

said he supported the military. President Reagan kept his promises. However, under the President in office during the 1990s, the military budget was again severely cut.

Once again my friends who remained in the military could feel the renewed respect and help for the military when President George W. Bush took office. Not only has the military been much better equipped and supplied, but also the Republican-controlled Congress has been increasing veterans' benefits. In fact, since Republicans took control of Congress there has been a 58 percent increase in veterans funding.

Just as the vast cuts during the Carter administration depleted and drained the strength of the U.S. military, during the 1990s the White House bragged of vast cuts in government when, in fact, the only true cuts were in military personnel. As a result of those cuts during the 1990s, George W. Bush's administration found itself, just as President Reagan had, battling to rebuild military strength.

We in this Republican-controlled Congress have done that and continue to do that along with some other friends. If yesterday's speeches were heartfelt, and there truly is a desire among Senators across the aisle to strengthen the military, to protect those who are protecting us and to keep and help our courageous veterans, I say, with arms open wide, Welcome to the Republican agenda.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. STRICKLAND) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. STRICKLAND addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

#### KEEPING PROMISES TO VETERANS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. EDWARDS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, for the past 14 years, I have had the privilege of representing the largest U.S. Army installation in the world, Fort Hood, an installation that has sent over 40,000 brave American soldiers to fight in Iraq. That is why I am so deeply offended and shocked that the Under Secretary of Defense in this administration, the Under Secretary of Defense for personnel and readiness, Dr. Chu, was quoted in today's Wall Street Journal as saying, in reference to programs funding military retirees and veterans, "The amounts have gotten to the point where they are hurtful. They are taking away from the Nation's ability to defend itself."

I am appalled, Mr. Speaker, and I believe veterans and military retirees all across this country have a right to be offended that the Under Secretary of Defense in this administration would say that the very men and women who

risk their lives and sacrifice greatly to defend our Nation are responsible for hurting our Nation's ability "to defend itself." It is a wrong statement.

The truth is that veterans have kept their promises to our Nation and now our Nation has a moral obligation to keep its promises to those who have served our Nation in uniform. The truth is, Mr. Speaker, that respecting the sacrifices of our veterans in responsible ways with quality health care and decent benefits is not only the right thing to do, because our veterans have earned those benefits, it is the smart thing to do.

As someone who has represented 40,000 soldiers over the last 14 years, I can tell you that when we break our promises to yesterday's service men and women we call veterans, today's service men and women are going to pay attention. The fact is, in a voluntary military force, we cannot bring the best and brightest into our military if we do not keep our promises made to our veterans.

My good colleague and friend from Texas, the previous speaker, talked about the 58 percent increase in veterans funding during this administration. That is part of the facts. The rest of the story is that much of those increases came from the leadership of Democrats and Republicans here in this Congress. The fact is that over the last couple of years we have added well over \$1 billion, now approaching \$2 billion in funding for veterans health care that the administration did not ask for.

The fact is that we are spending too little, not too much on our veterans and military retirees. The truth is that last year's budget for veterans health care did not even keep up with inflation. So, in effect, we had a real cut in veterans health care spending during a time of war. What happened to the principle of shared sacrifice during a time of war?

I find it outrageous and offensive that Secretary Chu blamed veterans for trying to undermine our Nation's security, when just as easily this administration, along with Dr. Chu, could suggest perhaps we reduce a little bit of that \$124,000-a-year tax break that the administration and the Republicans in Congress have given to people in America making over \$1 million a year.

Maybe before we start blaming military widows for undermining our Nation's security, maybe before Dr. Chu starts criticizing veterans and military retirees who risked their lives in Vietnam and Iraq, Korea, Iwo Jima and Normandy, maybe they should look at their own policies that have provided tax breaks for Members of Congress, tax breaks for people making over \$1 million a year that, in my opinion, make a farce out of the quintessential American value and principle of shared sacrifice during a time of war.

I would hope Dr. Chu will quickly retract his outrageous attack on our Na-

tion's finest, those men and women who have served our country so admirably in uniform.

□ 2015

Mr. Speaker, I would hope that the administration before the sun sets another day will say that Dr. Chu's statement does not reflect administration policy. I hope that the Republican leadership in the House joins with me in a bipartisan effort to criticize this outrageous and wrong attack on America's military veterans and retirees.

