

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, yesterday at noon was so much like September 11. Mr. Speaker, I was standing on the House floor with our majority leader as I saw Members beginning to hurry out of this Chamber.

As I exited the House, an F-16 literally flashed across the sky as thousands yesterday, as that day in 2001, streamed from the Capitol into the sunlight of uncertain moments and an undefined threat.

So much was the same, but so much has really changed. On September the 11 evacuation was largely disorganized and spontaneous. But yesterday, thanks to the extraordinary leadership of the United States Capitol Police; Bill Livingood, the House Sergeant at Arms; and Police Chief Terence Gainer, 25,000 public officials and personnel were evacuated from the Capitol and buildings around Capitol Hill in less than 6 minutes in an intense, but orderly, manner.

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It is an extraordinary comfort, I know, to millions of Americans who know that whatever the day may bring in our Nation's capital, thanks to the leadership and the security officials here on Capitol Hill, and the Department of Homeland Security, our national government is ready.

THIRTY YEARS LATER HELP THE HMONG STILL IN LAOS

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

Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I rise on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of America pulling out of the Vietnam war.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in horror at the continued atrocities against the Hmong folk who now reside in the jungles of Laos. Like a cheap date, a one-night stand, we abandoned our brethren who fought along with the CIA, and they were forced to flee into the jungle. Reports of rapes, mass killings, use of biological weapons have gone uninvestigated.

Mr. Speaker, I call upon the State Department to press Laos to immediately pull back its troops, grant international human rights monitors and workers access to the Hmong community and allow them to peacefully settle.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot stand by and abandon our fellow soldiers in the Vietnam war.

BAIT AND SWITCH ON STEM CELLS

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

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, in the coming weeks, some will say that they

only want to use Federal funds to destroy human embryos stored in IVF clinics for stem cell research. This is a skilled use of the bait-and-switch tactic.

First, these embryos are not primed for research; they are primed for adoption. Eighty-one embryos have been adopted today with dozens more on the way, called "snowflake adoptions." Researchers who support embryonic stem cell research acknowledge that these IVF embryos will not provide near the desired type or number of stem cell lines demanded by the biotech industry and admit that they will not be genetically diverse. In order to get that sample and overcome that rejection, they will need to clone human embryos. Advocates have admitted as much on this floor in the Chamber.

The ultimate goal of researchers is free and unfettered access to Federal dollars to create, clone and destroy human embryos for lab experiments. Congress should instead focus on supporting adult stem cell research, which has been proven to work successfully, is not morally controversial, and holds true promise for disease victims. We should not kill to harvest an experiment.

REPUBLICAN ABUSE OF POWER

(Mr. CLEAVER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CLEAVER. Mr. Speaker, we should always be cautious in this quest for absolute power here in Washington. This was not the vision of our Founding Fathers.

Today, we are dealing with a manufactured judicial crisis. Since President George Bush took office, the Senate has confirmed a whopping 208 of his judicial nominations and turned back only 10. That, my friends, is a 95 percent confirmation rate. That rating is the highest approval rating of any President in modern times, including Ronald Reagan and Bill Clinton. Thanks to these confirmations, the President presides over the lowest court vacancy rate since Ronald Reagan was President.

Congratulations, Mr. President.

Instead of accepting that success and avoiding further divisiveness and partisanship here in Washington, my hope is that our President will not add to the current bitterness here and around the Nation by resubmitting the names of rejected nominees again this year.

EXPRESSING GROWING CONCERNS ABOUT A GATHERING LEFTIST STORM IN LATIN AMERICA

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

Mr. MACK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my strong concern about a gathering storm that poses a real threat to freedom, security and pros-

perity throughout the Western Hemisphere.

At the center of this storm is Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, who is fanning the flames of leftist, anti-American, anti-freedom movements that are fostering regional instability.

In the years since he took office as a democratically-elected leader, Chavez has moved sharply away from those ideals. He has stacked the government with judges and allies to implement his own personal will. He has cracked down on the freedom of the press. He is financing a State-run television network patterned after Al Jazeera to spread his propaganda far and wide, and he has forged a dangerous alliance with Fidel Castro.

Mr. Speaker, Hugo Chavez fancies himself as a modern Simon Bolivar, who wanted to unite Latin America into one Nation. Hugo Chavez is trying to alter the balance of power in our hemisphere. The United States must take this growing threat seriously.

REPUBLICAN ABUSE OF POWER IN SENATE

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

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, the power grab Senate Republicans are about to take is not about seven judges; it is about clearing the way for a Supreme Court nominee who only needs 51 votes instead of 60 votes.

Senate Republicans do not want a David Souter, an Anthony Kennedy, a Sandra Day O'Connor, a Ruth Bader Ginsberg or a Steven Breyer, all of whom were confirmed with nearly unanimous, bipartisan support.

If President Bush is successful with this extreme power grab in the Senate, he will be able to appoint extreme, right-wing judges to the court.

President Bush wants to turn the Senate into a second House of Representatives, rubber-stamping his agenda, and that is simply not what our Founding Fathers envisioned when they created two distinctly different congressional chambers.

Mr. Speaker, Democrats will fight to protect our constitutional checks and balances and basic fairness for the American people.

