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House of Representatives

The House met at 12:30 p.m.

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
April 4, 2006.

I hereby appoint the Honorable TIM MURPHY to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 31, 2006, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 30 minutes, and each Member, except the majority leader, the minority leader, or the minority whip, limited to not to exceed 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) for 5 minutes.

ADMINISTRATION SHOVELS

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, well, it is budget week here in Washington and on the Republican side of the aisle they are issuing shovels.

Now, the shovels here in Washington have two purposes. One is to shovel certain substances to obscure what they are really doing, and the other is to dig the debt hole of the United States of America, the indebtedness of the American people, yet deeper while languishing programs that are important to average folks while the wealthy get more.

This budget would reserve substantial funding for tax cuts for the richest among us. It would reserve tax cuts so that we can extend the tax where people who own stock that pays dividends would pay a much lower rate of tax than an American who works for, say, $30,000 a year in wages and salary.

It would extend the capital gains tax cuts which again primarily benefit people over $300,000 a year. For someone who earns, 50, $60,000 a year, the average tax break in capital gains is $50 since we exempt people's principal residence. That is where most middle class people have their capital. They do not have a whole lot of other investments. They are kind of struggling to get by. This budget is not going to help.

This budget would borrow every penny. We are taxing working people more than we need to collect money for Social Security. The theory is that money is being set aside to pay for the retirement of the baby boom, the coming change in the demographics of the society, the crisis the President talked about in funding Social Security.

Well, what are the President and Republicans doing with the $192 billion extra we will collect in Social Security taxes this year only from people who earn $94,000 a year or less? They are going to spend it. They are going to spend part of it on tax cuts for people who earn a heck of a lot more than $94,000 a year.

This deficit-producing budget is going to do an incredible disservice to our Nation. It will give us a new record and, of course, there have been many records under the Bush administration, and this will set the record of the five consecutive years of largest deficits in the history of the United States, from the small government folks down there at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue.

Now, true, a lot of it is done in emergency supplementals. They cannot anticipate. This budget, for instance, says, unlike the President who says it will be a future President who decides when and if the United States withdraws from Iraq, the Republican budget, as honest as the day is long, says that we will spend $50 billion next year on Iraq and Afghanistan. Of course, that is quite a bit less than half of what we spent this year. So maybe they know something the President does not know and America does not know about the withdrawal timetable, or maybe it is more dishonest bookkeeping where we will have yet another unanticipated expense for the war in Iraq and the ongoing problems of pacifying Afghanistan.

So this budget is rife with these sorts of things. The total deficit this year will be $543 billion, including borrowing $192 billion of hard-earned money that is going to pay for supposedly future Social Security retirement. And over 5 years they are going to raise the debt of the United States of America. Again, it has been raised. Four times in the last 5 years, the debt ceiling has been raised. It is a 65 percent increase in the indebtedness of the United States of America.

This President has accumulated more foreign debt than the 42 Presidents that preceded him in office. Record after record after record is falling to the Republican leadership and the Republicans in the White House, something that they can be proud of. All so they can feed tax cuts for people who earn over a million bucks a year. That is really a great way to run a country.

They are anticipating with this budget, again even with dishonest bookkeeping, that we will be up to $11.3 trillion of debt by 2011. That would be about $27,000 for every American. $27,000 of debt. That would have more than doubled the debt since George Bush took office. Doubling the debt in that short period of time is, again, quite an accomplishment. It took 42 Presidents and more than 200 years to accumulate a significant debt and the President is going to manage to double it in a mere 5 years.

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So hopefully we can take away the shovels, we can pull aside the veils, we can reveal to America what is going on and we can pass a budget that meets the priorities of the American people, not a privileged few.

PUBLIC BROADCASTING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 31, 2006, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, more than 87 million Americans tune into public television each week and 30 million listen to public radio. And they depend on this Congress to provide some of the economic resources so that in every community across the country people can listen to those thousand public radio and television stations for programs that inform and inspire.

For help with reading, job training, for the latest digital services, for local news and information, for dozens of other reasons. These stations around the country determine their own program schedules. They often produce their own programming. We, in Oregon, are immensely proud of Oregon Public Broadcasting for its award winning programming. They respond to community needs and leverage local support that is so important.

While the Corporation for Public Broadcasting distributes its annual appropriations from Congress in accordance to a statutory formula for which almost 72 percent of the funds go directly to local public radio and television stations, the Federal appropriations while it only accounts for 15 percent of the entire costs, it leverages critical investments from State and local governments, from universities, businesses and foundations, and most important, from millions of viewers and listeners of public television and radio. They add their dollars to this core vital Federal support, writing checks to allow the public broadcasting to continue. However, we have faced issues of major reduction in this funding which would have immediate and severe impacts on our community and constituents.

Last month, 126 bipartisan Members signed a letter in support for $430 million in funding for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. This is a modest amount by reckoning of the vast sums that are thrown around here in Washington, DC, but it has a critical impact. It is going to be essential that we provide the core funding for the Corporation For Public Broadcasting and hopefully retain the practice of advanced funding which costs the Treasury nothing but gives public broadcasting certainty over time so that they can plan on allowing for the changes and development that they need.

There has been a modest request that has been suggested, $30 million above the fiscal 2006 funding. This is going to not even cover the additional electricity costs that public television must bear to operate both a digital and analogue transmitter. That transition to digital technology is also important for Congress to focus on. It is not cheap.

Public broadcasting has led the way. They have raised more than $1.1 billion from all sources for this purpose. We are asking for a little additional money, an increase of $10 million this year. This can have a critical impact, not just on the clarity of the broadcast that is received by people in their homes, but there is also an opportunity to replace and update the television interconnection system, known as the Next Generation Interconnection System, that the Department of Homeland Security has been testing as a foundation for a new digital emergency alert system. Not just better service for people at home, but an important potential addition to our homeland security.

Last but by no means least deals with educational technology. In the No Child Left Behind legislation passed in 2001, Congress authorized two programs, Ready to Learn and Ready to Teach. Ready to Learn harnesses television's universal reach to improve early childhood learning, while Ready to Teach uses technology to develop more highly-qualified teachers to measurably increase student standards. It is important to make sure that we support Ready to Learn, which received a small increase last year, focused on literacy and teacher professional development. Ready to Teach last year actually sustained a cut. It is requested that funding for both programs be increased in fiscal 2007 to $32 million for Ready to Learn and $15 million for Ready to Teach.

Last year we had to come to the floor with a strong bipartisan vote where 87 Republicans joined with every single Democrat to restore Draconian cuts to public broadcasting. This year it is more important than ever for education, for the Public Broadcasting Service, and for national security that we not have to go through that effort.

I urge my colleagues to look carefully at the requests that have been made for public broadcasting and join with us this year in assuring a strong funding base that will leverage hundreds of millions of dollars across America and provide the services Americans deserve.

REMEMBERING MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 31, 2006, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LEWIS) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, 38 years ago Martin Luther King, Jr., was taken by from us by an assassin's bullets. He had gone to Memphis, Tennessee to call for economic justice for working people in America and for the sanitation workers there.

Mr. Speaker, it is difficult for me to find the right words to express my feelings about Martin Luther King, Jr. He was a man, my friend. He was my inspiration, my leader, my colleague, and my brother.

Martin Luther King, Jr., more than any other American of the 20th century had the power to bring people together to do good, black and white, rich and poor, young and old, Protestant, Catholic and Jews.

He could inspire with his words, with his vision, and his leadership. He could fill ordinary people with the extraordinary vision that they had the power to build a new, more fair, more just America.

His message was love. His weapon was truth. His method was creative nonviolence. And his goal, Mr. Speaker, was the Beloved Community, a community of justice, a Nation at peace with itself. In a sense he spoke a strange language, a philosophy of passive resistance to evil and the use of nonviolence in the struggle for good.

He was far too advanced in his concepts of love and peace for the violent times in which he lived, perhaps too advanced for us to understand even today. But, Mr. Speaker, the assassins of Martin Luther King, Jr., did not kill the dream of peace. They did not kill the dream of an open society. They did not kill the dream of a Beloved Community.

The movement that Martin Luther King, Jr., led was too right. It was too necessary to be buried with his body. We know that his voice was stilled 38 years ago today, but his message of love, of peace, and of the good society continue to resonate all around the world.

Mr. Speaker, we here in the people's House, we know that Dr. King's dream has not been fulfilled. But that is why it must be our task to renew our commitment to the values of his vision, the values of peace, love and justice.

If Dr. King were here today he would say we must find a way to support courageous legislation, legislation that will redirect the priorities and the tremendous resources of this Nation, not to oppress but to uplift, not to divide but to bring together, not to enslave but to set free. He would say we must use the resources of this great Nation, our talents, our minds, and our votes to work for the good of all humankind.

Through the life of Martin Luther King, Jr., through his noble efforts, he injected new meaning and new dignity into the very veins of our society. We are a better people. We are a better Nation because he lived.

□ 1245

GLOBAL WARMING

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MURPHY). Pursuant to the order of the House of January 31, 2006, the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL)

is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss the urgent need for the House of Representatives to address global warming. As you can see from last week's cover of Time magazine, both popular and scientific consensus indicate that the United States must act now to mitigate this problem.

In fact, a poll released yesterday by Environmental Defense indicates that more than 70 percent of Americans polled believe that global warming is real and a problem that they are willing to do something about.

Mr. Speaker, it is time for a national policy on global warming. America must lead the global effort. As I speak, our colleagues in the other chamber are holding a day-long conference on this issue. They have also debated legislation and had several votes on bills designed to curb greenhouse gas emissions. It is time, in fact it is long overdue, for the United States House of Representatives to join the debate.

In my home State of New Mexico, we may already be seeing the dramatic effects of global warming. In the drought seasons of 2002 and 2003, we had major die-offs of our State tree, the pinon. Scientists predict that this major die-off is only the prelude to life in a warmer future. Also, as seen in this picture, dramatic melting has already been seen in icecaps, glaciers and sea ice on both poles and in high mountain regions across the globe. Scientists are in almost unanimous agreement that these events are directly related to the build-up of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere from the burning of fossil fuels.

Mr. Speaker, last week the Honorable TOM PETRI and I introduced H.R. 5049, the Keep America Competitive Global Warming Policy Act. Our bill will help America curb our emissions and spur innovation to keep us in the global technological lead. The bill is an economy-wide, upstream, cap-and-trade policy that covers all greenhouse gas emissions.

However, to provide some certainty to the economy, the bill provides for an unlimited number of additional safety valve allowances. These allowances will be sold by the Treasury Department at a fixed and reasonable price, which will escalate over time. The escalation of the safety valve price is tied to the emissions-control activities of the five largest developing country greenhouse gas emitters. This will ensure that the rest of the world joins us in this effort. In that way, our policy will not put America at a global disadvantage.

We know that there may be less emissions reduction with a safety valve than without one. However, the cost certainty and the modest starting up cost of the safety valve allowances provide assurance this policy will not result in undue economic harm. We believe it is better to have a policy that works slowly yet surely rather than one that might prove economically unworkable.

Many companies, including the largest utility in my home State of New Mexico, have expressed the need for a safety valve in any mandatory greenhouse gas emissions control legislation.

While the safety valve and a cap-and-trade program are critical to the short-term success of curbing emissions, conservation, research and technology are some of the long-term solutions of global warming. Our bill creates an advanced research projects agency inside the Department of Energy. The goal of the E-ARPA is to explore the truly out-of-the-box, high-risk, high-payoff research that will be necessary if we are to get to a low or no carbon dioxide or greenhouse gas world.

Mr. Speaker, we know that despite our best efforts some will probably be negatively impacted by this policy. That is why our legislation allocates allowances to those people, entities and localities that may incur dislocations because of this legislation.

Finally, we also set aside allowances for auction that will be used to ensure that the legislation is revenue neutral.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is modest, certain and efficient. It commits America to reducing its greenhouse gas emissions by having emitters internalize the costs associated with global warming. This monumental step of putting a price on all greenhouse gases will stabilize emissions and eventually reduce them and finally put the United States on the road towards curbing the effects of global warming.

I urge my colleagues in the House to cosponsor this comprehensive and economically rational legislation and help break the stalemate that exists on the global warming issue.

NATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH WEEK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 31, 2006, the gentleman from California (Mr. HONDA) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. HONDA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of National Public Health Week. Since 1995, national, State and local public health professionals highlight an important public health issue every April to raise awareness about leading health problems affecting our Nation.

This year, the theme of National Public Health Week focuses on what is called the ''built environment,'' which refers to building healthy communities to protect and enhance our children's life.

The built environment is any infrastructure with which children come in contact on a daily basis including homes, schools, parks, roads, walkways and businesses.

Enhancements to the built environment include access to primary health services, regular physical activity, safe places to play, and safe routes to walk or bike to school, smoke-free communities and homes, and toxin-free schools.

Health challenges include the quality of and access to schools and housing, economic opportunities, social capital, air and water, and opportunities for physical activity.

As Chair of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, I am particularly concerned about how the built environment affects communities of color, native communities, and linguistically isolated communities.

Members of these communities are more likely to live, work, and play in environments which have detrimental health effects, often vastly disproportionate to their percentage of the population.

For example, asthma is one of the major causes of illness and disability in the United States. Although asthma is only slightly more prevalent among minority children than among whites, it accounts for three times the number of deaths.

Low socioeconomic status, exposure to urban environmental contaminants, and lack of access to medical care contribute to the increase of deaths in minority communities.

African Americans living in low-income neighborhoods have particularly high rates of asthma, as do Native Hawaiians living in Hawaii.

America must invest more resources and be more creative in order to eliminate racial and ethnic health disparities.

We need to provide access to health care for the 45 million uninsured, more than half of whom are racial and ethnic populations.

We need to provide linguistically and culturally competent services, and we need to stop gutting the health care safety net.

Neighborhoods and communities across the United States are segregated by race and socioeconomic status, which exacerbates the underlying social and economic inequities that perpetuate health inequities. Without significant investment in the built environment for children and underserved communities, these health inequities will continue.

I am pleased to see that the American Public Health Association, the leading public health organization in the United States, has been able to disseminate the message about the interconnectedness between health and the built environment, and hope that this reality is integrated into the public health debate.

I look forward to working with all those involved with National Public Health Week to ensure policies to promote all children's health.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 55 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until 2 p.m.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mrs. BIGGERT) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer:

Lord God of the Jewish-Christian scriptures, You call forth Your people to move out from blood-stained doorways into the wandering freedom of the desert, until they found a promised land.

By the spirit You led Jesus into the desert to discover Your living presence through fasting and prayer.

Guide Your people in these days of grace in and through the political ways of Congress. May the trials of argumentative discussions and the discipline of compromise lead Your people across the barren land of uncertainty. Shape within them new resolves of faithful service, and open for them paths of greater justice and new-found peace.

Help us, O Lord, to renew the covenant of old which makes us Your own, even now and forever. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House her approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

DEMOCRATS AND CONFUSING SENIORS ABOUT MEDICARE

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

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, I rise today to discuss the new Medicare prescription drug benefit. Under this historic program, seniors are receiving the drugs they need at reduced cost. So far, more than 27 million Medicare beneficiaries are now getting coverage and saving money on their prescription drugs. Even more amazing is that 380,000 new beneficiaries are signing up each week.