The fact is we should be saluting our veterans, especially during a time of war, not criticizing and attacking them. The fact is that we spend much too little in keeping our promises to our servicemen and women who have retired, not too much.

I hope we can see this kind of statement relegated to the back pages of mistakes made by administration officials. Together the leadership of this House should fight for veterans benefits in the months ahead, although I would say, Mr. Speaker, I am concerned that the House leadership recently fired rather than saluted the Republican chairman of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs in the House because he had stood up for veterans. Our veterans have stood up for us, let us stand up for them.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BURGESS). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. MALONEY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

#### ONGOING WAR IN IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MEEHAN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, tonight I would like to address the most urgent issue facing our Nation today, the ongoing war in Iraq.

I recently returned from a congressional delegation trip to Iraq with the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SAXTON) and several of our colleagues on the House Committee on Armed Services. Meeting with our servicemen and women in Iraq made me appreciate their service and their courage even more. My trip also reinforced my conviction that America needs an exit strategy from Iraq, and that is what I would like to discuss tonight.

It has been nearly 2 years since we invaded Iraq and removed one of the world's most brutal regimes; but 2 years later, America's Armed Forces are confronting a far more resilient enemy, a growing insurgency that has plunged Iraq into violence and chaos.

The elections are drawing closer. The peace and stability seem to be moving

further and further away. How we got to this point in time has been the subject of an extensive debate. How did our intelligence fail us so badly about Iraq's weapons of mass destruction? Was that intelligence deliberately manipulated by the administration in order to rush to war? Why did the Bush administration not give the U.N. inspectors more time to conduct their inspections, and how did we allow so much chaos to grow out of Saddam Hussein's downfall? And why did we not have a better plan to secure the peace?

Many of us have strong views about these issues, and many of us have been quite vocal in expressing them. Unfortunately, when there is a hotly contested Presidential campaign, the national debate often descends into starkly partisan terms. I believe this is what happened to much of the debate about our policy in Iraq.

In Congress the bipartisanship was lacking, and partisanship was especially bad. Most Republicans saw it as their responsibility to defend the President's policies, however flawed. Many Democrats viewed their role as questioning and criticizing all that went wrong without necessarily offering policy alternatives. The result has been a failure to forge bipartisan consensus and develop answers to the pressing questions about our involvement in Iraq. By rallying behind the administration's policy, the Republican leadership in Congress failed in its responsibility to lead, not just follow, on issues of war and peace. At the same time, many Democrats who opposed the war from the beginning have spent more energy lamenting the past than thinking about solutions for the future.

A substantive, nonpartisan reassessment of America's goals and options in Iraq is long overdue. The time has come for us to change our focus from the missteps of the past to the challenge that confronts us in the immediate future.

When I visited with our soldiers on the front lines, they were not focused on the mistakes of last year, they were concerned about what we are doing today and tomorrow. Now more than ever, with our current policy going nowhere, America needs to form a bipartisan consensus behind a strategy, a responsible strategy, in Iraq.

Today I challenge my colleagues in Congress to work together to develop answers to the most urgent question facing our country today: How can the United States put Iraq on a path toward self-sufficiency and begin to bring our troops home in a way that advances our strategic interests? We owe it to the American people and we owe it to the brave men and women who are putting their lives on the line every day.

All of us in Congress have met with the family of guardsmen and reservists whose deployments have been extended. We have spoken to too many mothers of soldiers and attended too

many funerals to leave these fundamental questions unanswered. We must stop looking backward and thinking defensively. We must start looking forward and developing proactive ideas about the next steps in Iraq.

It is clear that the administration has no endgame in sight. It is time for Congress to reassert its role in foreign policy and take the lead on providing an exit strategy in Iraq.

The first step in Iraq to any exit strategy is an honest assessment of the facts on the ground there. It is time to take the rose-tinted glasses off and put aside our partisan hostilities and start with the basics: What is going well, and what is not? What is still possible in Iraq, and how do we get there?

In search of answers to these questions, I returned to Iraq earlier this month. The last time I was in Iraq was August 2003, 4 months after the fall of Baghdad. Iraq was hardly a safe place then, but we were able to walk the streets and talk with average Iraqis, something I had hoped to do this time. Unfortunately, the threat of violence was simply too high. Baghdad is still a war zone.

