

have been immunized against polio; 8.6 million new textbooks have been supplied to Iraqi schools; 790,000 Iraqis participated in town meetings on democracy during their historic elections; five cities in Iraq have 19 refurbished or expanded water treatment plants; nearly 3,000 Iraqi schools have been rehabbed; 2,500 Iraqis have been trained to provide primary health care; 1,200 megawatts of new/rehabilitation generation capacity have been added to Iraq's electricity grid.

Today, the Victory in Iraq Caucus will host USAID Iraq director Dawn Liberi to learn more about progress taking place throughout Iraq. I urge my colleagues to join me for this important event.

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

HEADLINES

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

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, yesterday Press Secretary Scott McClellan said, "We are moving on to the priorities of the American people. That is our focus."

Well, Scott, here are the headlines my constituents care about:

"Ex-CIA Official Says Iraq Data Was Distorted; White House Knew of Levee Failure; Brown Faults White House and Agency for Poor Response; Doctors, Pharmacists Say Medicare Benefit Limits Drugs For Seniors; Government Will Forgo \$7 Billion in Oil, Gas Royalties; Bush Budget Would Kill Popular Health Projects; Government Was Underpaid \$345 Billion; American Bar Association Says Bush Exceeded Constitutional Powers in Surveillance Program; Washington Lobbyists Spent \$1.6 Billion in First Half of 2005 Lobbying Congress; Photograph Shows Abramoff with Bush in May 2001; Iran Restarts Uranium Program."

Scott, if you are listening, the American people are ready and waiting. As they say in the news industry, good night and good luck.

HONORING THE LIFE OF VIRGINIA HAMMERSCHMIDT

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

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of a member of our congressional family, Mrs. Virginia Hammerschmidt, the wife of former Congressman John Paul Hammerschmidt. Virginia and John Paul were married for almost 58 years before she passed away over the holiday recess.

Any of us who have had the honor of serving in this House know that the full support, encouragement and guidance of a loving spouse makes our job so much easier. John Paul served in this institution for 26 years. I am sure

that he would be the first to tell you that he could not have done it without Ginny by his side.

Many of John Paul's former colleagues are still serving in the House today, and they remember Ginny with fondness. Gracious, dignified, sincere, these are some of the words people have used to describe her. I had the privilege of being in her company on numerous occasions and can personally attest to what a warm, caring person she was. She will be missed by many. She touched the lives of so many in Arkansas and here in these halls.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to keep John Paul, his son, John Arthur, and the rest of the Hammerschmidt family in their thoughts and prayers.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG DEBACLE

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, the Miami Herald got it right when it described the Republican Medicare prescription drug plan as an "unmitigated disaster."

For years, American seniors have been looking for help in paying for their prescription drugs. Republicans chose to pass a confusing law that forces seniors to go outside of their trusted Medicare to receive drug coverage from one of many private insurance plans. We have all heard stories of seniors leaving pharmacies without their drugs after being told their name could not be found in the system. Talk about incompetence.

But then again, this prescription drug plan is another sorry example of how congressional Republicans have turned this House over to the special interests. Republicans chose to help the pharmaceutical and insurance companies rather than help the seniors who desperately need assistance with skyrocketing drug prices.

Democrats have a plan to take this House back from the special interests so we do not have another prescription drug debacle in the future.

RAISING AWARENESS TO COMBAT HUMAN TRAFFICKING

(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, yesterday in Cannon Caucus, I hosted an event for diplomats based in D.C. to watch portions of a film entitled "Human Trafficking."

We had 97 countries, over 160 diplomats, many ambassadors there. They were very interested to learn what other countries are doing, the cooperation and partnership between nations and leaders around the world to combat trafficking in persons. They are very interested in increased training for their staff, particularly consular

staff, and the many NGOs and their resources that are available.

I want to thank the governmental leaders, the law enforcement personnel, NGOs, business people, and ordinary citizens around the world who are helping combat this horrible exploitation and violence against women and children.

I look forward to talking with them again about creative ways to stop trafficking, not just through stronger legislation and prosecution of traffickers but through other means, particularly providing assistance to victims, their families, addressing corruption, interdicting assets.

I commend to my colleagues this film, "Human Trafficking." It will be shown on TV on April 22 to educate yourself on this issue.

DISTURBING REVELATIONS ON YUCCA MOUNTAIN

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

Ms. BERKLEY. Mr. Speaker, a newspaper article headline states, "Yucca In need of Repair After 9 Years." It says that Yucca Mountain research facilities, from ground support to railroad tracks, need repairs after just 9 years of use.

Now this is the same Yucca Mountain that the Energy Department is proposing to put hundreds of thousands of tons of toxic radioactive nuclear waste for hundreds of thousands of years.

Just this past week Energy Secretary Bodman said, "There are problems with the U.S. Geological Survey work that was done," and we now know that the work was fudged and they made up the data. "There are problems with the EPA standards," and we know they are short by 290,000 years. "And there are problems with the efforts of the Department of Energy."

What did the Department of Energy just say: They can no longer estimate how long it will take to ready Yucca Mountain to accept nuclear waste or how much it will cost.

The latest estimate is \$308 billion, and now the Energy Department says that might not be right. It is time that we stop this boondoggle, end this project and let us figure out a sane and sensible way of dealing with nuclear energy in this country.

CONGRATULATING KENNESAW STATE LADY OWLS

(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 to congratulate Kennesaw State University women's cross country team on winning the 2005 Atlantic Sun Conference championship.

The Lady Owls exhibited dedication, teamwork and perseverance all season long, and it paid off. I congratulate

head coach Stan Sims and the whole team on their accomplishments.