This is a program that is working for most seniors, and any early problems are quickly being corrected. The new drug coverage offers more and better choices at a lower cost. Premiums have been lowered to an average of $25 a month, down from the $37 that was previously estimated. Yet Democrats continue their coordinated campaign of confusion. On the one hand they are telling seniors that the prescription drug program is a disaster, and then in the same breath they are urging them to sign up. Mr. Speaker, this reminds me of someone turning to you and saying, ''Hey, this milk tastes bad. Try it.''

Seniors are hearing from Democrats that the milk is bad, yet they are being asked to taste it. It is no wonder some seniors are confused. I would be, too.

MAKING THE TAX CUTS PERMANENT

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

Mr. KELLER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to give the American people some straight talk on why we need to make the tax cuts permanent. As tax day rapidly approaches, President Bush urged Congress to make the tax cuts permanent, and with good reason. If Congress does not make the tax cuts permanent, a family of four in central Florida making $50,000 would see their taxes go up by nearly 50 percent.

It is no accident that we have a strong and vibrant economy today. During President Bush's first term, Congress acted to lower income tax rates across the board, cut taxes on capital gains and dividends, and eliminate the marriage penalty.

Now, what have we seen as a result? We have seen 5 million new jobs created in the last 2½ years. We have seen an unemployment rate that is lower than the average unemployment rate in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. We have seen home ownership rise to 69 percent, the largest record in history. So don't believe the hype. Our government has received more revenue after the tax cuts than we received before the tax cuts. Let's make these tax cuts permanent and keep our economy strong.

CONGRATULATIONS TO NORTH COLLEGE HILL TROJANS

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

Mr. CHABOT. Madam Speaker, at this time last year I predicted that I would be standing here once again to congratulate Coach Jamie Mahaffey and his North College Hill Trojans. Well, they proved me right after winning back-to-back Division III Ohio State high school basketball championships.

Just this past weekend, North College Hill captured its second State championship with a convincing 90–73 triumph over Cleveland Villa Angela-St. Joseph. The victory topped off an impressive 26–1 season, including a number three national ranking by USA Today and a unanimous number one ranking in the final Ohio Associated Press State poll.

The Trojans made their road to Columbus look easy, defeating their opponents by an average of 33 points a game and knocking off the reigning Division I State champions from Ohio and Kentucky. In fact, statistics like these have already brought calls for a three-peat next year.

It gives me great pleasure to congratulate the North College Hill Trojans, the players, coaches, parents, fans, teachers, and administrators on bringing the championship back to the Cincinnati area. We are very proud of you, North College Hill.

AMERICAN FLAGS BANNED AT HIGH SCHOOL

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

Mr. POE. Madam Speaker, students at Skyline High School in Colorado are banned from waving the American flag. The principal is reported as saying, ''These flags were being used as a symbol of bigotry, a symbol of hostility. They were being used to inflame different groups, and we're not going to tolerate that.''

This principal is more concerned about hurting the feelings of people illegally in the U.S. than he is about Americans' freedom of expression. This principal is obviously unaware the flag was offensive to the British who were also illegally in the U.S. When the British reinvaded the United States in 1814 and were illegally on American soil, they marched on Washington waving the British flag, and they burned this very building. The British then sailed upriver to Fort McHenry and were offended by this defiant American flag that was flying. They tried to shoot it down, but Old Glory flew, and we have it down the street in the National Archives, bullet holes and all. We got our National Anthem from the glory of the Star Spangled Banner at Fort McHenry.

The American flag cannot be banned in America. How absurd. What flag do you fly there at that high school, the white flag of surrender so as not to offend anyone illegally in the United States? Good thing the commander at Fort McHenry didn't care about what the British thought and was proud to be an American. And that's just the way it is.

RESPECTING CAPITOL POLICE

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

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Madam Speaker, last week we finally saw the Democratic Party roll out their ideas about how we should secure America,

and they put a very heavy emphasis on how important they thought it was to support our first responders.

How ironic it was, then, on that very same day to hear allegations that a Democrat Member of this House struck a Capitol Police officer, and how disheartening to hear the response of the Democratic leader of this House. It was, she said, no big deal.

To those who might agree with the Democrats that allegedly assaulting a Capitol Hill Police officer is no big deal, I would respectfully remind them that just a few years back two members of the Capitol Police were shot and killed in the line of duty by a deranged man who was trying to attack the majority whip, and that during moments of danger and evacuation Capitol Police stand their posts while the rest of us seek to secure ourselves and the safety of others.

This is only my second term here, so the Capitol Police don't always recognize me and occasionally they do check my identity. They stop me and check my identity. No problem.

Madam Speaker, I wish to go on record as supporting the jobs that the brave men and women in the Capitol Police do to protect all of us, and let me just say to them thank you.

MEDICARE PART D

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

Mr. GINGREY. Madam Speaker, I rise and share yet another story of success regarding the Medicare part D prescription drug benefit. Today I would like to tell you about Lola Squires of Cedartown, Georgia.

Lola is a widow and lives on a fixed income. As you can imagine, every dollar of her monthly budget is precious to her livelihood. Due to chronic illness, Lola was paying $1,000 a month for her prescription drugs, which used up almost all of her income.

Lola is now enrolled in a Medicare part D plan. As my office was assisting her, we learned that she did qualify for the extra help due to her limited resources, and I am happy to report, as of today, Lola is paying a mere $27 a month for her medication. $27 a month. That is a saving of more than $900 every month for Lola.

Madam Speaker, the Medicare part D success stories are pouring in. Seniors have until May 15 to enroll in a plan without penalty; so in the next few weeks, it is absolutely essential that Congress put real people over partisan politics and help our seniors get the medicine they need to stay well.

INDONESIA IS A STRATEGIC FRIEND

(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. Madam Speaker, as supporters of freedom confront terrorism worldwide, it is appropriate to recognize the Republic of Indonesia's extraordinary efforts to advance democracy. Newly appointed Ambassador Sudjadnan Parnohadiningrat recently made a convincing presentation in the Washington Diplomat regarding the significance of his country, which is the world's third largest democracy of over 220 million and the world's largest Muslim population which spreads across 17,000 islands.

Despite al Qaeda terrorist attacks and economic collapse, and the catastrophic tsunami, Indonesia has rebounded with fair and free elections and an economic growth rate from 5.5 to 6 percent annually. America is fortunate to be a friend and partner of Indonesia, a dynamic nation which joins us in working for regional peace and winning the war on terrorism.

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

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken after 6:30 p.m. today.

PROVIDING FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF PHILLIP FROST AS A CITIZEN REGENT OF THE BOARD OF REGENTS OF THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

Mr. EHLERS. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 81) providing for the appointment of Phillip Frost as a citizen regent of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.J. RES. 81

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That, in accordance with section 5581 of the Revised Statutes of the United States (20 U.S.C. 43), the vacancy on the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution, in the class other than Members of Congress, occurring by reason of the expiration of the term of Manuel L. Ibanez of Texas on May 4, 2006, is filled by the appointment of Phillip Frost of Florida. The appointment is for a term of 6 years, beginning on the later of May 5, 2006, or the date of the enactment of this joint resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. EHLERS) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan.

Mr. EHLERS. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

House Joint Resolution 81 provides for the appointment of Phillip Frost to serve on the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution.

This 17-member board, which governs the Smithsonian Institution, is comprised of the Chief Justice and Vice President of the United States, three Members each from the House and Senate, and nine citizens who are nominated by the Board and approved jointly in a resolution of Congress.

Our first regent nominee, Phillip Frost, founded Ivax Corporation, and has served as the Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of the Board since 1987; he also served as President of Ivax from 1991 to 1995. Before founding Ivax, Dr. Frost chaired the Department of Dermatology at the Mount Sinai Medical Center of Greater Miami from 1972 to 1990. His other work involved joining the University of Miami School of Medicine faculty in 1966. Among his many accomplishments, Dr. Frost was named the 2001 National Entrepreneur of the Year by Ernst & Young.

A native of Philadelphia, Dr. Frost attended the University of Paris from 1955 to 1956. He received his Bachelor's Degree from the University of Pennsylvania and his medical degree from the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York in 1961.

Dr. Frost and his wife Patricia, who currently serves as Chair of the Smithsonian National Board, have displayed a genuine commitment to the arts through personal leadership and philanthropy. In 1986, they gave their entire 113-piece collection of American abstract art to the Smithsonian American Art Museum.

Dr. Frost has experience serving on a variety of boards and possesses significant fiscal experience with matters of government oversight.

□ 1415

I believe the Smithsonian can benefit greatly from Phillip Frost's financial, educational, and leadership experience. And I urge my colleagues to support House Joint Resolution 81.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I too rise in support of House Joint Resolution 81 to appoint Dr. Phillip Frost of Florida for a 6-year term as a citizen regent of the Smithsonian Institution.

Dr. Frost, who is a medical doctor, is a noted collector of American abstract art and a philanthropist, who, since 1987, as was mentioned, has served as the chairman of the board and CEO of the IVAX Corporation, which develops and markets pharmaceutical products.

Dr. Frost and his wife, Patricia, gave their 113-piece collection of American abstract art to the Smithsonian American Art Museum in 1986. In another major philanthropic donation, they previously gave a $33 million gift to the University of Miami for its school of

music. Subsequently, the school of music was named after Dr. Frost and his wife, Patricia.

Dr. Frost's broad background in medicine, science, business, and culture will be a valuable asset to the Smithsonian.

And, Madam Speaker, just as a personal aside, I have a personal relationship with Dr. Phil Frost. He is a renowned philanthropic contributor both in the community in south Florida and across this country. I have worked with him on several projects and also would like to note his deep commitment and involvement in the Jewish community in south Florida, and I am privileged to be able to stand before this House today and ask unanimous support for this resolution.

I urge my colleagues to support House Joint Resolution 81 so that this joint resolution can be signed into law before the May meeting of the Smithsonian regents.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of House Joint Resolution 81, which appoints Dr. Phillip Frost as a Citizen Regent of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution. Dr. Frost and his wife Patricia have long been ardent supporters of the arts, especially in my Congressional District of South Florida.

Dr. Frost grew up living above his father's shoe store as a child in Philadelphia. While in college at the University of Pennsylvania, he traveled to Paris for a year to study French Literature. While in Paris, his life long commitment to the arts began.

Dr. Frost came to South Florida to complete a one-year senior residency at Jackson Memorial Hospital in Miami. Fortunately for South Floridians, he has remained for over forty years, In 1966, he joined the faculty of the University of Miami School of Medicine. From there he moved on to Mount Sinai Medical Center in 1972, chairing their Department of Dermatology until 1990.

Dr. Frost's success in medicine translated into business, and he has used his success to enhance the South Florida Community. Dr. Frost has distinguished himself nationally as a business leader. It came as no surprise that in 2001; he received the National Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year Award.

Dr. Frost's contributions to our community in South Florida have been invaluable. Dr. Frost has been a huge supporter of the University of Miami's Music Department, which is now named after he and his wife.

In 1993, Florida International University presented him with an honorary degree for his many contributions in medicine, business, and community service. He also has been a strong advocate of the Miami Art Museum.

I would like to commend Dr. Frost for his dedication to enriching the lives of South Floridians through the arts. I urge my colleagues to support House Joint Resolution 81 and promote Dr. Frost as a Citizen Regent of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. EHLERS. Madam Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BIGGERT). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. EHLERS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the joint resolution, H.J. Res. 81.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. EHLERS. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.J. Res. 81.

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

There was no objection.

PROVIDING FOR THE REAPPOINTMENT OF ALAN G. SPOON AS A CITIZEN REGENT OF THE BOARD OF REGENTS OF THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

Mr. EHLERS. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 82) providing for the reappointment of Alan G. Spoon as a citizen regent of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.J. RES. 82

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That, in accordance with section 5581 of the Revised Statutes of the United States (20 U.S.C. 43), the vacancy on the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution, in the class other than Members of Congress, occurring by reason of the expiration of the term of Alan G. Spoon of Massachusetts on May 4, 2006, is filled by the reappointment of the incumbent for a term of 6 years. The reappointment shall take effect on May 5, 2006.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. EHLERS) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan.

Mr. EHLERS. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

House Joint Resolution 82 provides for the reappointment of Alan G. Spoon as a citizen regent of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution.

Alan Spoon has served as a member of the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History Board of Regents since 2000 and, by all accounts, has done an excellent job. His diverse background in finance, management, and technology has served the institution very well. We would be privileged to have him continue to serve as a member.

Mr. Spoon has a unique skill-set, stemming from his 25 years of service in various dynamic business atmospheres. Mr. Spoon currently serves as a managing partner of Polaris Venture Partners, which invests in Internet-related businesses, networking, biotechnology, and medical technology.

Prior to his position with Polaris, he served in a variety of capacities at The Washington Post Company. These included positions as president, chief financial officer, chief operating officer, president of Newsweek, head of newspaper marketing, and head of corporate business development.

Prior to serving on the Board of Regents, Mr. Spoon served on the National Museum of Natural History's Board of Directors. Mr. Spoon received his BA at M.I.T., his MS at M.I.T.'s Sloan School of Management, and his JD from Harvard Law School.

In light of his distinguished service with the Smithsonian Institution, I urge my colleagues to support House Joint Resolution 82 and reappoint Mr. Spoon to an additional 6-year term.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I too support H.J. Resolution 82 to reappoint Alan G. Spoon of Massachusetts for a new 6-year term as a citizen regent of the Smithsonian Institution.

I want to mention that my colleague, the Hon. Congressman BARNEY FRANK, joins me in the support of this resolution as well.

Alan Spoon was previously appointed to the Board of Regents by Congress in 2000. He is a member of the executive committee of the board and chairman of the Finance and Investment Committee. As was mentioned, Mr. Spoon is the managing partner of Polaris Venture Partners, an investment company, and was previously president of The Washington Post Company. Prior to that experience, Mr. Spoon also served as president of Newsweek magazine, an impressive accomplishment. He also brings previous experience to the Smithsonian as a member of the National Museum of Natural History's advisory board.

I believe the Smithsonian will continue to benefit from Alan Spoon's financial, marketing, and management background and continuing experience on the Board of Regents.

I urge my colleagues to support House Joint Resolution 82 so that this joint resolution can be signed into law before the May meeting of the Smithsonian regents.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. EHLERS. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. EHLERS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the joint resolution, H.J. Res. 82.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the joint resolution was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. EHLERS. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.J. Res. 82.

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

There was no objection.