My colleagues and I traveled in heavily armed military convoys, zigzagging through the streets to avoid ambushes. In Iraq today the expectation is that any American or anyone associated with the Americans will be attacked.

The United States has spent more than \$150 billion on military operations in Iraq, with another \$80 billion that the administration is going to request from this House next month in a new supplemental budget. We have maintained between 100,000 and 150,000 troops for 2 years. The Army's current plan is to maintain that level until at least 2007.

Over the past year, America has sent more soldiers and more money to Iraq, but we have seen more violence. As Iraq prepares to hold elections 5 days from now, the violence is worse than it has ever been. All of us hope that the elections will proceed peacefully and safely with maximum participation, but we should be realistic that regardless of who votes or who wins, the insurgency will continue.

When Saddam was captured, we hoped the insurgents would give up. When we transferred sovereignty, we hoped that the violence would end. And when we routed the insurgents in Fallujah, we hoped it would break their backs. But with each milestone, the insurgency has come back stronger and more deadly. Attacks on U.S. forces have grown steadily both in frequency and sophistication. Attacks on Iraqi security forces, civilians and the infrastructure are also on the rise. Coalition forces have been killing and capturing 1,000 to 3,000 insurgents every month for more than a year. But over that same time, the insurgency has quadrupled its ranks from at least 5,000 insurgents to at least 20,000 insurgents in that same amount of time.

More troubling is a network of Iraqi civilians, 200,000 by some estimates,

who offer both active and passive support, arms, materiel, sanctuary, and, most important, intelligence. It is often better intelligence than what our own forces have.

It is time to accept one of the basic assumptions held by the Bush administration, and many of its critics, no longer applies: More troops do not mean more security in Iraq. Despite 150,000 boots on the ground and tactical victories in Fallujah and elsewhere, the insurgency is only growing in size and lethal capacity. It may have been possible at one point in time to pacify Iraq with an overwhelming American force. Had we gone in with 700,000 troops like General Shinseki said we needed, perhaps the insurgency would not have developed. We will never know for sure. But whatever chance we had is now gone.

Ramping up our troop presence now will not turn the tables in Iraq, and it will probably make the situation worse. The undeniable fact is that the insurgency is being fueled by the very presence of the American military. Back in July of 2003, General John Abizaid called Iraq a "classic guerrilla war," but we have continued to wage war as if we were fighting a conventional army.

The result has been the "center of gravity" of any counterinsurgency, the civilian population, has moved further and further away from us. The growing hostility is palpable in Iraq. It is measured by polls taken of Iraqis by our own government and our own State Department. In November 2003, only 11 percent of Iraqis said they would feel safer if coalition forces left; 6 months later, 55 percent did. In the most recent poll that asked the question, 2 percent viewed the United States as liberators, and 92 percent viewed the United States as occupiers.

Iraqis have grown tired of an occupation that has provided them neither security nor meaningful sovereignty. Iraqis were apprehensive of America's intentions to begin with, and every time President Bush signals our forces will remain in Iraq "for as long as it takes," it reconfirms their suspicion that we intend a permanent presence. Every time Iraqi citizens see a Bradley fighting vehicle rolling through their streets or a Black Hawk helicopter overhead, it undermines our assertion that Iraq is already sovereign. Every time Iraqi bystanders are killed in coalition actions, it further erodes the goodwill we earned by ridding them of Saddam Hussein.

And even when innocent Iraqis are murdered by insurgents, the United States is blamed for failing to provide security. If the world's most potent Army cannot make the streets safe, Iraqis are asking, what is it that they are really here for?

So the first step in achieving stability in Iraq is recognizing that the United States presence there has become inherently destabilizing. We also need to recognize the fact that for the

most part we are fighting not foreign terrorists or former regime loyalists, but indigenous factions within Iraq who have united against us.

It is a native insurgency, fueled by a combination of volatile ingredients: a population of 25 million, 5 million of them Sunnis, with a median age of 19 years old; a jobless rate of 30 to 40 percent with pockets of extreme unemployment; 400,000 skilled and experienced army soldiers dispersed throughout the country with their weapons but without their salaries or pensions; 4,000 shoulder-fired missiles left over from the old regime; and 250,000 tons of unsecured explosives.

