

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

INTRODUCTION OF THE 9/11 COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS IMPLEMENTATION ACT OF 2004 (H.R. 5024)

HON. NANCY PELOSI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 14, 2004

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, recently the nation marked the third anniversary of the September 11 attacks.

In addition to mourning the loss of so many lives, it is appropriate to ask: "Are we as safe as we should be?" Sadly, two high level inquiries, including the independent 9/11 Commission, have said: "no."

Our rail lines, ports, commercial aircraft, power plants, chemical facilities, and other critical infrastructure components are not as secure as they should be.

Our first responders are not able to communicate with one another in real time, as they should be.

Much of the world's supply of the materials used to build weapons of mass destruction is not secured, as it should be.

Initiatives in the Department of Homeland Security are not funded adequately by the President and the Republican Congress, as they should be.

The nation's unmet security needs involve more than insufficient resources. The systemic governmental failures that opened the door for the terrorists to strike on 9/11 have been repeatedly identified. But there has been no concerted effort to fix them.

Eighteen months ago, a Joint Inquiry by the congressional intelligence committees produced a bipartisan call for change in the structure of the intelligence community. Nothing came of it.

Eight weeks ago, the 9/11 Commission issued a unanimous, bipartisan report recommending change—in the intelligence community and elsewhere—to deal with the terrorist threat. The Commission coupled its recommendations with a call for urgent action.

What was the response? The congressional recess went on, largely undisturbed, even after the threat level for New York and Washington was raised.

There has been too much delay. Congress must commit itself today to using the time left in this session to enact legislation to address the problems identified so clearly by the Commission and others.

To focus our efforts, many of my Democratic colleagues have joined me in introducing a bill that translates the Commission's recommendations into legislative language.

This bill will give the committees of jurisdiction a framework for considering the proposals on their merits, and reporting them to the House quickly for debate and votes.

United together, with an unwavering bipartisan commitment to the security of our country, let us make as much progress as we can so that our words of comfort to the victims'

families on September 11 are not diminished by their knowledge of how much critical work remains unfinished.

INTRODUCTION OF THE EVERY VOTE COUNTS AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION

HON. GENE GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 14, 2004

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I propose an amendment to the Constitution of the United States to abolish the electoral college and to provide for the direct popular election of the President and Vice President of the United States. I would like to start with a quote from Thomas Jefferson regarding the electoral college.

I have ever considered the constitutional mode of election ultimately by the Legislature voting by States as the most dangerous blot in our Constitution, and one which some unlucky chance will some day hit and give us a pope and antipope.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that these unlucky chances are hitting us today. The stakes of American presidential elections are tremendous for all of us but our Presidential candidates focus their activities on small numbers of "swing voters" in roughly a dozen states.

This is an injustice. All Americans are created equal and all Americans vote should count the same. So today, I am reintroducing legislation I authored in 2001 with my colleague from Washington State, Mr. BAIRD.

Our legislation, the Every Vote Counts Amendment would begin a Constitutional Amendment process to create national elections that are simple, democratic and counts every American equally. The heart of the amendment is Section Three, which reads: "The persons having the greatest number of votes for President and Vice President shall be elected."

The people, not small groups of partisans, should be responsible for filling the highest office in America. The Electoral College violates the sacred democratic principle of "one man, one vote." It should be abolished and replaced by something simple and fair.

Why should the candidate who wins the most votes not win the election? Opponents of this Amendment cannot justify why a less popular candidate should win, without saying, "that's the way we have always done it."

In 1913, Congress and the states trusted the people to elect their senators when we approved the Seventeenth Amendment. Today, we should trust the people to elect the President of the United States through a direct vote.

Every vote should carry the same weight in the election, no matter where in the nation it was cast. Texas Democrats, New York Republicans, California Republicans, and South Carolina Democrats would again have a say in the election of their President.

America is one nation, and our President should not wage a handful of separate campaigns in evenly balanced states, but one campaign, in all states, for all the people.

My constituents are unjustly ignored because neither candidate ever comes to Texas except to look for money, not votes. That is an insult to all Texans, Democratic and Republican.

Americans got a shocking look at our needlessly complex national election process in 2000, when we watched outcomes of recounts of hundreds of votes in a handful of counties determine an election in which over 100 million people voted.

We began to worry whether members of the Electoral College would be faithful to their states. We began to fear an election decided by just 435 individuals in the House of Representatives, which we have seen can be manipulated by redistricting.

There is nothing more simple and fair than: "the persons having the greatest number of votes for President and Vice President shall be elected."

In America, every vote should count and they should count equally. Therefore, we should adopt the Every Vote Counts Amendment and allow the states to begin the process of ratification.

RECOGNIZING THE ROBERT E. MITCHELL CENTER FOR PRISONER OF WAR STUDIES

HON. JEFF MILLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 14, 2004

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is a great honor for me to rise today in recognition of the Robert E. Mitchell Center for Prisoner of War Studies.

The original Center for Prisoner of War Studies was established in 1972 under a five-year charter to study long-term effects of captivity on repatriated Vietnam prisoners-of-war. After the initial five years, the Air Force and Army programs were discontinued. Captain Robert Mitchell continued to successfully direct the Navy-Marine program, so successfully in fact that Air Force Vietnam POWs rejoined the program in 1993 and Army POWs rejoined in 1997.

Located in my district in Northwest Florida, the Mitchell Center is the only program in existence that works with three branches of the armed services in this field, and currently sees over half of today's surviving Vietnam POWs. Findings from the Center's research have been used worldwide in medical and psychological fields, paving the way for further insight into POW studies. The Center now works with repatriated POWs from World War II all the way through Desert Storm.

Recognizing the importance of the Mitchell Center's findings, Secretary of the Navy Gordon England signed a Memorandum of Understanding this year with the Robert E. Mitchell

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.