RECOGNIZING THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CHERNOBYL NUCLEAR DISASTER

Mr. LEACH. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 703) recognizing the 20th anniversary of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster and supporting continued efforts to control radiation and mitigate the adverse health consequences related to the Chernobyl nuclear power plant.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 703

Whereas April 26, 2006, marks the 20th anniversary of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster;

Whereas serious radiological, health, and socioeconomic consequences for the populations of Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia, as well as for the populations of other affected areas, have been identified since the disaster;

Whereas the Chernobyl Forum, an initiative launched by the International Atomic Energy Agency and supported by the World Health Organization, the United Nations Development Program, and other United Nations agencies, as well as by the governments of Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia, examined the scientific evidence of the human health affects and the environmental impact of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster;

Whereas the findings of the Chernobyl Forum, issued in September 2005, significantly added to the understanding of the health consequences and economic impact caused by the Chernobyl nuclear disaster;

Whereas the Chernobyl Forum found that approximately 5,000,000 people live in areas of Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia that were contaminated by radioactivity;

Whereas the populations of the affected areas who were exposed as children have experienced significant increases in thyroid cancer;

Whereas the lives and health of people in the affected areas continue to be heavily burdened by the aftermath of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster;

Whereas numerous charitable, humanitarian, and environmental organizations from the United States and the international community are committed to overcoming the extensive consequences of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster;

Whereas the United States has sought to help the people of the affected areas through various forms of assistance;

Whereas humanitarian assistance and public health research into the consequences of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster will continue to be needed in the coming decades when a large number of latent health effects are expected to emerge;

Whereas the United States strongly supports improving nuclear safety in Ukraine;

Whereas, in 1997, the United States, the European Union, and Ukraine developed the Shelter Implementation Plan for the purpose of protecting people and the environment from the dangers of the large quantity of highly radioactive material contained in the Chernobyl nuclear power plant;

Whereas as the United States is the largest single country donor to the Chernobyl Shelter Fund, which was created with the purpose of funding the Shelter Implementation Plan, having pledged a total of $203,000,000; and

Whereas the most critical component of the Shelter Implementation Plan will be the construction of a new shelter designed to better protect people and the environment from the radioactive remains of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) recognizes the 20th anniversary of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster and expresses sympathy for the ongoing effects of the disaster, including adverse health consequences and deaths;

(2) calls upon national and international health organizations to focus their research into the public health consequences of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster into areas identified by the Chernobyl Shelter Fund, so that the global community can benefit from the findings of such research;

(3) supports continued United States assistance to the Chernobyl Shelter Fund, the Shelter Implementation Plan, construction of a facility to store spent nuclear fuel, and other efforts to mitigate the consequences of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster; and

(4) urges other countries and the European Union to continue to provide assistance to the Chernobyl Shelter Fund, the Shelter Implementation Plan, construction of a facility to store spent nuclear fuel, and other efforts to mitigate the consequences of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LEACH) and the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Iowa.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LEACH. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. LEACH. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Res. 703, a resolution introduced by Congressman ELTON GALLEGLY, the chairman of the Subcommittee on Europe and Emerging Threats of the House International Relations Committee. House Resolution 703 recognizes the 20th anniversary of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster and supports continued efforts to control radiation and mitigate the adverse health consequences related to this terrible accident.

I would like to commend Mr. GALLEGLY for his hard work on this resolution as well as that of Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania; Ms. KAPTUR of Ohio; Mr. LEVIN of Michigan; as well as our distinguished ranking member, Mr. LANTOS of California, for their great interest in ensuring that the international community lives up to its obligations to assist Ukraine and other countries in the region to overcome the continuing health, environmental, and economic problems caused by the Chernobyl accident.

In just a few weeks, on April 26, the world will mark the 20th anniversary of the Chernobyl power plant accident, the most devastating civilian nuclear disaster in human history. This disaster caused serious radiological, health, and socioeconomic consequences for the people of Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia. Millions of people, children in particular, suffered severe and debilitating health defects and were forced to flee from their homes.

Although 20 years have passed, the lives and health of individuals within the affected areas continue to be heavily burdened by the aftermath of the nuclear disaster. Ukraine must not only provide care for those affected but also ensure that the radioactive waste and environmental destruction from the explosion do not pose a threat to the region.

The sarcophagus currently encasing the remnants of the destroyed reactor is in disrepair and may collapse at any time. In response to this emergency, the United States, the European Union, and Ukraine developed the Shelter Implementation Plan for the purpose of protecting people and the environment from the large quantity of highly radioactive material contained in the reactor.

The most critical component of the Shelter Implementation Plan will be the construction of a new shelter designed to better protect the surrounding area from leakage of radioactive remains. The total cost of the shelter could well be in excess of $1 billion. In addition, Ukraine must still deal with the health and economic impact of the Chernobyl disaster, including the treatment of thousands of people who were exposed as children and have experienced significant increases in thyroid cancer.

This legislation expresses the sympathy of the House for the ongoing effects of the disaster. In addition, H. Res. 703 calls upon the U.S. and other countries to continue to provide assistance for the construction of a new shelter and a facility to store spent nuclear

fuel, and other efforts to mitigate the many adverse consequences of the Chernobyl disaster.

Madam Speaker, Ukraine is an important ally of the United States. Since the Orange Revolution, our bilateral relationship has been characterized by closer cooperation on trade issues, the strengthening of democratic institutions, and the fight against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. It is important that the House go on record in support of the Ukrainian people in their effort to overcome the negative economic and social impact resulting from this tragic accident.

Again, I would like to commend the work of Congressman GALLEGLY on this issue and for the introduction of this important resolution.

Madam Speaker, I urge the support of House Resolution 703.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in support of this resolution.

April 2006, marks the 20th anniversary of the catastrophic accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant in Ukraine. At the time of this disaster, Ukraine was still under the iron domination of the Soviet Union. When the accident occurred, we saw the stock Soviet response to all major disasters: cover it up, regardless of the consequences to the innocent civilians living in the region. It was not until radioactive particles were being detected in Finland that the Soviets were forced to admit that the Chernobyl reactor No. 4 was burning.

While the authorities were engaged in a political coverup, scores of brave rescue and emergency workers were attempting to douse the burning reactor and hastily construct a concrete cover over the reactor, the so-called sarcophagus that is now in danger of collapse.

According to a United Nations study, Madam Speaker, more than 200,000 emergency workers were exposed to high levels of radiation and some 2,200 will ultimately die from radiation-caused illness during their lifetimes.

The Chernobyl accident also caused some 4,000 cases of thyroid cancer, the majority of which have occurred in individuals who were children or adolescents at the time of the accident.

On December 15, 2000, with the encouragement of the United States and the international community, the President of Ukraine decided to shut down the last functioning reactor at Chernobyl, thus effectively closing the entire nuclear plant and putting an end to a shameful Soviet legacy.

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The Soviet response to the Chernobyl disaster should serve as an important reminder to future generations of the folly of totalitarian regimes and the need to ensure that democracy remains at the core of our foreign policy. Instead of covering up toxic chemical slicks traveling silently down China's waterways towards crowded cities, Beijing should move towards openness and transparency to save lives; and rather than pretending that the destruction of 700,000 homes in Zimbabwe was a clean-up operation, Zimbabwe's totalitarian leaders should be empowering the young people in these slums to become the next generation of democratic leaders in southern Africa.

Madam Speaker, the Chernobyl disaster has many lessons for our age, and our resolution is an important reminder of the importance of freedom and democracy worldwide. I urge all of my colleagues to support this resolution.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of this resolution. It is important to not only remember those that perished in this terrible tragedy, but to keep in mind that individuals in the affected area are still suffering.

Although the world's worst nuclear disaster occurred at Chernobyl nuclear power station in Northern Ukraine, the wind carried 70 percent of the radioactive material into the neighboring country of Belarus. This disaster has impacted the region economically, socially, and medically.

I would like to recognize the efforts of Chernobyl Children's Project International, a not-for-profit organization that works with the people of Belarus to help them overcome the lingering effects of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster. This organization provides humanitarian and medical aid to over three million children the United Nations recognizes as suffering from the Chernobyl disaster. In addition, I would like to recognize Children of Chernobyl which is an organization that works to provide a respite from ongoing exposure to radiation by bringing children to the United States to stay with host families for the summer.

In my district, Annandale United Methodist Church has worked with Children of Chernobyl since 1993. Annandale area host families have opened their homes and hearts and allowed children from the effected region to stay with them for the summer to get some much needed rest. These children significantly benefit from the clean water, healthy food, fresh air, and love that Annandale area families provide. The children return to their homes with a new understanding of American culture as well as new clothes, shoes and other necessities. During the children's visit, Northern Virginia area doctors donate their time to provide the children with medical care, dental checkups and vision and orthopedic care.

It is important that here in America we continue to support the recovering from the Chernobyl disaster. Twenty years after this tragic accident, we are observing the devastating affects of long term exposure to radiation, and I urge my colleagues to support this important resolution.

Mr. LEVIN. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution marking the 20th Anniversary of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster. I am proud to be a co-sponsor of this important legislation.

On April 26th, 1986 the Chernobyl Nuclear Facility's Reactor Number Four exploded, releasing over 100 tons of radioactive material in what remains the world's worst nuclear accident. We may never know the full extent of the damage this accident has done to the health of people living in the surrounding areas or to the environment. It is clear, though, that the deaths attributable to the Chernobyl disaster number in the thousands and that millions of people in Ukraine, Russia and Belarus have been exposed to radioactive contamination.

It is important as we remember the victims of Chernobyl that we also recognize the ongoing consequences of the disaster and the work that still needs to be done. We must continue to help those people in the areas affected by radioactive fallout. The populations exposed to this fallout have experienced significant increases in thyroid cancer, still births and birth defects, as well as economic hardship resulting from the impact of the disaster on local economies.

The United States must also continue to support the Chernobyl Shelter Fund and the Shelter Implementation Plan. A new shelter for Reactor Number 4 is essential to mitigating further health and environmental consequences from the radioactive materials inside the facility. To date, the U.S. has pledged over $200 million to the Shelter Fund, helping to ensure that this work will be completed.

The resolution before us supports these efforts, and recognizes that although this disaster occurred two decades ago, there is still much more we must do to help the Government of Ukraine and the affected populations cope with its consequences. I urge all of my colleagues to support it.

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, 20 years ago the world witnessed one of the last crimes of the Soviet communist regime against its own people. The biggest nuclear catastrophe in human history was kept secret from Soviet civilians, who were exposed to massive amounts of radiation that exceeded the medically tolerable norm by 100 times.

On April 25–26, 1986, many firefighters sacrificed their lives to put out the huge fire caused by the explosion. Thirty-one died. Their heroism prevented a European Hiroshima.

In 1986, the Soviet Government let millions of people in Ukraine, Belarus and Russia conduct their daily lives as usual—completely unprepared, unwarned, and unprotected. On May 1, 4 days after the catastrophe, citizens of Kiev, Minsk, Gomel, and dozens of other cities went outdoors celebrating Labor Day, an official holiday in the Soviet Union. Only days later the civilian population was gradually informed of the disaster's extent.

By that time, millions of people, including infants and children, had received high doses of radiation. Dozens were doomed to suffer painful deaths in the years to come. Thousands are still coping with health problems caused by exposure during those tragic days, including thyroid and breast cancer, and tumors. The ultimate prognosis for millions remains unclear.

20 years later, grave danger remains at Chernobyl. 200 tons of highly radioactive nuclear waste in Reactor #4 remains separated from the outside world by a ''Shelter'' that was determined to be reliable only until 2006.

Today's occasion is an opportunity for all people of goodwill to commemorate Chernobyl

victims—both civilians, and the brave individuals who sacrificed their lives to save those exposed to radiation.

European nations and Japan should follow the U.S. example and live up to their pledge to contribute to creation of the Shelter–2. This barrier would be effective for another 100 years, and has been approved by the Ukrainian government and international experts. The cost is estimated to be $1 billion, which is a small price to pay given the price-tag in dollars and lives of another radiological disaster.

Ms. KAPTUR. Madam Speaker, as the world prepares to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster, I rise in support of the H. Res. 703 Recognizing the 20th anniversary of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster and supporting continued efforts to control radiation and mitigate the adverse health consequences related to the Chernobyl nuclear power plant. I applaud the leadership of Congressmen GALLEGLY, HYDE, LANTOS and WEXLER on this important issue.

Twenty years ago this month, a human error triggered an explosion at the Chernobyl Power Plant's Reactor No. 4, causing the worst civilian nuclear catastrophe in the history of mankind, one which transcended geographic boundaries. Immediately after the explosion, increased levels of radiation were registered as far as Japan and the United States. The hardest hit were the people of Ukraine, Belarus, and western Russia, collectively taking close to 70 percent of the radioactive fallout.

The scope of devastation that followed was truly unprecedented. More than 600,000 emergency workers, liquidators, risked their lives putting out the reactor's inferno that raged for 10 days while exposing themselves to extremely high and deadly doses of radiation. Hundreds of thousands of people were forced to leave their homes because of radioactive contamination. More than 5 million people in Ukraine, Belarus and western Russia found themselves coping with life in towns and villages contaminated by iodine and cesium. Thousands of square miles of agricultural land and forests had to be removed from use because of contamination.

Twenty years after the initial fallout, Chernobyl has not been relegated to history books. Twenty years later, it continues to cause human suffering, environmental and economic hardship.

The disaster at Chernobyl has triggered a well documented epidemic of thyroid cancer, particularly among those who were infants and teenagers at the time of the explosion. Long latency periods for other types of cancers and ailments suggest that the toll on human health in the affected populations is a developing story, and not a thing of the past.

The consequences to the environment, as well as agriculture are equally devastating. Shortly after the fallout, short-lived iodine deposits onto vegetation entered into the food supply, mainly through milk, delivering large doses of internal radiation to consuming public. As for long-lived long-lived cesium, that will remain a problem for decades to come.

The Chernobyl disaster has been causing tremendous economic hardships as well, with Ukraine and Belarus spending up to 5 percent of their respective GDP on mitigation of its consequences. Environmental and economic degradation in the affected regions, increased health care costs, loss in productivity of human capital add to the heavy burdens of Chernobyl's enduring legacy.

As scientists and researchers continue their pursuit of a greater understanding of Chernobyl's long term consequences on human health and environment, it is important that we avoid closing the page on Chernobyl by rushing to speedy conclusions. Instead, I join many of my constituents in urging caution in accepting as definitive and conclusive some of the findings of the IAEA-led Chernobyl Forum report, particularly in the area of health consequences. Our Ukrainian colleagues in particular, encourage long term commitment to researching and analyzing Chernobyl's legacy. The whole world stands to benefit as together, we advance our understanding of man-made environmental disasters of this scope.

Another important aspect of Chernobyl's legacy is its impact on energy policy choices that are before the Government of Ukraine. It is my belief that Ukraine's long term energy security is not feasible without renewed emphasis on renewable energy. We share the same concerns in U.S., and both of our countries share great potential for development of bio-fuels, and other renewable energy technologies, such as fuel-cells, wind power.

It is also critically important that we address the issue of completing the Shelter Implementation Plan with the urgency and efficiency it deserves. President Yuschenko has highlighted this priority in his address to the Joint Session of the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate. It is often said that the next Chernobyl can be Chernobyl itself—the decaying concrete-and-steel sarcophagus, hastily constructed after the accident to secure the Reactor No. 4, has an estimated warranty of 20 years. That time is now, as the structural integrity of the encasement causes great concern. It is not just an Ukrainian issue, but indeed an issue of European security. As the largest single country donor to the Chernobyl Shelter Fund, the U.S. provides important leadership in this multi-national donor effort. I urge the redoubling of efforts by all stakeholders to the Shelter Implementation Plan to ensure its timely completion.

