

issue further, I cast my vote in favor of DOMA. Looking back 8 years later, while my analysis may have been accurate, it remains one of the few votes in Congress that I would change. Sadly, people who choose to exploit fear and bigotry based on sexual orientation continue to do so regardless of any evidence to the contrary.

My vote on DOMA also caused political confusion and pain for people who knew of my commitment for equality for gays and lesbians. Most troubling for me was the implication that my vote somehow may have been interpreted as an attack on people's ability to make their own choices about their personal relationships and their dignity as human beings.

Recently, gay civil rights victories in the Supreme Court, the State of Vermont, and in Canada have created a resurgence of controversy surrounding this issue. These successes do not have to lead to more antigay proposals and rhetoric. Most Americans today have friends and relatives who are involved with same sex relationships based on the same deep emotional commitment and affection found in the heterosexual community.

It is now time for Congress to play a constructive role in affirming civil rights for gays and lesbians. The House should start by enacting non-discrimination in employment, which should be one of the bedrocks of a society that claims to value self-reliance and the opportunity for individuals to reach their full potential. The Congress should also forcefully reject H.J. Res. 56, a constitutional amendment which would define marriage solely as a union between a man and a woman. It simply makes no sense to deny the benefits, legal rights, and opportunities afforded to married couples to others who want to commit to a long-term loving relationship, especially when the administration proposes to spend hundreds of millions of dollars to "promote marriage."

This attempt to preempt decisions at the State level is not just stunningly hypocritical; it will fuel fear and prejudice, create further divisions in our communities, and intolerance throughout our society. Instead of pitting citizen against citizen over questions of identity, sexuality, and private behavior, the Congress should model the behavior it expects of others: fairness, tolerance, and a basic respect for human dignity.

THE WIND AT OUR BACKS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY) is recognized during morning hour debates.

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, this week the House will begin moving into the end game for the legislative session, and we will do so with the wind at our backs.

Thanks to our passage of President Bush's Jobs and Growth agenda, jobless

claims are down, and corporate profits and economic growth are way up. Last week, we even learned the Federal deficit has come in much lower than anticipated, as Republicans predicted it would.

In other words, the Bush economy and the Federal Government are recovering with a vengeance from the "bin Laden" slump. The faster the economy grows, the sooner we can balance the budget, all the while maintaining our commitment to our national priorities.

Of course, the war remains our Nation's defining objective. Without victory over international terror and the security and prosperity victory will bring, no other item on any agenda is even possible. The reconstruction and democracy-building now underway in Iraq is a central component of that war, as a stable Iraq will be an invaluable ally in our fight against terror.

To highlight the progress we are making over there and to draw the public's and the media's attention to the good being done, we have created FREEDOM.GOV. On the FREEDOM.GOV Web site, citizens can find articles and features from Members of Congress who have been to liberated Iraq and reported back on what they have seen and our need to finish the job there. Further, with our economy roaring to life in recent months, we are now even better able to keep our commitment to strengthen and improve health care services for America's seniors. We expect a Medicare bill to do just that, and it will be ready for passage before we adjourn.

And, finally, Congress will soon be able to pass a comprehensive energy bill which will lower gas prices, create jobs, and reduce our dependence on foreign oil.

To put Congress's work this year in perspective, Mr. Speaker, consider: We are winning the war on terror and securing Iraq. We are cutting the deficit and balancing the budget through fiscal discipline. We are growing the economy and creating jobs, and we are meeting the health care needs of American seniors. This is the agenda we ran on, promised, and in just another few weeks will have delivered for the American people.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO DR. NAT COBB

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to one of my constituents, Dr. Nat Cobb of Corrales, New Mexico. I want to congratulate Nat on his participation in the Lance Armstrong Tour of Hope which concluded this past weekend here in the Nation's capital.

Nat Cobb was chosen to ride across the country with 25 other riders and

cycling champion Lance Armstrong. This amazing team of riders rode for 7 days from Los Angeles to Washington, DC, covering 120 miles per day per rider. They rode during the day and during the night. The Tour of Hope team climbed mountains and crossed rivers and reached communities across America to inspire millions and share the importance of cancer research. They used this ride to share their personal stories to help raise awareness about the need for cancer patients to participate in clinical trials so that we might achieve cures more quickly. Participation is of crucial importance to finding a cure. If clinical trials are not performed on new drugs, these drugs will not be available to those afflicted with cancer.

Nat's personal story is especially important to New Mexico and all Native Americans. Nat Cobb is actively engaged in making cancer screenings and clinical trials available to Indian populations all over the country. He has worked with a number of hospitals and clinics to enroll patients in trials and to educate people about preventing cancer through programs on tobacco control and life-style changes. He was an excellent choice to ride in the Tour of Hope.

I also want to say how proud I was to ride alongside Nat and Lance Armstrong this past weekend as the Tour of Hope concluded in Washington, DC. I was honored to join them along the final stretches of the journey and am pleased to have lent my support to their efforts which are so important to Native Americans suffering from cancer.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to help them spread the word that we can do more here in Congress to help them as well. For one, we can fund research programs to help increase awareness about clinical trials so that more adults participate in clinical drug trials. Nearly 85 percent of children participate in some type of drug trial, but less than 10 percent of adults do. I am hopeful that by raising awareness through the Tour of Hope, Lance Armstrong, Nat Cobb, and other team members and Bristol Meyers Squibb and others can achieve this important goal of finding cures more quickly for all types of cancer.

RECESS

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

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 43 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 (Mr. BOOZMAN) at 2 p.m.