□ 2030

The insurgency's size and strength are unlikely to decrease any time soon. Attempting to kill or capture every last insurgent is an impossible task. And as long as that is the thrust of our strategy, we will continue along a downward spiral.

Confronted with a growing native insurgency, America is left with three options, and two of them are not really options at all. The first one is to withdraw immediately. Given the current state of Iraqi security forces, we cannot cut and run. This option is a non-starter. Even if you believe that the United States should never have entered Iraq, it does not follow that we should leave now. The chaos that would result would be much worse than the vacuum of authority left by the downfall of Saddam, and the humanitarian consequences could be even greater.

From a strategic standpoint, immediate withdrawal undermines America's credibility and destabilizes the entire region. The second option is to stay on the same path, as the President says, for as long as it takes. I believe that this course of action would only cause the problem to grow worse. As of May of 2003, the administration was predicting that only 30,000 troops would remain in Iraq by the fall of that year. Twenty months later, five times that many remain. The most compelling reason not to continue down the same path is that the occupation has become counterproductive to stability and progress in Iraq. With United States forces serving as a focal point for tensions and violence, factions within Iraq have turned against us when they should be confronting each other peacefully in setting up a new Iraqi Government. The indefinite U.S. presence is forestalling the political compromises that are ultimately necessary to end the violence in Iraq.

I am proposing a third option, an option that Prime Minister Alawi and President Bush announce a timetable for a phased drawdown of U.S. forces in Iraq. This could be done in concert either with Prime Minister Alawi in Iraq with President Bush or with the new Prime Minister who will be elected after these elections. Changing the dynamic in Iraq means handing the secu-

rity of the Iraqi people back to the Iraqis and bringing an end to the occupation. Under this proposal, the United States would draw down the majority of our forces by the end of this year. Only a small and mobile force would remain by mid-2006, 2 years after the transfer of sovereignty.

Announcing a timetable for a phased-in withdrawal over the next 12 to 18 months will change the underlying dynamic in Iraq in several ways. First, it would help win the support of the Iraqi people for a political process and a government untainted by the appearance that the United States controls them. Second, announcing a drawdown would splinter insurgent groups who have set aside their own differences in order to unite against the United States. Foreign jihadists, Sunni nationalists, and Shiite extremists have little in common except their opposition to the United States' presence in Iraq.

Third, a timetable for withdrawal would encourage the Iraqi Government and the factions within Iraq to deal with each other rather than relying on American troops to make the sacrifices. A withdrawal could be structured in such a way as to create incentives for violent factions within Iraq to come to the negotiating table rather than engaging in armed insurrection.

Fourth, renouncing any long-term presence in Iraq would enhance America's legitimacy throughout the world. It would be the first step in putting the division that we have had with our allies behind us so we can focus on the war on terror. Fifth, the central political question in Iraq is not whether the United States should leave, but how soon. The politics in Iraq are such that the incoming government, no matter who is elected, will demand that the United States withdraw as soon as it is confident of its own survival. The fact that 70 to 80 percent of the Iraqi people do not want us there makes it clear, if elections determine who is in power in Iraq, whoever is elected Prime Minister will want to work with the United States to set up a timetable for a withdrawal.

Finally, a timetable for withdrawal would be that light at the end of the tunnel for our military which has been severely overstretched and unfairly deployed. While in Iraq, I met with many of our soldiers and Marines. Their spirits are high. Morale is strong. They are prepared for any mission. But they and their families want a reasonable expectation of when this mission will end. From a standpoint of readiness, a phased drawdown in Iraq would forestall what could otherwise soon become a recruiting and retention crisis in the Armed Forces.

We can withdraw the vast majority of our forces in Iraq by the end of this year under a realistic plan. This is not a cut and run strategy, but a phased drawdown that would leave a small, mobile and low-profile U.S. presence in Iraq for a reasonable time frame in agreement with the new Iraqi Govern-

ment. This smaller contingent of approximately 30,000 troops could continue to fill specialty roles, such as training Iraqi forces and engaging in quick strikes against insurgent or terrorist infrastructures that minimize the risk of civilian casualties. A smaller, more remote presence would not patrol Iraqi cities or streets, but it would be enough to prevent outbreaks of civil warfare.