The Congressional Ukrainian Caucus is stepping up to the plate in commemorating the somber milestone of the 20th anniversary of Chernobyl. I am grateful to my colleagues and our Caucus Co-Chairs, Congressmen WELDON, LEVIN and BARTLETT, for their strong leadership and support in organizing events commemorating Chernobyl's anniversary. They include a special commemorative photo exhibit Chernobyl: 20 which documents the human experience there over the past 20 years, looking through the lenses of the world's top photographers. The exhibit is scheduled to open at the Rayburn Foyer on April 26, 2006 at 10 a.m.; an in-depth briefing, scheduled for April 27, 2006, 2 p.m–6 p.m, will explore a broad range of Chernobyl issues, including impact on human health and agricultural/food systems, environmental, economic and social rehabilitation in the affected regions, U.S. and international assistance, Chernobyl Shelter Implementation Plan progress; and finally, the Congressional reception honoring the tireless work of NGOs dedicated to improving human condition in the effected regions, scheduled for the evening of April 27, 2006, 6 p.m.–8 p.m.

The U.S. has provided assistance in remediation efforts in the aftermath of the catastrophe, followed by technical, humanitarian and economic assistance in the subsequent years that. One of the objectives of the briefing on Chernobyl is to review past U.S. assistance to the countries stricken by Chernobyl disaster, and identify current priorities that require continued commitment and financial support.

Life in the Chernobyl affected regions of Ukraine, Belarus and western Russia would have been a much more difficult challenge were it was not for the tireless work of many NGOs that go wherever they see human needs and opportunities to improve people's lives. Many lives were not just improved, but saved, because of the work of such organizations as Children of Chernobyl Relief and Development Fund and Chernobyl Children's Project International. This month, these charities send multi-million dollar convoys and airlifts of valuable medical equipment and medicine to Ukraine and Belarus, over the past decade bringing more than $100 million worth of medical supplies to those in need. This example of human compassion and resilience in the face of adversity is truly a hopeful sign for all survivors of the Chernobyl catastrophe.

I am submitting for the RECORD the respective statements of Children of Chernobyl Relief and Development Fund and Chernobyl Children's Project International in connection with H. Res. 703.

Finally, I would like to mention the political dimension of this catastrophe. When the nuclear reactor at Chernobyl blew up 20 years ago, Ukraine, Belarus, Russia and other countries were part of the closed Soviet society, one where secrecy prevailed and freedom was denied. In my view, there was a direct link between the inefficiencies of the Soviet system, indeed its criminal disregard for the environment and for its citizens, and the disaster we commemorate today. In many ways, Chernobyl was a wake-up call for the Soviet Union, for the world. We dare not fall asleep again. We must continue to support Ukraine's democracy and ease her transition to the European Union; we must align ourselves with the brave people of Belarus who are trying to advance their own beleaguered country; and must build a strong relationship with Russia so that the authoritarian practices of the past that led to such disastrous results can be transformed to a more open, hopeful society, whose future will be of unlimited potential.

The occasion of the Chernobyl' s 20th anniversary offers a unique opportunity to step back in time and reflect on fragility of human life as we interact with powers of nature and technology. Let us be thoughtful and mindful of the lessons of Chernobyl in our everyday actions.

CHILDREN OF CHORNOBYL RELIEF FUND

The Children of Chornobyl Relief and Development Fund wishes to add its support to House Resolution No. 703: ''Recognizing the 20th anniversary of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster and supporting continued efforts to control radiation and mitigate the adverse health consequences related to the Chernobyl nuclear power plant''.

For the past sixteen years our organization has been working to address the human legacy of the world's worst environmental accident. Relying almost exclusively on private contributions, CCRDF has delivered over $53 million dollars worth of medical supplies, state-of-the-art technology and physician training programs to help save the lives of children stricken with thyroid cancer, leukemia, birth defects, and early childhood diseases.

The children who are undergoing treatment in our 20 partner hospitals offer painful but eloquent testimony to the critical need for continuing medical aid to the Chornobyl survivors. It is now well established that the nuclear disaster caused an epidemic in thyroid cancer beginning in the 1990s. Children and adults who were exposed to radioactive iodine were stricken at a rate of 80 times higher than normal. Over 9,000 additional children in Ukraine have been diagnosed with precancerous conditions. But thyroid cancer is just one of many health problems confronting the Chornobyl communities. Fully one-third of all children in some provinces suffer from endocrine disorders or tumors that require medical or surgical intervention. Children who live in contaminated territories suffer from immune deficiencies and depleted levels of killer-T cells at a much higher rate than children from relatively clean zones.

Recent studies by Ukrainian and Israeli scientists have shown that the children born to Chornobyl nuclear cleanup workers—the so-called ''liquidators'' have a seven-fold increase in chromosome damage as compared to their siblings born prior to the Chornobyl accident. There is growing evidence that birth defects have doubled in the wake of Chornobyl, and the rate of some birth defects, such as spina bifida and cataracts are even higher. The Ukrainian-American Association for the Prevention of Birth Defects under the direction of an eminent geneticist from Alabama—Dr. Wolodymyr Wertelecki has been tracking birth defects among a very large population of newborns in the provinces of Rivne and Volyn in northwestern Ukraine. They have found an epidemic of spina bifida, and a wide range of other deformities that are ordinarily extremely rare. Although USAID has discontinued funding for Dr. Wertelecki's research centers, we believe that his program has proven its value. The next stage could be even more important as Dr. Wertelecki's team is developing programs to reduce the incidence of birth defects through prenatal programs and the introduction of folic acid into local foodstuffs.

The United States could play a vital role in creating a nationwide birth defects registry in Ukraine and Belarus. Our government could also help to save the lives of thousands of youngsters who are born each year with congenital heart defects by providing training and technology to diagnose these life-threatening conditions at birth or in early childhood,

We have seen how even modest investments can have a dramatic impact on infant survival and cancer remission rates at several of our partner hospitals. In Kharkiv Children's Hospital No. 16, for instance, the recovery and remission rates for childhood leukemia have improved from a dismal 5 per cent in 1991 (a virtual death sentence) to 75 per cent in 2004 thanks to the installation of modern equipment such as a blood cell separator and a full protocol of chemotherapeutic agents. We have created model neonatal intensive care units in Poltava and Lviv and Dnipropetrovsk, where infant mortality has dropped by as much as 45 to 80 per cent, even as the hospitals began to take on a larger volume of infants with more difficult pathologies. By raising the standard of care, we have also stimulated citizen initiatives, private philanthropy and indigenous government programs that were virtually unheard of during the Soviet era.

Thanks to the generous support of the Ukrainian-American community, and thanks to corporate donors such as John Deere, Monsanto, Philip Morris and UMC, we have been able to bring doctors the tools and training they needed to achieve quantum leaps in the kind of care they can provide their patients.

Unfortunately, Chornobyl's legacy is likely to endure long after this 20th Anniversary. We have to remember that the 20-year latency period for many forms of cancer is just beginning to toll, and already, Chornobyl liquidators are dying of oncological illnesses at a rate almost triple the rate of working age males in Ukraine. Of the 34,000 liquidators who have died in Ukraine to date, 25% died of various forms of cancer as compared to a rate of 9% for most Ukrainians. Our colleagues at the National Institute of Pediatrics and Obstetrics and Gynecology in Kyiv have found evidence of cesium-137 and strontium-90 in placentas and breastmilk, showing that newborn infants are being directly exposed to highly dangerous radioactive materials at their most vulnerable stage. We need to remember that the half-life for these elements is 30 years, so they will be with us for many years to come.

In the coming years, the United States Government should make significant efforts to strengthen Ukraine's medical infrastructure, and to invest in better maternal and children's health. We must also provide funding for independent research studies that will look at a wide range of other health problems such as the accumulation of radionuclides in the gastro-intestinal tract of youngsters who live in areas contaminated with radioactive materials.

For our part, we will do everything in our power to reduce the impact of Chornobyl by giving Ukrainian children a fighting chance to overcome even the most daunting illnesses. We thank you for your consideration.

ALEXANDER B. KUZMA
Executive Director

CHERNOBYL CHILDREN'S PROJECT INTERNATIONAL,
New York, NY.

Chernobyl Children's Project International supports House Resolution No. 703: ''Recognizing the 20th anniversary of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster and supporting continued efforts to control radiation and mitigate the adverse health consequences related to the Chernobyl nuclear power plant.''

Chernobyl Children's Project International has worked with health care institutions and communities in Belarus for fifteen years. A partnership between Ireland and the United States, we have delivered over $70 million in humanitarian and medical aid. Working with citizens of Belarus, we provide a children's cardiac surgery program, community care programs for disabled children, nursing and therapeutic programs and training, foster homes and hospice services.

In Belarus, 1.8 million people continue to live in radiation-contaminated zones—over 420,000 of them children. Our work keeps us in close contact with scientists, researchers, NGOs and physicians in Belarus who have first hand knowledge of the social, economic, and health needs of the communities they serve. They observe and have documented increases in cancer, birth defects, and cardiac and immune disorders since the Chernobyl disaster. Data from experts and health professionals in the affected regions is often overlooked by their counterparts in the West. The Belarusian Academy of Sciences reports that among children, morbidity, sicknesses have increased by almost one-third, new cancers by 1.5 times, and blood diseases by 1.5 times. Sixty to 70 percent of Belarusians who live in contaminated zones who have been checked at the Belarusian Institute of Radiation Medicine have critical levels of radiation in their bodies.

Although the link between the Chernobyl disaster and thyroid cancer has by now been firmly established, it is important to note that it took years for this epidemic to emerge. Screening and early intervention programs have thus been able to minimize but not erase the human toll of thyroid cancer. The first warnings were sounded by the medical and NGO communities in Belarus and Ukraine well before the link between the disease and the disaster were widely acknowledged, and in fact initial reports of increases were dismissed.

The latency period for the emergence of many cancers is 20+ years, and today respected researchers and clinicians are voicing concern over the emergence of birth defects, non thyroid cancers and blood and immune disorders.

The Chernobyl Forum report made an important contribution to the understanding of the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster by highlighting the complex interplay of factors that impact the quality of life in Chernobyl affected regions, and by encouraging the international community to focus on projects that address poverty, lack of economic opportunity, inadequate health care, and environmental degradation. While we support this holistic approach, it is far too soon to say that we know all there is to know about the long term health effects of Chernobyl. We strongly submit that the U.S. Government and the international community must acknowledge the need for further research and to continue to examine the health effects of the Chernobyl disaster.

KATHY RYAN,
Executive Director/USA.

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 703, but I feel compelled to qualify my support to ensure the people of Ukraine continue to receive support in the wake of this tragedy.

To understand the gravity of the worst nuclear accident in history, let's review what happened on April 26th, 1986. While testing the reactor, a series of mishaps led to a large chemical explosion that resulted in the 1,000-ton cover blowing off the top of the reactor.

Ultimately, fifty tons of uranium fuel from the reactor core vaporized immediately, and were blasted high into the atmosphere; a further 70 tons of uranium and 900 tons of highly radioactive graphite were dispersed into the area around the reactor, starting more than 30 fires; the 800 tons of graphite that remained in the reactor core caught fire at once, creating a radiological inferno that would burn for 10 days, sending a continuous plume of lethal radionuclides roiling into the sky.

The Soviet government would wait nearly three full days before acknowledging that an accident had taken place, and did so only after the drifting plume set off radiation alarms in a nuclear plant in Sweden. Nine million people were exposed to radiation in Belarus, Russia and Ukraine.

The contaminants, which included plutonium isotopes with a half-life of 24,360 years, eventually traveled around the globe, depositing radioactive material as far away as the lakes of Japan and the hill farms of north Wales. The long-lived radioactivity released was more than 200 times that of the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The economic consequences of the accident remain a massive burden on the countries most affected; Belarus and Ukraine continue to spend around 6% of their Gross National Product on trying to deal with the consequences of the accident.

I have concerns with the following clause in H. Res. 703 because it sanctions an attempt to downplay the health effects on millions of innocent people.

"Whereas the findings of the Chernobyl Forum, issued in September 2005, significantly added to the understanding of the health consequences and economic impact caused by the Chernobyl nuclear disaster;"

The Chernobyl Forum study understates the health consequences of Chernobyl. The authors excluded more than 30,000 anticipated cancer deaths from the collective doses in all other countries in the Northern Hemisphere. Over 6,000 thyroid cancer cases have been diagnosed so far in Belarus, Russia and Ukraine, and more are anticipated. Recent scientific studies are revealing an increased incidence of solid cancers, including breast cancer, as well as cardiovascular and ophthalmic effects. These effects have long latency periods of more than 20 years.

In the Rivne region of Ukraine, 310 miles west of Chernobyl, doctors say they are coming across an unusual rate of cancers and mutations. There is a 30 percent incidence rate amongst people in the highly radiated areas that have physical disorders, including heart and blood diseases, cancers and respiratory diseases. Nearly one in three of all the newborn babies have deformities.

It took some 600,000 workers for recovery and clean-up operations, all of them exposed to high levels of radiation. Studies show that almost 35,000 people who took part in the cleanup of Chernobyl have died in the years since the catastrophe. The rate of death from cancer was nearly three times as high as in the rest of the population.

The conflicting scientific studies suggest much more research needs to be done. But it is essential that we do not minimize the effects of this disaster without cause.

I am concerned that any effort to downplay the effects of this disaster may jeopardize the U.S. financial commitment to Ukraine and the innocent victims. I cannot support anything that might permit the U.S. to abandon the Belarus, Russia and Ukraine victims of Chernobyl.

