

sometimes there will be judicial decisions that we believe are poorly reasoned and others we just do not like. However, efforts by the Congress to force the courts to look at our transient wishes, rather than the Constitution, would only serve to undermine the very institution in which we serve.

As a Member of Congress with a strong interest in improving the relationship between the legislative and judicial branches, I have formed, with the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT), a bipartisan congressional caucus dedicated to this goal. Our caucus consists of some 30 Members from both sides of the aisle, and I encourage my colleagues who share our goal to join our efforts to restore the historic comity between our two branches.

One hundred and seventy-four years ago, Mr. Speaker, Chief Justice Marshall warned of the great scourge of a dependent judiciary to be inflicted upon an ungrateful and sinning people. Let us not forget his wise admonition.

IN SUPPORT OF LIEUTENANT PANTANO

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

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I have spoken several times about Second Lieutenant Ilario Pantano, a Marine who served our Nation bravely in both Gulf Wars and who now stands accused of murder for defending himself and this country.

During his service in Iraq last year, Lieutenant Pantano was faced with a very difficult situation that caused him to make a split-second decision to defend his life. He felt threatened by the actions of two insurgents under his watch; and in an act of self-defense, he had to resort to force; 2½ months later, a sergeant under his command, who never saw the shooting, accused him of murder. Lieutenant Pantano now faces two counts of murder.

Mr. Speaker, what is happening to this young man is an injustice. Lieutenant Pantano has served this Nation with great honor. My personal experiences with him and his family convince me that he is a dedicated family man and a man who loves his corps and his country.

But I am not the only one who believes he is innocent. Yesterday, I read excerpts of pieces from the Washington Times and respected journalist Mona Charen defending Lieutenant Pantano.

I have received letters and e-mails from Vietnam veterans who sympathize with him and ask that I do something to help him. They know what it is like to be in battle with an unconventional enemy. One second can make the difference between life and death.

I have read excerpts from his combat fitness report in which his superiors praised his leadership and talent, even recommended him for promotion.

Mr. Speaker, Lieutenant Pantano was, by all accounts, an exceptional Marine.

Yesterday, Lieutenant Pantano and his attorneys waived his right to have an article 32 hearing and had decided that they want to go straight to trial. They are so convinced that he will be proven innocent that they want to speed the process along.

In a letter yesterday, Lieutenant Pantano's mother wrote: "My son, our family, and millions of concerned citizens, Marines and soldiers were assured that the article 32 pretrial hearing would bring everything out in the wash, and we have been patient with a process that has been grueling for my son's family. The problem is that if the government is the machine and my son is the laundry, they are not adding any water."

Thus far, the prosecution has not presented the witnesses and the evidence that they claim to have, and Lieutenant Pantano had no reason to believe that they would do so at the hearing. No such evidence appears to exist.

Mr. Speaker, I have put in a resolution, House Resolution 167, to support Lieutenant Pantano as he faces trial. I hope that my colleagues in the House will take some time to read my resolution, look into this situation for themselves. Lieutenant Pantano's mother also has a Web site that I encourage people to visit. The address is www.defendthedefenders.org.

Mr. Speaker, as I close, I ask the good Lord in heaven to please bless our men and women in uniform whether in Iraq or Afghanistan, to bless them and their families across this country, and also I ask the good Lord to please be with the family of Lieutenant Pantano and that I believe he will be exonerated, and he is a great man, a great Marine; and God bless America.

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

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

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to address the House and take the time of the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Washington?

There was no objection.

BANKRUPTCY REFORM LEGISLATION

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

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, the word "bankrupt" as we know it today comes from the 16th century Italian *banca rotta*, which literally means broken bench. It refers to a legend that said when a money trader became insolvent, the bench or table which he used in the market was literally broken. The Latin root of the word includes "corrupt" in the meaning.

The bankruptcy bill that the Republicans forced on the American people in this House today is as broken a bench and as corrupt a piece of legislation as I have seen in this House.

Republicans are providing nothing less than money tribute of, by and for credit card companies; and just like the tribute demanded by the corrupt leaders in ancient times, this money will be extracted from the American people, even if it means children will go hungry.

Do not let the Republicans mislead my colleagues for one money-grubbing, greed-pandering minute. The Republican bill threatens single mothers and children who rely on child support from a spouse who files for bankruptcy.

Credit card companies demanded, and the Republicans caved in, on a provision that says credit card debt will survive bankruptcy and compete on an even basis with kids and moms for the limited dollars left in bankruptcy. One of the Republican Members said, well, we have to do that. What if all the money went to the mothers and kids? Well, now, what kind of family values are those? They ought to go to the children and the mothers.

The Republicans shout family values, but they just sold the women and the children down the river. Single mothers and children will have to fight the credit card companies in court for whatever meager assets remain after bankruptcy. It will not be any just division. They will have to go in and arm wrestle with the credit card companies to make sure that they get food and shelter for their kids.

One credit card company television commercial says, "Don't leave home without it." Maybe they can make a new commercial that says: You might not have home, or food, with it.

Protecting children is more important than satisfying the insatiable greed of credit card companies. Any person who supports this bill opposes our responsibility as a Congress and as a Nation to protect our most vulnerable population, the children.

The line must be drawn. The vote should have been the other way in this House, but the American people must know who is willing to feed corporate greed ahead of feeding vulnerable kids.

My distinguished colleague, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY), had proposed an amendment which would ensure that the debtors make child support payments ahead of credit card payments. The Republicans would not even allow it to be heard in this House. They had their marching orders, and these orders come directly from the credit companies.