

But it was not just students demonstrating. On Sunday, several hundred intellectuals, including several clerics, issued a statement supporting the right of Iranians to criticize the government. These patriots do not want to be told what to think, what to wear, what to read, what to watch, how to behave; and they are frustrated at the slow pace of change.

The demonstrations are evidence enough that freedom-loving people in Iran are growing in numbers and boldness.

Instead of complaining about what we have not found in the Middle East countries, let us appreciate what we have found, people longing for the same freedoms that we enjoy.

REPEAL THE DEATH TAX

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I cannot think of a more unfair and immoral tax than the death tax.

□ 1015

It is fundamentally wrong to tax a person their entire life and then, upon death, have the IRS take up to 60 percent of what they have saved. This is a cruel tax that punishes people for working hard and saving enough to pass something on to their children.

This tax has hit the Palmetto State very hard, as in South Carolina, 1,518 death tax returns were filed in 2001. As a former probate attorney, I have seen firsthand where those who inherit family businesses or farms are forced to lay off workers, cut salaries, liquidate assets, or even take out loans to keep the doors open.

Thanks to President Bush's leadership, we have passed legislation that would end the death tax, but only temporarily. I urge my colleagues to support the bill of the gentlewoman from Washington (Ms. DUNN), H.R. 8, the Death Tax Repeal Permanency Act of 2003. We must make this repeal permanent and end this unfair tax.

In conclusion, God bless our troops.

SUPPORT H.R. 660, THE SMALL BUSINESS HEALTH FAIRNESS ACT

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

Mr. CANTOR. Mr. Speaker, this week, the House has a chance to help out over 20 million uninsured workers that are employed by small businesses across our Nation. H.R. 660, the Small Business Health Fairness Act, will allow small employers to band together to access more affordable, more efficient health insurance for their companies.

This bill will help small business owners like Kevin Maxwell from my

district in Midlothian, Virginia. Earlier this year, Mr. Maxwell wrote to me about the escalating health care costs for his employees. He is a partner in a small petroleum parts sales company, employing about 13 people. Mr. Maxwell told me that the health insurance costs will increase from \$1,100 to \$1,400 per month, per family. Two or three years of these types of increases will very quickly force Mr. Maxwell to stop offering health care to his employees.

As a small businessman, Kevin pays more because he does not have the insurance purchasing power that large companies have.

According to the National Federation of Independent Businesses, small businesses pay 17 percent more for health benefits than large companies. That price disparity forces small companies to make tough choices about the benefits they offer.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud people like Kevin Maxwell. It has not been easy, but help is on the way.

PRIVATIZING MEDICARE IS A BAD IDEA

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

Mr. MCDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, last night the House began the process of privatizing Medicare. The Committee on Ways and Means put out a bill, and it has a provision in it that says, by the year 2010, we are going to take away the guaranteed benefit that people have under Medicare, and we are going to give them a defined contribution.

Now, that is a voucher under any other name. They call it premium support. They will try and confuse people. It is wrapped inside the drug bill so people will say, well, we want the prescription drug benefit. If you take it the way the Republicans are giving it to you in the House of Representatives, you have to accept that they are privatizing Medicare.

Now, that is a concept that people simply do not understand what that means. Give \$5,000 to every one of the 40 million old people in this country and send them out looking for a loving insurance company to take care of them. It is a bad idea. People should wake up and see what is happening in the next week.

This rubber stamp Congress is going to put that bill out of here so that they can go home over the 4th of July and say, we gave you prescription drugs. They are going to give you privatized Medicare with it.

MEDICARE REFORM IMPROVES QUALITY OF LIFE FOR SENIORS

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

Ms. HART. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of a Medicare reform that will actually help our seniors.

The Republican House, along with the Senate, have worked on plans that will help provide prescription drug coverage to seniors. I have spent the last year in my district in western Pennsylvania in different forums with groups telling me what they need.

What we know in Pennsylvania is that prescription drug assistance is necessary. We have been giving it to low-income seniors for years. However, middle income seniors, those who one would think are fairly well off, are finding it very difficult to pay for these prescription drugs.

What I learned in those forums is we need to help them. Our plan does this. It makes sure that catastrophic expenses for prescription drugs are going to be covered for these senior citizens.

We also improve Medicare, making sure that it provides proper access to home health care, so that families can stay together in their later years.

Mr. Speaker, our goal is to make sure that the quality of life for our seniors is better, that they can have access to prescription drugs which they can pay for. That is our goal. That is what we are going to give in our plan.

SOME WILL NOT TAKE YES FOR AN ANSWER

(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, I was amazed to hear the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH) speak in this Chamber just a few short moments ago and use the word "cover-up" to describe the action that we took in the House Committee on International Relations yesterday. The truth is that some Democrats just will not take yes for an answer.

The gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH) offered a resolution asking for the White House to turn over all information relative to the weapons of mass destruction for inspection by the Congress. The White House, at the urging of the House Select Committee on Intelligence, is doing just that. All documentation on the WMD program of Iraq will be available to every Member of Congress at the House Select Committee on Intelligence.

We rejected the Kucinich resolution because it was mute, as the ranking Democrat member of the Committee on International Relations says.

It is not a cover-up, Mr. Speaker. Some Democrats just will not take yes for an answer.

WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION

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

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, lately there has been a stir, a desperate grasp for press attention, to form an inquiry into the Bush administration's knowledge of weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. Speaker, for 7 years following the Gulf War, Saddam claimed that he did not possess weapons of mass destruction, and for all 7 years, he was lying. Iraqis told inspectors they had no mustard agent and then they expressed profound shock when quantities of mustard gas were found. Iraq told inspectors they never had weaponized VX nerve agent and then feigned surprise when inspectors found weaponized VX nerve agent. We learned that Saddam Hussein had constructed elaborate concealment mechanisms. The Iraqi regime spent a decade working to ensure that prohibited weapons production was kept quiet. When the inspectors were kicked out of Iraq in 1998, the regime had failed to account for vast quantities of its weapons of mass destruction stockpiles.

So here is a question for the dissenters: Why would a regime without weapons of mass destruction manufacture the mobile laboratories that our troops and the U.N. inspectors found to make such weapons? And why would the numerous defectors, many with recent, first-hand knowledge of Iraq's WMD programs, have detailed elaborate production and concealment efforts? Were they all lying?

Mr. Speaker, Iraq is the size of California and the dirt is deep. There are many places for these weapons to have been hidden. I urge the press and the American people to be patient and let our troops do their jobs. There are still soldiers at risk fighting off violence. We know that these weapons existed and we know that the Iraqi government has never accounted for their destruction. That is what we do know.

BAKE SALES AND BUDGET CUTS— THE IMPACT OF NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND

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

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to explain the effects on our States of the administration's cut of the No Child Left Behind Act. The \$20 billion in education cuts could not come at a worse time as States scramble to close budget gaps and schools struggle to comply with the rigorous new law.

Across America, desperate measures are being taken. In Alabama, schools are being forced to raise class sizes. In Florida, two-thirds of the pre-kindergarten programs are being terminated. In Idaho, parents must raise money for teacher salaries through bake sales and auctions. In Illinois, they have laid off thousands of teachers and staff to increase class sizes and, in some schools, to nearly 40 students. Detroit plans to close 16 schools this month. In South Carolina, 2,000 teachers have been let go, and class sizes are up to 35 students.

This is just a sample of the consequences of the failure of the Federal Government to make good on its promises.

That is why I intend to introduce H.R. 2366, the Fully Fund the No Child Left Behind Act. Before we ask our schools to hold bake sales and our States to live with budget cuts, we should live up to our own budget cuts.

Mr. Speaker, Congress should honor its commitment to our students.

MEDICARE REFORM MEANS MODERNIZING HEALTH CARE FOR OUR SENIORS

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

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, last night we marked up the Medicare bill in the Committee on Ways and Means, and we are hoping to pass a comprehensive Medicare bill by the 4th of July recess. Just a few minutes ago, we heard a sample of some of the rhetoric we are going to hear from the other side, the distortion, the demagoguery.

There are three things we are trying to accomplish with Medicare reform which we accomplish in this bill: make Medicare fair for seniors across all of America in all States like my State of Wisconsin; modernize Medicare so that it is once again a comprehensive health care plan with prescription drug coverage; and number 3, and perhaps the most important part, recognize the fact that in 13 years, Medicare is going bankrupt and we need to pass reforms to make Medicare solvent for the baby boom generation.

What we are doing is protecting all of the rights seniors have in Medicare today, but expanding their choices of coverage so they have the same choices, like every Member of Congress has here in their own health plan and every other Federal employee.

We have to modernize Medicare. We have to make it fair for all of our constituents in all of our States, and we have to save this vital program for the baby boom generation, and that is what we are accomplishing.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1528, TAXPAYER PROTECTION AND IRS ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 2003

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 282 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 282

Resolved, That upon the adoption of this resolution it shall be in order without intervention of any point of order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 1528) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to protect taxpayers and ensure accountability of the Internal Revenue Service. The bill shall be considered as read for amendment. The amendment recommended by the Committee on Ways and Means now printed in the bill,

modified by the amendment printed in part A of the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution, shall be considered as adopted. All points of order against the bill, as amended, are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill, as amended, and on any further amendment thereto to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate on the bill, as amended, equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means; (2) the further amendment printed in part B of the report of the Committee on Rules, if offered by Representative Rangel of New York or his designee, which shall be in order without intervention of any point of order, shall be considered as read, and shall be separately debatable for one hour equally divide and controlled by the proponent and an opponent; and (3) one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. OSE). The gentleman from Washington (Mr. HASTINGS) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. SLAUGHTER), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

(Mr. HASTINGS of Washington asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 282 is a modified, closed rule waiving all points of order against the consideration of H.R. 1528, the Taxpayer Protection and IRS Accountability Act of 2003. The rule provides one hour of debate to be equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means. The rule also provides that the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Ways and Means, as modified by the amendment printed in Part A of the Committee on Rules report accompanying this resolution, shall be considered as adopted. The rule waives all points of order against the bill, as amended.

The rule further provides for consideration of the amendment printed in Part B of the report, if offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL) or his designee, which shall be considered as read and shall be separately debatable for one hour, equally divided and controlled by a proponent and an opponent.

Finally, the rule waives all points of order against the amendment printed in Part B of the report and provides one motion to recommit, with or without instructions.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1528, as authored by my friend and colleague, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN), would amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to protect taxpayers and ensure accountability of the IRS. The bill would improve the efficiency of tax administration and increase the confidentiality of tax returns and related information.