Mr. LEACH. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BIGGERT). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LEACH) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 703.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR GOOD FRIDAY AGREEMENT AND CONTINUED POLICE REFORM IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Mr. LEACH. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 744) expressing support for the Good Friday Agreement of 1998 as the blueprint for lasting peace in Northern Ireland and support for continued police reform in Northern Ireland as a critical element in the peace process.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 744

Whereas the Good Friday Agreement, signed on April 10, 1998, in Belfast, was endorsed in a referendum by the overwhelming majority of people in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland;

Whereas the parties to the Good Friday Agreement made a clear commitment to ''partnership, equality, and mutual respect'' as the basis for moving forward in pursuit of lasting peace in Northern Ireland;

Whereas the parties to the Good Friday Agreement also affirmed their ''total and absolute commitment to exclusively democratic and peaceful means'' in pursuit of lasting peace in Northern Ireland;

Whereas inclusive power-sharing based on these defining qualities is essential to the viability and advancement of the democratic process in Northern Ireland;

Whereas paramilitary activity by both traditions in a democratic society undermines the trust and confidence that are essential in a political system based on inclusive power-sharing in Northern Ireland;

Whereas on September 26, 2005, the International Independent Commission on Decommissioning (IICD) confirmed the Irish Republican Army had destroyed its full arsenal of weapons;

Whereas the Good Friday Agreement called for police reform and establishment of a ''new beginning'' in policing in Northern Ireland with an effective, accountable, and fair police service capable of attracting support from the entire community, maintaining law and order, and adhering to the principle of the protection of human rights;

Whereas the new Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) has made great strides in becoming an integrated, professional, and impartial police force under civilian control and responsive to all community concerns, and has worked to protect both communities from violence;

Whereas significant further work in police reform, and in fostering community acceptance of the PSNI, must still be accomplished;

Whereas the Government of the United Kingdom and the Government of Ireland continue to strongly support the Good Friday Agreement as the way forward in the peace process and have committed themselves to its implementation; and

Whereas the Government of the United States continues to strongly support the peace process in Northern Ireland: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That—

(1) the House of Representatives—

(A) reiterates its support for the Good Friday Agreement, signed on April 10, 1998, in Belfast, as the blueprint for a lasting peace in Northern Ireland;

(B) commends the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom Tony Blair and the Irish Taoiseach Bertie Ahern for their leadership and persistence in seeking a peaceful resolution in Northern Ireland;

(C) commends the Sinn Fein leadership in successfully urging the Irish Republican Army to end its armed struggle and verifiably put its weapons beyond use;

(D) commends Sir Hugh S. Orde, Chief Constable of the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), for his leadership and for working to protect both communities;

(E) commends the PSNI for the institution of the Historical Enquiries Team, which will provide a thorough and independent examination of unresolved deaths that occurred in connection with the Troubles from 1968 to 1989;

(F) commends Nuala O'Loan and the Police Ombudsman's Office for the work they have done in promoting human rights in law enforcement and in fostering community confidence in the PSNI; and

(G) commends the work of the Northern Irish Policing Board and its District Partnerships for promoting genuine community policing in Northern Ireland; and

(2) it is the sense of the House of Representatives that—

(A) all groups and organizations should end their involvement in paramilitary activity;

(B) all political parties in Northern Ireland should—

(i) agree to share power with all parties according to the democratic mandate of the Good Friday Agreement; and

(ii) commit to work in good faith with all the institutions of the Good Friday Agreement, which established the Northern Ireland Assembly and an inclusive Executive, the North-South Ministerial Council, and the British-Irish Inter-Governmental Conference, for the benefit of all the people of Northern Ireland;

(C) since policing reform is a significant part of winning public confidence and acceptance in the new form of government in Northern Ireland, all political parties should cooperate fully with the PSNI in preventing and investigating crimes; and

(D) the Government of the United Kingdom and the Government of Ireland should work to achieve full implementation of the Good Friday Agreement, including devolution of policing and justice, the normalization of the security presence, and of the Independent Commission on Policing in Northern Ireland reforms, including long-term senior-level exchanges between the Garda Siochana, the police service of the Republic of Ireland, and the PSNI.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LEACH) and the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Iowa.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LEACH. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. LEACH. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Res. 744, a resolution introduced by International Relations Committee Chairman HENRY HYDE. H. Res. 744 expresses support by the House for the Good Friday Agreement of 1998 as the blueprint for lasting peace in Northern Ireland. In addition, it supports continued police reform in Northern Ireland, which is a critical element in the implementation of the Good Friday Accords.

At this time, I would like to commend Chairman HENRY HYDE, as well as Representatives ELTON GALLEGLY and CHRIS SMITH as well as our distinguished ranking members TOM LANTOS and JOE CROWLEY for their work on

this measure and more importantly their commitment to this singularly important peace process. I would like to also note the important role of Mr. WALSH of New York and Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts as the Chair and Co-chair of Ireland-related caucuses. H. Res. 744 also has broad-based support among those House Members who long have been concerned about finding a peaceful solution to the conflict in Northern Ireland.

Madam Speaker, since 1969, over 3,200 have died as a result of terrorism and political violence in Northern Ireland. For years, the British and Irish governments, assisted by the United States, sought to facilitate a peaceful settlement to the conflict. Finally, in April of 1998, the long-warring Catholic and Protestant factions in Northern Ireland signed the Good Friday Agreement. Just over a month later, strong majorities in both the north and south of Ireland endorsed the agreement in a referendum.

The Good Friday Agreement calls for the transfer of power from London to Belfast and the establishment of the Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive Committee, in which Unionists and Nationalists share power. It also contains provisions on disarmament, reformed policing, human rights, prisoners, and demilitarization by British Armed Forces.

Madam Speaker, while the Good Friday Agreement provides a blueprint for achieving peace and justice in Northern Ireland, its full implementation has proved difficult. The devolved Northern Ireland government has been suspended since October 2002 amid a loss of trust on both sides of the conflict.

Unionists remain skeptical about the IRA's commitment to disarmament and nonviolence. As a result, they have so far refused to join the power-sharing institutions such as the Executive Committee, which was created by the Good Friday Agreement for the purpose of exercising executive authority in Northern Ireland.

On the other hand, Nationalists worry about the pace of police reforms. They have refused to join the Policing Board, the independent oversight body that ensures the Police Service of Northern Ireland is effective, accountable and impartial.

That leaves us at a standstill in the peace process. The Unionists do not have confidence as to the IRA's intentions and commitment to nonviolence. The Nationalists still do not have confidence in the police service and they question the Unionists' commitment to share power with Catholics.

This legislation directly addresses these issues and clearly endorses the Good Friday Agreement as the exclusive framework for a lasting peace in Northern Ireland.

Specifically, House Resolution 744 states that it is the sense of the House that all groups and both communities should end their involvement and paramilitary activity.

Second, the legislation calls on all political parties to agree to share power and work in good faith with the power-sharing institutions established by the Good Friday Agreement.

Third, since police reform is a significant part of winning public confidence in the new government in Northern Ireland, all political parties should cooperate fully with the Police Service of Northern Ireland.

Lastly, House Resolution 744 calls on the governments of the United Kingdom and Ireland to work together to achieve full implementation of the Good Friday Agreement.

The language of the resolution puts a shared onus on both sides, Nationalists and Unionists alike, to take the difficult next steps that will move the peace process forward and lead to the implementation of the Good Friday Agreement.

Madam Speaker, this is an important piece of legislation that provides support for the Northern Ireland peace process at a critical time.

Again, I commend Chairman HYDE for introducing this resolution and for quickly bringing it to the floor for consideration.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution. I would first like to thank my good friends and colleagues, Chairman HYDE and Congressman CHRIS SMITH, for their tireless advocacy of peace and justice in Northern Ireland.

Madam Speaker, over the past several years the peace process in Northern Ireland has taken many twists and turns. The Good Friday Accord, designed to bring an end to the conflict in Northern Ireland, has been declared dead time and again. During the past few months, however, we have witnessed very promising developments in our efforts to fully implement the Good Friday Accord, which was signed almost 8 years ago.

In July of last year, the Irish Republican Army announced that it would forswear violence. The IRA followed up on that announcement by decommissioning a substantial portion of its weapons cache last fall. After these dramatic events, we all hoped and expected that the Good Friday Accord would be fully implemented.

It is becoming increasingly clear now that we have reached another impasse. Sinn Fein has refused to support the police in Northern Ireland or to encourage Catholic Republicans to join the police service. The Democratic Unionist Party has refused to enter local government with Sinn Fein or even to talk with them.

Meanwhile, Madam Speaker, despite the positive moves on the part of Sinn Fein, the Unionist paramilitary groups have yet to follow up with a no-violence pledge and disarmament agreement.

Our resolution addresses all of these outstanding issues. It challenges all the parties to renounce violence and to disarm, and it calls on all sides to fully engage in police reform.

Madam Speaker, after many setbacks, substantial pressure has finally developed to fully implement the Good Friday Accord. Our resolution is designed to support this forward movement and to help pave the way to a time when the conflict in Northern Ireland is only a subject for the history books.

I strongly support this resolution, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LEACH. Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from New York (Mr. WALSH), who chairs the Friends of Ireland Committee and who has played such a central role on Irish issues in this Congress.

Mr. WALSH. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Iowa for yielding time to me and for his leadership on all issues relating to the International Relations Committee. I would especially like to thank Chairman HYDE and Ranking Member LANTOS for their leadership and the entire International Relations Committee and their staff for their hard work and effort in getting this important resolution to the floor at such a critical period in the Northern Ireland peace process.

The timing of this resolution could not be more appropriate. We are fast approaching the eighth anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement, and recent media reporting suggests that the British and Irish governments are working to restore a devolved government that has been under suspension since the police raids and the Unionist walkout of October 2002.

As one of 35 million Irish Americans in this country, I can't tell you how pleased and encouraged I am with these developments. For far too long, the people of Northern Ireland have been denied an equal voice and equal representation in government. It is time for the Assembly and Executive to be up and running and the people's business to be addressed.

Her island's citizens have spoken. They expressed their views for a shared future by overwhelmingly approving the Good Friday Accords by a margin of 95 percent in the Republic of Ireland and 71 percent in Northern Ireland. It is time for Northern Ireland's political leadership to acknowledge their wishes and fully carry them out.

In the last few years, progress has been spotty, but, nonetheless, there has been progress. That progress must continue without any backward steps or delays. I believe recognizing a few key leaders that have nurtured this progress can help highlight and strengthen this initiative.

First I would commend Prime Minister Tony Blair of Great Britain and

the Republic of Ireland's Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern. Northern Ireland has no better friend than these two men. They have been understanding to all viewpoints and fair to all political denominations and respectful of all traditions. They have been firm in conviction and steadfast in their beliefs; and, most importantly, they have been true leaders committed to a lasting peace. Both men deserve recognition and praise for their work.

Second, the leadership of Sinn Fein for their role in facilitating the complete decommissioning of the IRA's weaponry. This was certainly no small task. Sinn Fein has never received the full credit it deserves for delivering this historic moment. Sinn Fein made the commitment, the commitment was delivered in full, and that commitment has been verified by the International Monitoring Commission and the International Commission on Decommissioning led by General de Chastelain.

I have read reports of individuals being skeptical and wary of this declaration, but the facts speak for themselves. The IRA has abandoned its armed struggle in pursuit of its goals by political means. This must be fully acknowledged. Continued challenge does nothing but obstruct and inhibit the peace process.

I would like to add also, Madam Speaker, that the members of the Democratic Unionist Party, the DUP, led by Dr. Ian Paisley, will be here today meeting with Members of Congress, and we welcome them. We are delighted that they are here. We are excited about hearing their vision for the future of Northern Ireland, and they will be here to express that and develop personal relationships. Many of them are members of Parliament, in addition to being elected members of the legislative assembly in Northern Ireland.

Finally, the Policing Service in Northern Ireland, under the leadership of Hugh Orde and Nuala O'Loan, deserves recognition. Northern Ireland has experienced a dramatic improvement in policing over the last 8 years, with the current Catholic to Protestant employment percentage up 18 percent since the restructuring, and the police recruit ratio holding firm at 50–50.

It is imperative that people in all communities recognize that the Policing Service, while not perfect, is certainly not the Policing Service of old. They must begin to develop a relationship of trust and confidence in their police. It is only through this type of relationship that the community will be best served.

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Madam Speaker, again it gives me great pleasure to stand before you today in order to praise the Good Friday Agreement as the framework for peace in Northern Ireland and to recognize the remarkable progress that has been achieved.

I would also like to recognize the efforts of all the Members of Congress, House and Senate, and Presidents of both parties for their commitment to this process. I commend the efforts of all past leaders who have put personal and political ramifications aside for the greater good of Northern Ireland and urge all current leaders to continue to move forward. I urge adoption of this resolution.

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to our distinguished colleague and my good friend, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MCCARTHY).

Mrs. MCCARTHY. Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from California for bringing this important legislation and resolution to the floor and I thank my colleagues that have been working on this for years.

I have been in Congress for 10 years now and during that 10 years we have been working on peace in Ireland. Many of us that are Irish call it ''the troubles'' which have continued over these years. And every time there seemed to have been a little bit of sunlight and we actually thought that peace would finally come to Northern Ireland, and we certainly fought and worked for that. But the Good Friday Agreement is certainly an important piece of legislation and it gave the goal and certainly the hope to the people of Ireland, and I think that is probably the most important thing.

There have been many bumps in the road over the years with the Good Friday Agreement, but it was the people of Northern Ireland, it was the people that basically said, let's go forward. So each time that we saw, as I call it, a bump in the road or a stop sign, it was the people of Ireland that said let's go forward. I happen to think we are at the crossroads now. And I happen to think that with all the people here in Congress especially, I support the things that have been said from my colleagues that we are honestly going to see hopefully peace come.

Ireland economically has done very well and we will continue to support them to do that. But I have to say when the IRA agreed to give up its weapons last February, I think that was certainly the biggest step that we could have asked. The people remain cautious in Ireland, but I do believe the IRA is showing good faith.

In February the Independent Monitoring Commission released a report. The report found that security forces believe that the IRA held on to weapons and is still intelligence gathering. In spite of that, the IMC stated that the IRA seemed to be moving in the right direction.

It is important that the people in Ireland who are working towards peace know that they have the support of the United States in these efforts. I encourage the Irish people to continue their work in the peace process, and I am proud to support this legislation.

We here in Congress carry a great deal of weight. The people of Ireland do trust us. They appreciate us being with them during the good times and the bad times. I would like to say thank you to my colleague, Mr. WALSH, for all the great work in bringing us over to Ireland to meet with all political groups so we can try to see peace in our lifetime.

The Policing Commission has always been a stumbling stone, and yet when we have gone there and we have met and we have seen young Irish Catholic men and women joining the police force and the same on the Protestant side and learning how to be together, there is great hope in the future for all of us. But Northern Ireland and Ireland is going to win in the end, and the United States, I am happy to say, had a lot to do with that.

Mr. LEACH. Madam Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH), who has been such a leader on so many issues, including those that relate to Ireland.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Madam Speaker, I thank my good friend, Chairman LEACH, for yielding me time and for his leadership on this and on so many other resolutions and initiatives as well on behalf of human rights.

Mr. LANTOS, it is great to see you again on the floor, not unexpected. You are always here fighting the good fight on behalf of human rights.

Madam Speaker, I especially want to commend Chairman HYDE for offering this resolution. I am very proud to be one of the original cosponsors of it. It is a collaborative effort that strongly restates U.S. support for the Good Friday Agreement signed 8 years ago this month.

Madam Speaker, the Hyde resolution also underscores our unyielding support for the establishment of peace, justice, reconciliation and prosperity in Northern Ireland which we have all hoped for and we have all prayed for. While we are not there yet there has been some very encouraging signs.

On March 15, Madam Speaker, I chaired my eleventh hearing on the Northern Ireland peace process. All of these hearings have been comprehensive and insightful but this one was the first since the IRA's full renunciation of arms struggle and the decommissioning of its weapons.

Our resolution today makes note of that historic milestone, a remarkable development in the path to peace. Of course, equally significant for the implementation of the Good Friday Agreement is true, durable and transparent police reform. Here, too, Madam Speaker, there has been progress.

Today there is a vigorous and fiercely independent Police Ombudsman's Office, whose chief, Nuala O'Loane, has been a catalyst for reform. There is now a Policing Board in Northern Ireland composed of independent and party representatives to design and provide civilian control and fair nonsectarian policing. The Chairman, Sir Desmond Rea, and retiring Vice Chairman, Dennis Bradley, testified at our

most recent hearing. There is a new Historical Enquiries Team established by the PSNI Chief Constable Hugh Orde, which will provide a thorough and independent examination of unresolved deaths that occurred in connection with the troubles from 1968 to 1989.

H. Res. 744 rightly commends Nuala O'Loane, Sir Hugh, and the new policing institutions for the progress that they have made, often under very adversarial conditions. Even with these improvements, Madam Speaker, significant work further remains to be done in order to ensure acceptance by all the communities of the PSNI. A key stumbling block to that greater acceptance has been the lack of resolution of charges of official collusion in the murder of human rights lawyer Patrick Finucane. In 2001 the British and Irish governments jointly appointed Judge Peter Cory, a preeminent retired justice of the Supreme Court of Canada, to determine whether independent commissions should investigate possible state-sponsored collusion in six notorious and horrific murders. They also pledge to abide by his recommendations.