The Lady Owls were the only team to have all competitors finish in the top 20. In fact, Patrina Haines finished second in the field, and her teammate Erin Sutton, whose grandfather, Jack Sutton, works in my district office, was named Atlantic Sun Conference's Freshman of the Year and earned a spot on the all-conference team.

Winning a conference championship is quite an achievement, but this victory is even more inspiring when you consider it was the Lady Owls' first year participating in Division I sports. If this season is any indication, we can expect many more winning seasons for the Kennesaw State University team.

Mr. Speaker, these athletes have brought much pride to Kennesaw State University and the entire Kennesaw community. I ask that you join me in celebrating their accomplishment.

CUTS AT NATIONAL RENEWABLE ENERGY LABORATORY WRONG POLICY

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

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, here is another chapter in the competitiveness saga. A couple weeks ago in the President Bush's State of the Union address he stated, "So tonight, I announce the Advanced Energy Initiative, a 22 percent increase in clean-energy research at the Department of Energy to push for breakthroughs."

This was followed a week later by an announcement from the National Renewable Energy Laboratory in Colorado of cuts in outside contracts, cuts in operating expenses, and the laying off of 35 staff, including eight researchers, one in photovoltaics and seven in biomass and hydrogen.

The words and the actions simply do not match. The researchers will leave the lab, affecting our economy and distancing us further from solutions in energy technologies. We will lose their knowledge and their creativity.

There is a lot of talk about lost competitiveness, outsourcing of jobs, and lost opportunities in the alternative energy market. We could lead the world in energy technologies if we invest in alternative energies.

Mr. Speaker, which is it: Are we pushing for breakthroughs or are we cutting research?

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SBA KATRINA LOAN FUNDING

(Ms. BEAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. BEAN. Mr. Speaker, more than 5 months after Hurricane Katrina ravaged New Orleans and the gulf coast, many small business owners are still struggling with no relief in sight. Busi-

nesses are strained from a lack of customers, employees, infrastructure, electricity, and most particularly the access to capital that they need to get back to business. With no other funds available, many small business owners turn to the SBA for assistance. The Small Business Administration is prepared to help entrepreneurs through its disaster loan programs.

Yet today, real criticisms continue to surround the SBA over the agency's failure to provide adequate assistance to the gulf coast's businesses. Since the devastation from Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Wilma, the SBA has declined approximately 80 percent of all disaster loans, with a backlog of over 200,000 pending applications. On January 30, the SBA released a statement that approximately 51,000 applicants have been approved for financial assistance from the agency; but with over 312,000 total applicants, this is a dismal ratio between those businesses and individuals who are getting loans and those who are left waiting.

As a member of the House Committee on Small Business and because of my own experience as a small business owner, I am well aware of the stimulative effect that small to medium-size firms can have on our regional economies. In the gulf region it couldn't be more critical to ensure small business owners reopen their doors to provide essential services and jobs that allow families to get back on their feet.

We can do better. I ask my colleagues to help me in this effort.

AMERICAN HEART MONTH/WOMEN & HEART ACT

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

Mrs. CAPPs. Mr. Speaker, I remind my colleagues that February is American Heart Month. Throughout this month, we recognize the millions of Americans struggling with heart disease and recommit ourselves to helping them. And we acknowledge the efforts of organizations like the American Heart Association, which help all of us prevent and treat heart disease.

What is not well enough known is that heart disease, stroke, and other cardiovascular diseases are the number one killer of women in the United States. Each year, 480,000 women die from heart disease. That is one every minute.

In addition to experiencing classic chest pain, women often have a greater tendency to exhibit atypical symptoms of heart attack, such as difficulty breathing, nausea and unexplained fatigue. So they are often misdiagnosed.

Yesterday, Representative CUBIN and I introduced the Women & HEART Disease Act. This legislation will increase awareness, education, data collection, and the detection of heart disease in women so that we can improve the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of women with cardiovascular disease.

I urge each of my colleagues to support this bill and other efforts to address the costly scourge of this disease.

ON THE DRUG PLAN DEBACLE AND THE COST OF CORRUPTION

(Ms. SOLIS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, leave it to Washington Republicans to create a chaotic and confusing system that has left a large majority of seniors just saying no. The Republican prescription drug plan shows the everyday cost congressional corruption has on the American people.

Republicans promised American seniors they would have access to prescription drugs through private plans beginning January 1, but to date it has been an utter failure. In many instances, beneficiaries who tried to have their prescriptions filled under the new system were either told that their enrollment could not be verified or that their drugs were not covered. As a result, many beneficiaries, particularly those that are called dually eligible for both Medicare and Medicaid, were at risk for receiving no coverage at all.

Rather than choosing to work to alleviate drug costs for seniors, Republicans were more interested in coming up with a bill that benefited their friends in the pharmaceutical and insurance industries, friends who have been very loyal to them over the years.

America must do better, we can do better and put special interests aside so that we can help those people who truly need our assistance. Let's start thinking about our senior citizens.

VIOLENCE AMONG GIRLS

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

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, a Chicago Sun Times article today reveals that fighting among girls in schools is up. As a matter of fact, fights involving girls are up 31 percent, assaults are up 18 percent, and battery is up 15 percent. So far this school year, 529 girls in the Chicago schools have been written up for fighting in incident reports to the district's bureau of safety and security. While girls have been steadily catching up to boys in violence rates in the past 25 years, there are few programs to address this great need.

As we go into budget talks and budget negotiations, let us be mindful of this need and allocate resources to stem this tide of growing violence among girls.

BUSH'S BUDGET AND ITS FAILURES TO MAKE AMERICANS SAFE

(Ms. WATSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)