Two factors will allow Iraq to move forward while our troops come home. First, our highest priority must be on training high-quality Iraqi security forces. It must be our number one priority. For too long, the Bush administration assumed that Americans would bear an indefinite burden of security in Iraq. But lasting security can only be provided by Iraqis. In the words of President Bush, ultimately the success in Iraq is going to be the willingness of the Iraqi citizens to fight for their own freedom. With the United States providing an open-ended guarantee for security, there is little urgency for Iraqis opposed to the insurgency to take charge and to fight it.

In addition, the training program was set back for months by a focus on quantity over quality. A couple weeks' training is clearly not enough. One of the reasons why there were problems with our policy on training in the beginning was that we would train Iraqi soldiers for 2 weeks and then send them out into battle and oftentimes many of those Iraqi soldiers when faced with the violence of an insurgency would run away or, in some instances, join the insurgency.

While I was in Iraq, I met with General Petraeus and surveyed the training of Iraqi security forces. General Petraeus gets it. He knows that to fight a sophisticated insurgency, these Iraqis will need to be highly skilled. Despite the rocky start, the training program is moving forward. I believe 12 to 18 months is enough time to train Iraqi security forces with the skills they will need to confront the insurgency.

As important as training Iraqi security forces is, creating jobs for Iraqis is also important. It is outrageous that of the \$22 billion that Congress has committed to Iraq reconstruction, only \$4 billion has actually been spent. And a huge percentage of that \$4 billion has gone to provide security for foreign contractors. When General Petraeus took the 101st Airborne into Mosul, he used riches from Saddam's palaces to keep Iraqi soldiers on the payroll. He invested in local reconstruction projects that put people to work immediately. It was one of the reasons that Mosul was relatively quiet for so long. It may not be a model of free market capitalism, but it is a model for success in a country that is desperate for jobs. It is worth replicating. As the United States begins to reduce our military involvement in Iraq, our investment in Iraq's reconstruction must endure.

Last week, President Bush spoke eloquently about America's special responsibility to spread freedom around the globe, but his inaugural address did not include a single mention of the actual war we are fighting, the war that 150,000 of our servicemen and -women are fighting every day in one of the most volatile and violent places on Earth. In the realm of rhetoric and abstraction, President Bush has clearly defined ideas about the struggle for human freedom, but his policy for Iraq has not yet included a clear path for when or how we will leave.

Our national conversation about Iraq needs more realism. It needs more focus on the future rather than on the past. We need to refocus on our original goal, a stable Iraq that does not threaten its neighbors, develop weapons of mass destruction, export terrorism, or terrorize and murder its own people. Hard experience and tragedy have taught us that prolonged military occupation in Iraq will not end the insurgency, will not stabilize Iraq or bring us closer to our strategic goals. It will only cause more casualties and more hatred toward America within Iraq and beyond. Iraqis want freedom, and they also want control over their daily lives and their country's future. The best hopes for a stable, peaceful Iraq are achieved by making it clear to the Iraqis that the occupation is not indefinite and that soon they will bear the burden of creating a responsible, democratic state.

Iraq's political development is occurring on a clearly defined timetable. Elections will be held this Sunday; a constitution drafted by August 15; an election to ratify that constitution by October 15; new elections by December of this year; and a permanent government in place by the end of December. Iraq needs a similar timetable for taking responsibility for its own security. By laying out a timetable for a phased-down withdrawal, the United States sends a clear message to Iraqis, and all citizens of the world, that we believe Iraq is capable of governing itself and making decisions about its future.

The removal of Saddam Hussein was a victory for the United States, but lasting success in Iraq will not be achieved until the country is stable and American soldiers have the opportunity to come home and be with their families. I believe adopting a strategy of phased-down withdrawal is the only course of action for the United States, and I would hope that the Members of the Congress of the United States would engage in this very important policy issue and have an influence on the direction this country takes in the weeks and months ahead.

#### CHALLENGES TO OUR FREEDOMS AND RIGHTS HERE AT HOME

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MIKE ROGERS of Alabama). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Louisiana

(Mr. JINDAL) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. JINDAL. Mr. Speaker, this month, this year started off as potentially a great month, a great year for democracy and for freedom. The President gave a soaring speech about spreading freedom and liberty across the world. We have elections coming for the first time to the people of Iraq.