Two years ago Judge Cory, and he too testified at one point before our committee, 2 years ago he issued his report; and it called for five of the six murderers to be investigated independently. Yet, I am sorry to say, the British government has still not appointed an inquiry commission into the murder of the human rights attorney, Pat Finucane, who was gunned down in his home in front of his wife and three small children in 1989.

Every one of the 11 hearings that I have chaired on human rights and police reform in Northern Ireland has dealt with Pat Finucane's murder in whole or in part, yet still nothing has been done. The U.K. government must find a way to institute a credible inquiry which will be stepped by all, by Judge Cory, the Irish Republic, by the world community, but most of all, by the Finucane family.

If the population of Northern Ireland is to cease relying on paramilitaries for protection, which they absolutely must do, they must never rely on that, and transfer its trust to the police, it must have the confidence that the police and the authorities deserve trust. That is the major reason why these inquiries must be done and done right as soon as possible.

Again, I want to commend Chairman HYDE, Chairman GALLEGLY, Mr. WALSH, Mr. KING, of course Mr. LANTOS again, and Chairman LEACH, and also many of our staffs, including Mary Noonan, Richard Mereu and Dennis Curry for their work in writing and crafting this resolution which will put us in a bipartisan way on record for saying that the peace process must continue and the Good Friday Agreement must be fully implemented.

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, I want to commend all of my colleagues who have worked on this legislation. We have no further requests for time and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LEACH. Madam Speaker, I have no further requests for time, but I would like to conclude with just one reference to a distinguished American that is a member of your side, Senator George Mitchell, who did so much to work to achieve and develop the accord that we are now referencing in this resolution.

Mr. CROWLEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of this legislation introduced by Chairman HYDE.

Chairman HYDE, I would like to commend you for your continued support of the Good Friday Agreement and a lasting peace in the north of Ireland.

A few weeks ago during the Saint Patrick's Day festivities I had an opportunity to meet with many of the actors involved in creating a lasting peace in the north of Ireland.

When I met with the Taoiseach and Gerry Adams about the ongoing situation, I stressed the importance of bringing about representational government to the people of the north.

It has been over three years since free and fair elections took place in the north.

The people spoke and elected leaders to represent them, but I am sad to say when they went to the voting booth in November of 2003, their vote was not respected.

This issue needs to move forward so the people of the north can finally have democratic rule.

If a true and lasting peace is ever to be achieved the people must be able to feel they are invested in the process.

All parties must begin to put aside their differences and work toward the common goal of peace and reconciliation in the north.

This battle has been allowed to go on for too long with seemingly both sides knowing what the other is doing.

The IRA has lived up to its obligations and fully decommissioned and now it is time for Unionist paramilitary groups to for their example.

I am proud to be an original cosponsor of this legislation and would urge all of my colleagues to send a strong message to the parties involved in the peace process.

The House of Representatives is engaged and would like to forward movement.

Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of the resolution.

In doing so, I want to commend the tremendous work of an organization known as the Washington Ireland Program, or "WIP." Every year since I came to Congress in 1999, I have hosted a WIP student and I have found these students from both the North and the Republic of Ireland to be exceptional future leaders. WIP is a six-month program of personal and professional development that brings outstanding Protestant and Catholic university students from Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland to Washington, DC, for summer internships and leadership training. The program begins and ends with practical service in Northern Ireland and Ireland. In Washington, participants get firsthand experience with U.S. government and politics and an immersion in American culture by living with area Host Families. Through an intense eight-week schedule, young people from different sides of the political divide are challenged to work and learn as a team and to create an environment of mutual respect. The program aims to send students home with enhanced professional interpersonal skills and a new confidence in their own leadership abilities which they are expected to demonstrate through service to their own communities.

To date, 300 young adults have graduated from the program. Many WIP graduatess moved into important careers in politics, business, media, and education. These include: a research officer to the NI First Minister in Westminster; television and radio news journalists; reporters for major newspapers in Belfast and London; barristers and solicitors; university professors and primary school teachers; consultants with Accenture and Price WaterhouseCoopers; Dublin PR firm managers; assistant to Members of the NI Assembly and the Irish Parliament; political party operatives in Northern Ireland and the Republic; and Executive Officer for the Home Office in London.

This dynamic program should serve as a model for many of the geographically and religiously conflicted areas around the world. WIP is helping to ensure a lasting peace throughout the Emerald Isle. I congratulate its officials, staff, and volunteers, and hope that my colleagues will join me in supporting its efforts in the years to come.

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong and enthusiastic favor of H. Res. 744, which expresses support for the Good Friday Agreement of 1998 as the blueprint for lasting peace in Northern Ireland and support for continued police reform in Northern Ireland as a critical element in the peace process.

Throughout my tenure in Congress, I have been a strong supporter of reinforcing the strong ties between Ireland and the United States. As a member of the Ad-Hoc Committee on Irish Affairs, one of my top goals is the achievement of peace, justice, human rights, and political stability in Northern Ireland.

Since the completion of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998, the U.S. has worked with all interested parties to help with its implementation. With over 40 million Americans being of Irish heritage, it is vital that the United States continue to play an active role in this process and contribute both the political and economic support needed to ensure that peace continues in Northern Ireland.

Madam Speaker, I would like to recognize the efforts of the involved parties who are working daily to make the promise of the Good Friday Agreement a reality. In recent months, there has been a promising softening of the Unionist position with relatively more favorable comments toward the Agreement. And, of course, the Sinn Fein has backed and overseen the IRA's abandonment of its armed campaign.

These are exciting steps toward a sustained and lasting peace in Northern Ireland. And, I remain very hopeful that the parties can make further progress toward a fully functioning government that operates in regular order to meet the needs of the Irish people.

I commend the Irish people on all of its successes and hard work and encourage all of my colleagues to support this important resolution.

Mr. HYDE. Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to offer H. Res. 744, which expresses

support for the Good Friday Agreement as the blueprint for lasting peace in Northern Ireland and support for continued police reform in Northern Ireland as a critical element in the peace process. I compliment the work of Subcommittee Chairmen ELTON GALLEGLY and CHRISTOPHER SMITH for improving and making the originally-introduced version even more constructive and stronger on policing. The Good Friday Agreement needs U.S. support and a push to fully implement all of its terms.

On the important issue of policing reform, the resolution before us wisely reflects the overall view of the Independent Monitoring Commission (IMC) for the north of Ireland, which has closely monitored paramilitary activities and made many critical suggestions for reform and change, especially in the area of a new beginning on policing.

The IMC is made up of highly respected representatives appointed by both the Irish and British Governments, and includes an American as well. In its May 2005 report to the two governments and interested parties, the IMC stated some key findings on the responsibilities of all of the political parties on criminal justice, and it has just reiterated these again in its February 2006 report.

The IMC said that all the parties should, among other things:

''Give credible vocal and practical support to all parts of the criminal justice system, including policing . . .''

''Play a full and constructive role in the participative organs of the criminal justice system, such as the Policing Board and the District Policing Partnerships.''

These are some wise and constructive suggestions, which this resolution supports and fully endorses. We would encourage Sinn Fein and all the parties in the north to honor and live by these ideas for a better, more secure and democratic north of Ireland. There is no place for violence in the process.

Finally, my resolution also calls on both the Irish and British governments to fully implement the important Patten Commission police reform provision which calls for senior-level police officer exchanges between the Republic of Ireland and the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI). These exchanges are clearly needed so that some of the cultural, religious, and other long-standing issues dividing communities and the police in the north can fully benefit from senior-level understanding and diversity.

I urge adoption of the resolution.

Mr. MURPHY. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of House Resolution 744, which honors the Good Friday Agreement of 1998 for being what I believe is, as the resolution states, ''the blueprint for lasting peace in Northern Ireland.''

Next Monday, April 10, 2006 will mark the 8th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement, which has helped to bring nearly a decade of peace to Northern Ireland. As a result of the historic Good Friday Agreement, there is perhaps a greater potential for lasting peace in Northern Ireland now than perhaps ever, since the establishment of the Irish Republic. The Good Friday Agreement has outlined a plan for peace and reconciliation in the 21st century.

I believe the most significant result of the Good Friday Agreement was the revival of the Northern Ireland Assembly, a devolved government body that has facilitated important debate between the political parties. Consequently, problems have been directly and civilly addressed through free and open debate. Unfortunately, as my colleagues know, due to disagreements between the political parties—the Social Democrat and Labor Party, the Ulster Unionist Party, the Democratic Unionist Party, and Sinn Fein—the Northern Ireland Assembly has been suspended since October of 2002. Ever since, the British government has taken direct control over the government to ensure stability. I would hope all sides can agree to terms in order to allow the Assembly to be reestablished.

Madam Speaker, I have met with the leaders of Sinn Fein, the DUP, the UUP and the SDLP, both here in the U.S. and in Ireland. All parties have conveyed to me that they agree it is vital for the future security of the North that new elections be held, an Executive put in place, and the legislative assembly reconvened. I agree with this view, and express the support of the U.S. House of Representatives to facilitate the peace process.

I thank the distinguished Chairman of the International Relations Committee, Mr. HYDE, for authoring this resolution.

Mr. KING of New York. Madam Speaker, today I rise in strong support of H. Res. 744, a resolution that expresses support for the Good Friday Agreement as the blueprint for lasting peace in the North of Ireland. H. Res. 744 is an expanded version of a resolution written by my colleagues JIM WALSH, RICHARD NEAL, JOE CROWLEY, and I last November. I appreciate Chairman HYDE sponsoring this new bill with its additional language which I believe strengthens our initial endeavor and moving it to the House floor promptly. I am also grateful for the opportunity to work with the Chairman and his staff on the drafting of this resolution.

H. Res. 744 expresses our strong commitment to the ideals of the Good Friday Agreement, a referendum that was endorsed by an overwhelmingly majority of the people living both in the North and the Republic of Ireland on April 10, 1998. As we approach the 8th anniversary of this date, I think it is important to recognize those groups and individuals who have committed themselves to peace, justice, and equality and worked to fully implement this agreement. Much progress has been made since 1998 but much still more needs to be done.

First, I'd like to commend (UK) Prime Minister Tony Blair and the (Irish) Taoiseach Bertie Ahem for their leadership in securing a peaceful resolution in the North of Ireland. We would certainly not be where we are today if it were not for these two great statesmen. I'd also like to thank our own government, including both the Clinton and Bush Administrations, for their dedication and efforts to move this process forward. We have been lucky to have fine diplomats such as George Mitchell, Tony Lake, Richard Haass, and Mitchell Reiss play vital roles during the past decade.

One of the most significant changes in the North recently related to the changes in policing. The new Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) has adopted many of the Patten recommendations to become a much more integrated, professional, and impartial police force. Under the leadership of its chief constable, Sir Hugh Orde, and its ombudsman, Nuala O'Loan, the PSNI is a much more effective and accountable law enforcement agency that promotes human rights and fosters community confidence.

Finally, I'd like to commend the leadership of Sinn Fein, specifically Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness, for successfully urging the Irish Republican Army to end its armed campaign and verifiably put all of its weapons beyond use. This was a crucial step in the peace process to demonstrate the Republicans' commitment to an exclusively democratic and peaceful process. There is no place for any paramilitaries in the North of Ireland and it is my hope that the remaining private armies will follow the IRA's lead by destroying their weapons and signing up to the peace process.

Now is a critical time for the people and the political parties in the North of Ireland. This Thursday the British and Irish governments intend to publish their plans for a resumption of the Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive. It is long past due for this government to be back up and running. But for this to happen, all parties must agree to share power and commit themselves to the full implementation of the Good Friday Agreement.

Mr. LEACH. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BIGGERT). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LEACH) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 744.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

COMMENDING THE PEOPLE OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS FOR THE CONTRIBUTIONS AND SACRIFICES THEY MADE TO THE UNITED STATES NUCLEAR TESTING PROGRAM IN THE MARSHALL ISLANDS

Mr. LEACH. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 692) commending the people of the Republic of the Marshall Islands for the contributions and sacrifices they made to the United States nuclear testing program in the Marshall Islands, solemnly acknowledging the first detonation of a hydrogen bomb by the United States on March 1, 1954, on the Bikini Atoll in the Marshall Islands, and remembering that 60 years ago the United States began its nuclear testing program in the Marshall Islands, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 692

Whereas between 1946 and 1958, the United States conducted 67 nuclear tests in the Marshall Islands, 66 of which resulted in atmospheric fallout;

Whereas the most powerful of these tests was the hydrogen weapons test codenamed

Bravo, a 15-megaton device detonated on March 1, 1954, at Bikini atoll;

Whereas the Bravo detonation alone was the equivalent to 1,000 Hiroshima-sized bombs;

Whereas 17 other tests in the Marshall Islands were in the megaton range, and the total yield of the 67 tests was 108 megatons, the equivalent yield of more than 7,000 Hiroshima bombs and 93 times the total of Nevada atmospheric tests;

Whereas in July 1998, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimated that 6.3 billion curies of radioactive iodine-131 were released to the atmosphere as a result of the testing in the Marshall Islands;

Whereas the 12-year nuclear testing program has been the defining experience of the modern era for the people of the Marshall Islands, and these momentous events created a common bond between the people of the Marshall Islands and the United States military and civilian personnel who shared hardships and suffering with the people of the Marshall Islands during the testing program;

Whereas as a Member State of the United Nations, the world body that once had oversight of United States stewardship of the trusteeship for the people of the Marshall Islands and their island homelands, the Republic of the Marshall Islands has an unmatched record of working in conjunction with the leadership of the United States in the pursuit of international peace and security, the rights and well-being of the peoples of the world, and in the War on Terrorism: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) commends the people of the Republic of the Marshall Islands for the contributions and sacrifices they made to the United States nuclear testing program in the Marshall Islands;

(2) solemnly acknowledges the first detonation of a hydrogen bomb by the United States on March 1, 1954, on the Bikini Atoll in the Marshall Islands; and

(3) remembers that 60 years ago the United States began its nuclear testing program in the Marshall Islands.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LEACH) and the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Iowa.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LEACH. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. LEACH. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, first I would like to commend the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA) for introducing this timely resolution which commemorates the six decades of friendship and strategic solidarity that the United States have shared with the people of the Marshall Islands.

June 30 marks the 60th anniversary of the U.S. nuclear testing program in the Marshall Islands. The program encompassed 67 atmospheric tests, including the 15 megaton blast codenamed ''Bravo,'' a detonation equivalent to a thousand Hiroshima-sized bombs, which occurred above Bikini Atoll on March 1, 1954.

The last nuclear test occurred in August of 1958. These massive detonations were considered critical at the time to the development of our nuclear deterrent during the Cold War and represent the most vivid examples of a strategic partnership that stretches back to the Pacific campaign of the Second World War.

They also symbolize the dangers of nuclear weapons and the unintended consequences of weapons development. Tragically, for instance, as this resolution points out, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimated that 6.3 billion curies of radioactive iodine-131 were released in the atmosphere as a result of the testing in the Marshall Islands.

