

what we had heard and read about. While there may have been some inappropriate interrogation efforts in the past, they are not ongoing, and closing the prison is not one of the things we should pursue."

A Democratic Representative agreed, saying that "the Guantanamo we saw today is not the Guantanamo we heard about a few years ago."

Another Democratic Senator noted the care taken to respect the prisoners' religious beliefs, "they are given Muslim prayer rugs and Korans. There are arrows everywhere pointing them to Mecca. We even witnessed a prayer call announcing to the terrorists that it was time for them to turn to Mecca and pray."

Mr. Speaker, these praises for the Guantanamo Bay facility do not come from its supporters. They all come from Democrats.

It is unacceptable for anyone who has not visited this facility to condemn it and attempt to defame the military personnel who serve there. Comparing the staff with murderers and criminals is worse than hyperbole—it is uninformed, hurtful nonsense!

As one Democratic Senator who visited the camp asked, "Did the Nazis respect the Jewish faith? Did Stalin and Pol Pot practice religious tolerance?" The answer: Absolutely not!

INCREASE THE FUNDING FOR THE VA BUDGET

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

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, the Republicans started off their 1 minutes today, as the President did last night, by saying it is time to show the troops how much we care. Show them how much we care, except when they come home!

How do we show how much we care?

We have cut the VA budget. The VA budget that was just announced is \$1 billion short this year, \$2.5 billion short next year.

Our troops come back with post-traumatic stress disorder, and can get no services. They come back with dental problems, and have to wait a year for an appointment. That is how much we show how much we support our troops!

Mr. Speaker, the Democrats tried through this whole appropriations process to raise the amount of money for our veterans. I asked for \$3 billion, which would have made up for this shortfall. I was ruled out of order.

Do my colleagues know what is out of order, Mr. Speaker? This administration is out of order. This Congress is out of order.

We have to show that we do support our troops by giving them the support they need when they come home to the veterans health system. We are not doing that today. Let us hope that we can add this money as the appropriations process proceeds.

HONORING THE LITHUANIAN KAIMAS FUND PROJECT

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

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as the co-chair of the Baltic Caucus to commend the work of the Lithuanian Kaimas Fund Project. The project provides children in rural areas of Lithuania with educational opportunities.

In just its third year, the project is having a positive impact on the lives of more than 2,000 young people in more than 60 rural villages across Lithuania. The Kaimas, which stands for countryside, Fund is a private-public partnership between the American Lithuanian Economic Development Council, the Lithuanian Ministry of Education and the Lithuanian Embassy in Washington, D.C., and local non-governmental organizations who provide services to young people in Lithuania.

During a 2-week summer program, community centers throughout Lithuania will provide opportunities for youth to participate in educational and athletic activities, including computer training. Because the project is supported by contributions from American donors, the project also demonstrates the generosity of Americans and all the shared values between our two countries.

Most importantly, I would like to encourage the young people and leaders of the community centers who are participating in this program in Lithuania this summer; they are helping to strengthen the special friendship between Lithuania and America. They are also a vital part of the future of the special relationship that our two countries share.

BIG BIRD IS NOT A BILLIONAIRE

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, last week, we were told that Big Bird was a billionaire and did not need Federal support. Not true on either account.

The Sesame Street Workshop, the nonprofit educational organization, supports children's activities in 120 countries around the world for less than \$100 million a year. Yet, Sesame Street, now in its 36th season, gets only \$17.5 million, about 10 percent of that, from Federal sources.

The Federal money helped make it possible for stations to operate and to buy the programming.

The bottom line is, Big Bird is not a billionaire, and taking away the Federal money, he would still be here, but it would diminish the program and make it harder or impossible for kids to watch him on local, free, non-commercial public television, especially in small cities and rural communities.

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I urge my colleagues to visit their local stations during the summer break and find out the truth about Big Bird.

TEN EUROS FOR THE IRAQI RESISTANCE

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

Mrs. KELLY. Mr. Speaker, extremist groups in Europe are providing financial support to the insurgents in Iraq, and they will be openly gathering later this year on Italian soil to continue their plotting.

Shortly after the commencement of Operation Iraqi Freedom, they began a fund-raising campaign, asking people to donate "ten euros to the Iraq insurgency." The revolting image behind me, dramatizing a violent assault on a U.S. soldier, was taken from the Web site of a group actively supporting the 10-year-old campaign.

It seems to me it conveys accurately the murderous intentions behind this fund-raising initiative. When questioned as to whether the campaign would support terrorism in Iraq, a spokesman for the fund-raising effort said, "We support the armed struggle in Iraq. Our money is to help them. It doesn't matter to us if they use it to buy weapons, Kalashnikovs, or medicines for the people."

The group reportedly sent supplies to the Al Anbar province as recently as February of this year. Now they are notifying comrades of a conference this October in Rome to grow support for insurgents throughout the world.

My colleagues, we hold different opinions about our efforts in Iraq, but we should all stand together in fighting those who support the insurgents, killing Americans and innocent Iraqis.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT

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

Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California. Mr. Speaker, this week I and over 60 of my colleagues will introduce a comprehensive reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act. VAWA is set to expire on September 30 of this year, so it is vital that this Congress quickly consider and pass the reauthorization.

Since its passage in 1994, VAWA has been a great success. It has provided over \$5.5 billion in Federal funding to improve our criminal and community responses to domestic violence. But the statistics remain alarming. One in every four women will experience domestic violence during her lifetime. Last year, California law enforcement received 198,000 domestic violence calls, with weapons involved in over 136,000 of those cases.

The reauthorization that we are putting forward this week will go a long