Yet even despite this optimism and this hope, there are also serious challenges to our freedoms and our rights right here at home. Tonight I want to speak about both those opportunities and those challenges. We have got opportunity in Iraq with free elections. We have got threats here at home with frivolous lawsuits threatening our freedoms, threatening our way of life. We have got threats here at home with recent IRS rulings and decisions threatening the ability of homeowners to keep their homes, to live in their homes. Finally, we have threats here at home threatening the ability of people across the wonderful State of California from enjoying the great oysters from my home State of Louisiana.

Just today, I want to start first with the threat of frivolous lawsuits and the threat that poses to our way of life. In today's news, we find that a Federal appellate court has reinstated a lawsuit against the McDonald's restaurant, against the McDonald's chain. For those of you not familiar with this lawsuit, it was brought in New York by a family claiming that McDonald's restaurant should be responsible for the fact that their children have eaten too much of McDonald's food.

□ 2045

I am a parent. I have got two beautiful young children, a 3-year-old girl and a little 9-month-old boy. My little 3-year-old girl enjoys McDonald's. She likes eating out. She likes the playground as much as the food. And it is my job, it is her mother's job, it is both of our jobs to make sure that our daughter eats a balanced meal. We would never in a million years think of blaming another, think of bringing a lawsuit against a restaurant for the fact that our daughter eats too many chicken McNuggets or too many French fries.

In my mind this is just one more example of frivolous lawsuits, one more example of how frivolous lawsuits can actually erode our freedoms, our liberties, our economic rights. If this lawsuit in particular and frivolous lawsuits in general are allowed to stand, I fear that we will not have freedoms that we take for granted, the freedoms to go our favorite restaurants, the freedoms to open and operate small businesses, the freedoms to earn a living.

In today's newspaper as well, from today's Wall Street Journal, I want to share with this House, all the way from Europe and Ireland they talk about curbing the "American disease." I put that in quotes, "American disease."

They are not talking about our agricultural products. They are not talking about some kind of new biological threat. They are talking about personal injury lawsuits. Today in the Wall Street Journal, on the front page of the B section, they talk about the fact that litigation has been booming in Europe. Indeed, the nickname in some circles is the "American disease." They talk about a restaurant owner, Pat McDonagh, who is worried about the fact that American-style lawsuits are coming to Ireland. In his restaurant he actually videotaped an adolescent customer pouring water on the floor in the restroom in one of his restaurants so that he could pretend to fall and sue the restaurant owner.

In Ireland they have put in place several reforms. They have put in place a mandatory arbitration panel without involving lawyers, where plaintiffs and defendants can go and argue their case. Both of them still maintain the right to go to court after this arbitration panel. But already despite the fact they have got one of the highest concentrations of attorneys per people, already with some of these reforms, they are beginning to see real results.

In Europe, again quoting from the Wall Street Journal, they said the Republic of Ireland was the Texas of Europe in terms of litigation before the new reforms. The Republic of Ireland was the Texas of Europe. I do not think this is an export we want to become known for. I do not think we want to brag about the fact we are exporting our legal system, our lawsuits to other corners of the world.

In Ireland the number of personal injury claims dropped 20 percent, 20 percent, this year after they adopted these reforms. Liability insurance rates for both government and private employers also dropped 40 percent last year alone. Auto insurance premiums are back to where they were in 1999. It is not just Ireland. The UK has also introduced reforms to cut down the cost of litigation in civil claims courts. In France they are trying to slow down the runaway costs of medical malpractice insurance.

Going back to Mr. McDonagh, going back to Ireland, not only did he see an adolescent stage a fall, he also saw a young pregnant woman with her husband also apparently stage a fall in his restaurant. That adolescent tried to file a 38,000 pound claim. When Mr. McDonagh went public with his evidence, went public with the proof that he had, not only was the adolescent reprimanded but many claims suddenly disappeared. After this video, after these reforms, they have seen the total liability claims, which in Ireland had been climbing at a rate of over 50 percent for the previous 3 years, finally begin to slow down. Insurance rates had tripled in 3 years, and finally they are beginning to see some relief. In Ireland legal fees and related costs account for almost half, 46 percent, of the awards in settlements. So this is