Recently, the United States reaffirmed and extended aspects of its unique relationship with the Republic of the Marshall Islands in the amended Compact of Free Association which the Congress considered and approved during the 108th Congress. As we approach the anniversary of the commencement of the U.S. nuclear testing program in the Marshall Islands, it is fitting to recall the mutual sacrifices that our people shared during the last century and commit ourselves to maintaining our special friendship in the decades ahead.

I urge support of this resolution.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution. First, I would like to commend my very good friend and distinguished colleague, Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA, for introducing this important measure concerning nuclear testing in the Marshall Islands.

His tireless leadership to strengthen the bonds between the United States and all the nations of the Pacific is deeply appreciated by all of us who have the privilege of serving with him on the International Relations Committee.

□ 1500

Madam Speaker, 60 years ago, the history of the Marshall Islands and its people was fundamentally altered. The residents of isolated Bikini Atoll were loaded aboard American military ships and sent to live on a distant atoll. The goal of this relocation was simple: to enable the testing of a hydrogen bomb equivalent to 1,000 Hiroshima-sized weapons. Bikini Atoll had drawn the short straw, and it would become ground zero for the famous Bravo detonation.

This blast in 1954 was not the first nor the last nuclear test in the Marshall Islands. Between 1946 and 1958, we conducted 67 nuclear tests in the Marshall Islands, but Bravo was the most powerful of our nuclear tests and the one which caused the greatest impact on the long-term health of Marshallese citizens.

Despite the enormous after-effects of the U.S. nuclear testing program, the relationship between the Marshallese and the American people has only grown stronger over the past six decades. Through the Compact of Free Association, the United States provided substantial financial assistance to the Marshall Islands and medical aid to those directly impacted by the nuclear tests.

In return, the government of the Marshall Islands has been a steadfast ally of the United States since it obtained its independence in 1986. Young Marshallese citizens proudly serve in the United States military, and they have died alongside their American comrades in defense of liberty in Iraq. The government of the Marshall Islands has stood with us on vote after vote in the United Nations, when many of our other allies were more than happy to sideline their commitment to freedom and democracy, particularly in cases when the defense of the democratic State of Israel was at stake.

Mr. Speaker, over the past six decades, the people of the Marshall Islands and the United States have been on a long, but important, journey together, beginning with the liberation by American GIs of the Marshall Islands from Japanese occupation, continuing through 12 years of post-war atmospheric nuclear testing and resulting in a strong and mutually beneficial relationship between these two Pacific nations.

The 60th anniversary of the Bravo test is an important time to remember our shared history and to appreciate better the future positive relations we can surely expect between our two nations.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly support this resolution and urge all of my colleagues to do as well.

Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to yield as much time as he might consume to the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA), my distinguished colleague and good friend, author of this resolution and the ranking Democratic member of the Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific of the International Relations Committee.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend and colleague for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I also would like to offer my commendation to the chairman of our House International Relations Committee, Mr. HYDE, for his leadership and for his support of this resolution. I would also like to thank our senior Democratic ranking member on the committee, Mr. LANTOS from California, and especially also my good friend and chairman of the House Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific, the gentleman from Iowa, Chairman LEACH, for his support as well of this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 692, commending the people of the Republic of the Marshall Islands for the contributions and sacrifices they made to the United States nuclear testing program in the Marshall Islands.

I want to especially thank the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. FLAKE), my good friend and colleague. He and I also had the privilege of visiting the Marshall Islands a year ago, and is an original cosponsor with me on this legislation, as well as my dear friends and colleagues who have also. In the spirit of bipartisanship, I want to submit for the RECORD the list of the Members who have also signed on as cosponsors of this resolution.

H. RES. 692

Title: Commending the people of the Republic of the Marshall Islands for the contributions and sacrifices they made to the United States nuclear testing program in the Marshall Islands, solemnly acknowledging the first detonation of a hydrogen bomb by the United States on March 1, 1954, on the Bikini Atoll in the Marshall Islands, and remembering that 60 years ago the United States began its nuclear testing program in the Marshall Islands.

Sponsor: Rep Faleomavaega, Eni F. H. [AS] (introduced 2/16/2006) Cosponsors (36).

Latest Major Action: 2/16/2006 Referred to House committee. Status: Referred to the House Committee on International Relations.

Rep. Abercrombie, Neil [HI–1]—3/30/2006
Rep. Ackerman, Gary L. [NY–5]—3/30/2006
Rep. Baca, Joe [CA–43]—3/30/2006
Rep. Berman, Howard L. [CA–28]—3/30/2006
Rep. Blumenauer, Earl [OR–3]—3/30/2006
Rep. Bordallo, Madeleine Z. [GU]—3/30/2006
Rep. Brown, Corrine [FL–3]—3/30/2006
Rep. Brown, Sherrod [OH–13]—3/30/2006
Rep. Burton, Dan [IN–5]—3/30/2006
Rep. Cardoza, Dennis A. [CA–18]—3/30/2006
Rep. Castle, Michael N. [DE]—3/30/2006
Rep. Delahunt, William D. [MA–10]—3/30/2006
Rep. Engel, Eliot L. [NY–17]—3/30/2006
Rep. Flake, Jeff [AZ–6]—2/16/2006
Rep. Gallegly, Elton [CA–24]—3/30/2006
Rep. Gutierrez, Luis V. [IL–4]—3/30/2006
Rep. Honda, Michael M. [CA–15]—3/30/2006
Rep. Jackson-Lee, Sheila [TX–18]—3/30/2006
Rep. Kennedy, Patrick J. [RI–1]—3/30/2006
Rep. Kind, Ron [WI–3]—3/30/2006
Rep. Kucinich, Dennis J. [OH–10]—3/30/2006
Rep. Lantos, Tom [CA–12]—3/30/2006
Rep. Leach, James A. [IA–2]—3/30/2006
Rep. Lee, Barbara [CA–9]—3/30/2006
Rep. Lewis, John [GA–5]—3/30/2006
Rep. Miller, George [CA–7]—3/30/2006
Rep. Napolitano, Grace F. [CA–38]—3/30/2006
Rep. Payne, Donald M. [NJ–10]—3/30/2006
Rep. Ros-Lehtinen, Ileana [FL–18]—3/30/2006
Rep. Schiff, Adam B. [CA–29]—3/30/2006
Rep. Spratt, John M., Jr. {SC–5]—3/30/2006
Rep. Udall, Tom [NM–3]—3/30/2006
Rep. Waters, Maxine [CA–35]—3/30/2006
Rep. Watson, Diane E. [CA–33]—3/30/2006
Rep. Watt, Melvin L. [NC–12]—3/30/2006
Rep. Wexler, Robert [FL–19]—3/30/2006

Mr. Speaker, 60 years ago in 1946, the United States began testing nuclear weapons in the Marshall Islands. Over a 12-year period until 1958, the United States conducted 67 nuclear tests with the equivalent yield of more than 7,000 Hiroshima nuclear bombs. In fact, the nuclear test code-named Bravo was a 15-megaton hydrogen bomb that was detonated on March 1, 1954, in the Marshall Islands and its equivalent yield was 1,000 Hiroshima-sized nuclear bombs. Acknowledged as the greatest nuclear explosion ever at that time detonated, the Bravo test vaporized six islands and created a mushroom cloud 25 miles in diameter.

Because people were living in these South Pacific islands during the time of the U.S. nuclear testing program, the people of the Republic of the Marshall Islands were exposed to severe radiation poisoning. Even today, 60 years after the U.S. nuclear testing program began, the people of the Rongelap Atoll, as well as other atolls, are still exiled from their own land due to the radioactive fallout.

Mr. Speaker, as the ranking member of the House International Relations Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific and as a Pacific Islander myself, I feel I have a special responsibility to look after the interests of our Pacific Island community, especially from the Marshall Islands which have sacrificed greatly for our common good.

From 1946 to 1958, the United States detonated 67 nuclear weapons in the Marshall Islands, representing nearly 80 percent of all atmospheric tests ever conducted by the United States. If one were to calculate the net yield of these tests, it would be equivalent to the detonation of 1.7 Hiroshima bombs every day for 12 years. These tests exposed the people of the Marshall Islands to severe health problems and genetic anomalies for generations to come.

The U.S. nuclear testing program in the Marshall Islands continues to devastate the Marshall Islands, and the funds provided by the United States under the Compact of Free Association I submit, Mr. Speaker, are grossly inadequate to provide for the health care, environmental monitoring, personal injury claims, or land and property damages.

Pursuant to the compact and the accompanying section 177 agreement, the United States accepted responsibility for the damage to the property and environment of the Marshall Islands and the health of its people. This agreement did not constitute a final agreement, as evidenced by the inclusion of article IX authorizing the government of the Marshall Islands to petition the U.S. Congress in the event of ''changed circumstances that render the provisions of this agreement manifestly inadequate.''

The government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands has submitted a request to Congress based on a changed circumstances claim. The administration, however, as represented by the State Department in its report evaluating the Marshall Islands' request, rejected the argument made in the Marshall Islands' petition, contending that the claims did not constitute changed circumstances as defined in the agreement.

For the record, Mr. Speaker, I want to make it clear that I take issue with the State Department's position. While the State Department denies that there is no legal basis for Congress to hear this petition, the fact remains that we in Congress should decide this for ourselves.

Mr. Speaker, the State Department issued a report in November of 2004 evaluating the Marshall Islands' petition, concluding that the Marshall Islands' request does not qualify as changed circumstances within the meaning of the agreement, so there is no legal basis for considering additional payments.

Mr. Speaker, the State Department fails to explain how the declassified documents released 10 years after the agreement was reached, indicating a wider expanded radioactive fallout than previously disclosed, or that the National Cancer Institute study indicating that more cancers will surface do not constitute a legal basis for Congress to consider their circumstances.

Mr. Speaker, I submit this is much larger than a legal issue. This is a moral issue. The fact is the people of the Marshall Islands are still suffering severe, adverse health effects directly related to our nuclear testing program, and they are still unable to use their own lands because of the radiation poisoning. We have a moral obligation to provide for health care, environmental monitoring, personal injury claims, and the land and property damage in the Marshall Islands. This is the least we can do, Mr. Speaker, considering the historic contribution the people of the Marshall Islands have made in the Cold War struggle to preserve international peace and promote nuclear disarmament.

Mr. Speaker, the people of the Marshall Islands do not want handouts. They have brought these ongoing health environmental and loss of land issues to Congress for our consideration. While we may find that we cannot provide the amount of money requested, I believe we do have an obligation to examine carefully the application they have submitted to ensure that we live up to the responsibility we embraced over 50 years ago when we began nuclear testing in the Pacific. We should not be looking for ways to sidestep this responsibility. We should ask ourselves if we have done everything we can possibly do to make things right for the people of the Marshall Islands who have sacrificed their lives, their health and their lands for the benefit of the United States.

I have reviewed the petition. I have researched this issue extensively, and I believe enough evidence exists to justify a thorough review of the changed circumstances in the petition.

Mr. Speaker, I do not know if my colleagues can see this picture. These are some of the children who were born to mothers this day last year, deformed children, still as a result of nuclear testing that we conducted in the Marshall Islands, and how dare that our government say that we do not have

any further responsibility to the people of the Marshall Islands. It is still there, and we should pay attention to this.

Mr. Speaker, I am probably one of the few Members who has ever been to the Marshall Islands and have seen the results of our nuclear testing program. Some of our colleagues may ask how come we stopped our nuclear testing in the Marshall Islands. I will tell you why: because of the radiation, a nuclear cloud that floated all over to the United States and we found strontin-90 on milk products coming out of Minnesota and Wisconsin. That is why we stopped our nuclear testing there in the Marshall Islands.

I am probably one of the few Members who also visited the French nuclear testing in the South Pacific in French Polynesia where the French Government detonated over 220 nuclear bombs in the atmosphere, on the surface, under the ocean; and guess what, those atolls are beginning to leak now. The French Government refuses to allow international scientific teams to go down there and find out exactly the extent of the nuclear damage that the French Government has done to those people in the Pacific.

Last year, Mr. Speaker, I was invited by the President of Kazakhstan to visit that country; and to my surprise, I did not realize that this is where the Soviet Union conducted their nuclear testing program. They detonated 500 nuclear devices in Afghanistan before Afghanistan became independent; and as a result of the Soviet Union nuclear testing, 1.5 million Kazakhs were exposed to nuclear radioactivity, very similar to the problems that we have just had a resolution on on Chernobyl.

It is madness. It is madness, Mr. Speaker, and I submit this is something we should at least do for the people of the Marshall Islands. They are not asking for handouts, Mr. Speaker. They are just simply asking for fairness. If we were so deliberate in our efforts to fund the Cold War, let us give the Marshall Islands people at least what they deserve, a good medical treatment for the mothers that still continue to have cancers in thyroid glands, cancers all over, several hundred, and their descendants still continue to be exposed because of what we had done to these people 60 years ago.

Mr. Speaker, I submit and I ask my colleagues, I request with all due respect that the least we could do is to pass this resolution. With this resolution, Mr. Speaker, we want to acknowledge the historic contribution the people of the Marshall Islands have made in the Cold War struggle to preserve the peace that we are seeking throughout the world. We commend the people of the Marshall Islands for the contributions and sacrifices they made, and we hope and I hope, sincerely hope, that my colleagues will join me in providing for appropriate legislation so that we can give these people the proper medical care that they deserve.

With that, Mr. Speaker, again, I thank my good friend, the chairman of our Asia Pacific Subcommittee, Mr. LEACH, and my good friend, senior Democratic member, Mr. LANTOS, for their support and management of this bill.

Mr. LEACH. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I would just like to conclude briefly with three thoughts. One, I think it is absolutely imperative that this body emphasize its friendship to the people of the Marshall Islands and affirm, as Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA has suggested, our obligation to take care of those whose health we are responsible for affecting.

□ 1515

Secondly, I want to express my deep regard and friendship for the two Members who have spoken, Mr. LANTOS, our ranking member, and Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA.

And, thirdly, I want to make a constitutional point. People listening to the debate maybe do not understand that this is a body of 435 voting Members plus five delegates, and the importance of delegates is often not noted in the American constitutional system. But this is a classic example of an individual leader, Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA, who comes from American Samoa, who is bringing a resolution that would otherwise not have been brought to this House except for his leadership. It is resolution of seminal importance and one that intriguingly looks to the problems of our times and also to the history of the 20th century in a unique and profound way.

So I want to express my deepest regard for this initiative, and I thank the gentleman from American Samoa.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LANTOS. Before yielding back the balance of our time, I want to express my appreciation to the chairman of our Pacific and Asian Subcommittee for his extraordinary work on this and all other issues, and I want to identify myself with the powerful and persuasive statements of my friend and colleague, ENI FALEOMAVAEGA.

Mr. CASE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 692, a resolution introduced by my esteemed colleague from American Samoa and Ranking Member of the House International Relations Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific—Congressman ENI FALEOMAVAEGA—commending the people of the Republic of the Marshall Islands for their incalculable contributions and sacrifices they made to the United States nuclear testing program throughout the 1940s and 1950s in the Marshall Islands.