THE BULGARIAN MIRACLE CONTINUES

(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, on Tuesday I was in Sofia, Bulgaria, on a delegation with the gentlewoman from Guam (Ms. BORDALLO). I saw firsthand the Bulgarian miracle of a dynamic democracy, a partner with America on the war on terrorism, and a thriving and robust economy providing jobs for young people.

During my first visit 15 years ago to Bulgaria with the International Republican Institute, I witnessed a dying Communist State frozen in time. Today, Bulgaria is a valued member of NATO and soon to be admitted to the EU.

The Bulgarian people are proving themselves to be courageous and capable to meet the challenges of political, defense and economic transformation.

I want to thank my hosts Tuesday of the enthusiastic economic team of Prime Minister Simeon Saxe-Coburgi Gotha, Foreign Minister Solomon Passy and President Georgi Purvanov. Also, America is well represented in Bulgaria by Ambassador Jim Pardew and his gracious wife Kathy.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September 11.

DEMOCRATS WILL FIGHT REPUBLICAN ABUSE OF POWER IN SENATE

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

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, the congressional Republican abuses of power continue in the Senate where Senator FRIST is preparing to change the Senate rules for the first time in 200 years.

Senator FRIST and Senate Republicans are waging an unprecedented political power grab. They are changing the rules in the middle of the game and attacking our historic system of checks and balances so they can ram through a small number of judicial nominees who otherwise cannot achieve consensus because of their poor record of protecting individual rights.

Our House Democrats join our colleagues in the Senate committed to fight this Republican abuse of power. We will protect the role of the judiciary as the guardian of the rights of all Americans, assuring that all judges who are confirmed in the Federal courts be as intellectually honest and fair as possible, rather than ruling just on one side of one interest.

Drunk with power, rewriting the rules is what has been happening in Washington the most in recent years. The House Republican leadership tried to weaken the House ethics rules to protect one of their own, and they failed. Let us not let the Senate do the same.

CONGRATULATING ELEVENTH DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOLS

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

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in praise of three very impressive schools in my district, Columbus High School, LaGrange High School, and Campbell High School, which were selected by Newsweek magazine among the top high schools in America.

To have three Eleventh District schools included on this prestigious list speaks to the dedication and accomplishments of our district's educators, students, and community members.

As the former chairman of the Marietta City School Board, I know the great work that goes on in our school districts. I am glad the rest of the Nation finally knows about it as well.

LaGrange High School has a long tradition of providing students with the kind of education that truly helps our children succeed in life.

Columbus High School traces its history back to the 1890s, so it is no wonder the school is a perennial education all-star; practice makes perfect.

Campbell High School has upheld the standard of excellence in Cobb County for years, its teachers, staff, and students showing a relentless ambition for achievement, and, just last week, hosted our Vice President for a discussion on Social Security.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in congratulating these schools.

AMERICAN PEOPLE SUPPORT FILIBUSTER

(Mr. PALLONE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I just want to stress that the protection of the filibuster is something that the American people support.

I heard one of my colleagues just a few minutes ago talk about the New Jersey filibuster which is down here at the Mall with a group of people who are trying to make the point that we must protect the filibuster. We should not repeal it as the Republicans want to do, because it does protect minority rights. It protects individual freedoms in terms of making sure that justices and judges that are appointed are those that have a consensus.

I want to say that, in my State, it is not just the people involved in the New Jersey filibuster; a lot of other people have expressed their concern on this issue. Just a week or two ago, I was at Princeton University outside the Frist Student Center, and the students there at Princeton University were conducting a 24-hour filibuster which went on for almost 2 weeks, I think it may still be going on, because they felt so strongly about this issue. They feel strongly about it because it has been around for so long. It is over 200 years now that the Senate rules have provided for a filibuster, and that is what our Founding Fathers wanted, because they did not want an abuse of power. They did not want the majority to be the absolute rule.

PRAISING AMERICA'S SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS

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

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to praise America's small business owners. They really are our Nation's economic engine, and these small business owners and our Nation's employers are doing a great job with this free enterprise system that we enjoy.

Mr. Speaker, there is good news about the economy that is out. In April, this economy created 274,000 new jobs. Also in April, we saw that retail sales exceeded projections. We thought we would have a .7 percent retail sales growth; in fact, we had a 1.4 percent retail sales growth.

Mr. Speaker, it just shows that manufacturing numbers are up. Capital investment is up. Manufacturing investment and output is up. The economy is at work, and it is working for America's families.

America's small businesses are doing their job, and I salute those small business owners.

GOOD NEWS AND BAD NEWS FOR U.S. ECONOMY

(Mrs. MALONEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, thankfully, there have been a couple of bright spots over the past week in the economy. April was just the sixth month during this administration in which at least 250,000 jobs were created, a welcome relief for this struggling economy. Meanwhile, the trade deficit in March decreased from its record high level in February, though it is still on pace to become a record year, the highest trade deficit in the history of our country.

Still, the positive news on the economy is often accompanied by equally troubling news. New statistics show that each paycheck American workers take home ends up buying less and less. The prices of many basic goods from gas to milk have shot up, but workers' wages have not kept pace. Americans are working hard and producing more, but they are not seeing the benefits in their buying power. This is terrible news for America's families. We have to have those wages at least keep pace with inflation.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1544, FASTER AND SMARTER FUNDING FOR FIRST RESPONDERS ACT OF 2005

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 269 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 269

Resolved, That at any time after the adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1544) to provide faster and smarter funding for first responders, and for other purposes. The first