and well-qualified workforce to work. We must provide