This year will mark the 60th anniversary of the United States' commencement of nuclear testing in the Marshall Islands. Over a period of twelve years, from 1946 to 1958, the United States of America conducted sixty-seven atmospheric nuclear weapons tests in the Marshall Islands. The tests resulted in a combined yield of 108 megatons, roughly the destructive force of over 7,000 times that of the bomb used on Hiroshima. The worst of these tests, the Bravo shot, was a l5-megaton thermonuclear device, which in itself carried 1,000 times the destructive power of the Hiroshima bomb. It was detonated on March 1, 1954, on Bikini Atoll, and caused dangerous levels of radioactive fallout to be released over 7,000 square miles, including the populated atolls of Rongelap and Utrik.

It is vital that our country remember the contributions of the Marshallese to our national security and to world peace.

While recognizing such contributions, our country over the years has sought to address the legacy of our nuclear testing in the Marshall Islands in our initial Compact with the Republic of the Marshall Islands in 1986 and in our ongoing bilateral relations with the RMI government. Just recently, our governments renegotiated the compact agreement.

I am aware that the RMI government has filed a "changed circumstances" petition with the U.S. government, which still must be negotiated. It is time our country come to closure on the changed circumstances petition and address our country's long-standing nuclear legacy in the Marshall Islands and its ramifications on the lives of its residents, particularly those of the affected atolls. I also believe that we must ensure that the U.S. Department of Energy's medical assistance program is fulfilling its obligation to its beneficiaries in the Marshall Islands.

I urge my colleagues to support H. Res. 692 and to work on addressing these crucial remaining issues.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 692, a resolution to commend the people of the Republic of the Marshall Islands for the contributions and grave sacrifices they made to the United States nuclear testing program in the Marshall Islands.

In 1947, the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) became one of six entities in the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands established by the United Nations with the U.S. as the Trustee. This began a decades-long relationship between the U.S. and RMI that has proven to be resilient and enduring.

In particular, I'd like to highlight the U.S. nuclear testing program in RMI which began in 1946. Over the years, the U.S. detonated 67 nuclear weapons on the islands of Bikini and Enewetak. These tests comprise 80 percent of all atmospheric tests conducted by the United States. On March 1, 1954, the hydrogen weapons test code-named "Bravo" yielded explosive power approximately 1,000 times greater than the weapon used in the 1945 wartime nuclear attack on Hiroshima, Japan. The Bravo test created a mushroom cloud 25 miles in diameter, produced a crater 6,000 feet in diameter, and vaporized 6 islands at the Bikini Atoll. Radiation from the test forced the evacuation of Marshallese and U.S. military personnel on Rongelap, Rongerik, Utirik and Ailinginae. This responsibility shouldered by the Marshallese people allowed a majority of all tests to be conducted as far from densely populated areas as possible and helped bring about a peaceful end to the Cold War.

Over the years, the Marshallese have faced very serious consequences as a result of the nuclear testing. The health and property effects have proved to be extensive and in many cases, immeasurable. The U.S. has recognized this and set up a fund to compensate those affected by the testing. However, the consequences of this testing, especially the health of the Marshallese people, continue to be impacted.

In particular, the Section 177 Health Care Program is in urgent need of increased funding. Intended to provide comprehensive medical care, including cancer care, for the four communities most affected by the nuclear weapons testing program, this healthcare program has fallen woefully short of its intended goals. Spending approximately $12 per patient per month, the needs of this program are immediate and urgent.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure that our countries will continue to work on this issue and find a resolution. I also have no doubt that the relationship between our governments will continue to be productive and mutually beneficial. As our alliance continues in the coming decades, I urge the United States to step up and meet its obligations to the people of the RMI. With all the sacrifices they have made for the United States and continue to make each day, it is the very least the United States can do.

I urge my colleagues to join me in commending the people of the Marshall Islands and acknowledge their profound sacrifices. We must continue our efforts to restore the health and lands of the people of the Marshall Islands.

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 692 which commends the people of the Republic of the Marshall Islands for their contributions and sacrifices associated with the United States nuclear testing program. The first nuclear detonation was made on the Bikini Atoll in the Marshall Islands on March 1, 1954. This test, and the subsequent testing program, established the nuclear deterrent that has served to ensure the security of our Nation and our allies throughout the Cold War. The people of the Marshall Islands sacrificed in a particularly unique way for our security, one that is both immense and somber. Today we continue to honor their contribution.

Further, Mr. Speaker, the contributions of the people of the Republic of the Marshall Islands have continued to this very day. Today we can find Marshallese serving in the United States Armed Forces around the world. Some are serving in Iraq and Afghanistan as we speak and many others are contributing to the well being of the United States in other new and unique ways throughout the Global War on Terror.

The Republic of the Marshall Islands stands today with America as one of the Freely Associated States in the Pacific, and our strong bonds of friendship are a testament to our mutual commitment to freedom and democracy.

To my friends and neighbors, the Marshallese, I extend the thanks of a grateful Nation. To borrow from your beautiful language, ''kommol tata,'' or thank you very much.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 692, commending the people of the Republic of the Marshall Islands for their contributions and sacrifices to the United States nuclear testing program.

Mr. Speaker, as fellow islander, I feel a kinship to the people of the Marshall Islands and sympathize with them for the suffering they endured for our benefit. Between June 30, 1946 and August 18, 1958, our government, after evacuating the residents, conducted an intensive program of nuclear testing on Bikini and Enewetak atolls in the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

These tests, which were the equivalent of more that 7,200 Hiroshima bombs, caused significant damage to the health of the people of the Marshall Islands, as well as, to the lands, vegetation, lagoons and surrounding ecosystems. In addition to rendering all of Bikini and most of Enewetak uninhabitable, radioactive fallout from nuclear testing on Bikini and Enewetak accidentally spread to other populated areas of the RMI.

It is believed that these tests on Bikini and Enewetak caused high rates of thyroid, cervical and breast cancer throughout the Marshall Islands, with more than a dozen Marshall Islands atolls seriously affected. In 1998, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control estimated that 6,300,000,000 billion curies of radioactive iodine-131 were released to the atmosphere as a result of the testing in the Marshall Islands.

Mr. Speaker, the U.S. government accepted responsibility for the injuries to the people of the Marshall Islands and provided financial and other assistance to the RMI as compensation for the harm done as a result of our nuclear testing.

Six years ago, the Republic of the Marshall Islands government submitted a Changed Circumstances Petition to the United States Congress related to U.S. nuclear testing on the Marshall Islands atolls of Bikini and Enewetak during the 1940s and 1950s. The Petition requests additional compensation for personal injuries and property damages and restoration costs, medical care programs, health services infrastructure and training, and radiological monitoring.

The Petition bases its claims for compensation upon ''changed circumstances'' pursuant to Section 177 of the Compact of Free Association. The Compact of Free Association, enacted in 1986, governs the economic and strategic relationships between the United States and the RMI. The Section 177 Agreement granted $150 million as part of a ''full and final settlement'' of legal claims against the U.S. government, and provided for possible additional compensation, if loss or damages to persons or property arose or were discovered that could not reasonably have been identified as of the effective date of the agreement, and if such injuries rendered the provisions of the Compact ''manifestly inadequate.'' The Petition argues that ''new and additional'' information since the enactment of the Compact—such as a wider extent of radioactive fallout than previously known or disclosed and more recent radiation protection standards—constitute ''changed circumstances.''

Mr. Speaker, we should support the petition of the RMI calling for recognition of a ''changed circumstances''. Our country owes a great debt to the people of the RMI for the sacrifices they made on our behalf and we must, as called for by H. Res. 692, assist them in extricating themselves from the legacy of the nuclear age and the burden of providing testing grounds for nuclear weapons.

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA for sponsoring H. Res. 692, which commends the people of the Republic of the Marshall Islands for the contributions and sacrifices they made to the United States nuclear testing program in the Marshall Islands 60 years ago.

When I served as the Ambassador to the Federated States of Micronesia, I had the opportunity to visit the Marshall Islands on several occasions and to get to know the people, their land, and their history.

During the period of June 20, 1946 to August 18, 1958, the United States conducted 67 nuclear tests in the Marshall Islands. The vast majority of the tests were atmospheric. The most powerful of these tests was the ''Bravo'' shot, a 15 megaton device detonated on March 1, 1954, at Bikini atoll. The test was equivalent to 1,000 Hiroshima bombs.

While the Bravo test is the probably the best known, it should also be acknowledged that 17 other tests in the Marshall islands were in the megaton range with a combined yield estimated to be 174 megatons. Approximately 137 megatons of the that total was detonated in the atmosphere. This represents nearly 80 percent of the atmospheric nuclear tests detonated by the U.S.

Mr. Speaker, we must also acknowledge that the people of the Marshall Islands paid a steep price for the nuclear testing program. Many Marshalese who lived through the period of nuclear testing have been relocated to other areas and have been waiting for decades to return to their homes. Residents of the Rongelop Atoll, the island closest to ground zero, still remain in exile. Other Marshalese, including their offspring, have suffered from medical conditions associated with increased levels of radioactivity.

Despite the hardships endured by the people of the Marshall Islands, the Republic of the Marshall Islands has an exemplary record of working with the United States and supporting U.S. security concerns, including efforts to stamp out terrorism around the world.

H. Res. 692 acknowledges the debt that all Americans owe for the sacrifice as well as loyalty of the people of the Marshall Islands.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LEACH. Mr. Speaker, I move adoption of the resolution, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CAMPBELL of California). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LEACH) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 692, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

RECOGNIZING THE BENEFITS AND IMPORTANCE OF SCHOOL-BASED MUSIC EDUCATION

Mr. KELLER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 355) recognizing the benefits and importance of school-based music education, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 355

Whereas school music programs enhance intellectual development and enrich the academic environment for students of all ages;

Whereas students who participate in school music programs are less likely to be involved with drugs, gangs, or alcohol and have better attendance in school;

Whereas the skills gained through sequential music instruction, including discipline and the ability to analyze, solve problems, communicate, and work cooperatively, are vital for success in the 21st century workplace;

Whereas the majority of students attending public schools in inner city neighborhoods have virtually no access to music education, which places them at a disadvantage compared to their peers in other communities;

Whereas local budget cuts are predicted to lead to significant curtailment of school music programs, thereby depriving millions of students of an education that includes music;

Whereas the arts are a core academic subject, and music is an essential element of the arts; and

Whereas every student in the United States should have an opportunity to reap the benefits of music education: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That it is the sense of the Congress that music education grounded in rigorous instruction is an important component of a well-rounded academic curriculum and should be available to every student in every school.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. KELLER) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. BISHOP) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. KELLER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on House Concurrent Resolution 355.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. KELLER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume, and I rise today in support of House Concurrent Resolution 355, which highlights the benefits and importance of school-based music education.

Anyone who has seen the movie, Mr. Holland's Opus, can appreciate the value of school-based music education and the importance of music teachers who inspire our young people. I would like to thank my colleague from Tennessee (Mr. COOPER) for his leadership on this issue and for introducing the resolution we are considering today.

Research has shown that students' involvement in their school music program is crucial to a complete education. Musical studies develop critical thinking and self-discipline skills and improve a child's early cognitive development, basic math and reading abilities, self-esteem, SAT scores, ability to work in teams, abstract reasoning skills, and school attendance.

In an analysis of U.S. Department of Education data on more than 25,000 secondary school students, researchers found that students who report consistently high levels of involvement in music over middle school and high school years show significantly higher levels of mathematics proficiency by grade 12 regardless of a student's socioeconomic status.

For these reasons, I support House Concurrent Resolution 355 that recognizes the benefits and importance of school-based music education. The resolution before the House today is simple and straightforward. It states that it is the sense of Congress that music education, grounded in rigorous instruction, is an important component of a well-rounded academic curriculum and should be available to every student in every school.

As retired General Norman Schwarzkopf said, ''What a tragedy it would be if we lived in a world where music was not taught to children.'' Music education is important to our children. It can broaden and strengthen their education and improve their lives. I commend music educators and organizations across the country for the key roles they play in helping our children succeed in school and throughout life.

For every ''School of Rock'' or ''Mr. Holland's Opus,'' there are thousands of real-life music teachers inspiring our young people every day. They may not have major movies made about them, but they are heroes nonetheless. I urge my colleagues to support music education in our schools and House Concurrent Resolution 355, which highlights the benefits and importance of school-based music education.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BISHOP of New York. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume. Mr. Speaker, I want to join my colleagues in thanking Congressman COOPER for introducing House Concurrent Resolution 355, which recognizes the benefits and importance of school-based music education. He has been steadfast in his support of music as a learning tool in the classroom, and we appreciate his work on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, every year schools throughout the country highlight the importance of music education. It is time to celebrate music and to use music as a means for enhancing the academic experience of students. While there has been much debate on how to teach students to read and to perform math, there is little debate that music contributes to overall learning ability.

We know that students who participate consistently in music activities over middle and high school show significantly higher levels of math proficiency by the 12th grade. Additional data shows correlations between music and higher SAT scores and a decrease in disciplinary problems and risky behavior. Students who are involved in music classes in school have higher self-esteem and self-confidence than their counterparts who do not participate in music class.

Unfortunately, even with all the data to support the importance of music in learning, many schools are struggling to keep art and music in the classroom. Mr. Speaker, music education is facing severe cuts in thousands of school districts throughout the Nation due to budget cuts. Instead of being able to fund programs to support music in the classroom, student choirs, and high school bands, local school districts find themselves struggling to find money for teachers' salaries.

Mr. Speaker, we must do better if we are committed to seeing to it that all children succeed. And for those who say that the three R's of reading, writing, and arithmetic should outweigh the arts and music in priority, I disagree. Music is a complementary academic subject and belongs right alongside math and reading.

In fact, the arts are considered a core academic subject under No Child Left Behind. This reflects an understanding by Congress and the President that the arts are critical to a well-rounded education.

Again, I would like to thank Mr. COOPER for bringing this resolution to the floor today and join with him in calling for more resources to our schools and to make sure that all children have access to music in the classroom.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. KELLER. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BISHOP of New York. Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield such time as he may consume to the author of this resolution, my friend from Tennessee (Mr. COOPER).

Mr. COOPER. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend, Mr. BISHOP; my friend, Mr. KELLER; and also Mr. PORTER. This is a truly bipartisan resolution. As has been explained, it expresses the sense of the Congress of the United States that music should be a key part of the curriculum of every public school for every child. Music is vitally important for the education of our young people, and this expresses the sense of this great body, this institution, that it must be a part of our school systems.

Mr. Speaker, I have the privilege of representing Nashville, Tennessee. That is also known as Music City USA, so you would know that I would be for a resolution like this, but all of us should be, in both parties. In the other body, Senator HATCH and Senator FEINSTEIN are likely to be the leads on the legislation, but I hope that every school district across this country, every parent will realize the importance of music as a key part of the curriculum, not a luxury add-on, but a key part of their child's education.

All of us love sports, and most all our schools have pretty good athletic programs. A lot of focus is put on that. But the chance of a child actually becoming a successful pro athlete is sometimes pretty small, whereas the chance of a child who has the ability to learn music, of whatever type, it might be band, it might be piano, or chorus or

voice, there are a variety of opportunities, the chance is probably far greater that that child will be able to go on and develop some sort of career in the musical field; or perhaps music will be a hobby, an add-on to their career.

Some of the most successful people in the world, such as software engineers and mathematicians, other folks like that, have music as a hobby, so it is a vitally important part of our curriculum. I think it is also an emotional need that so many of us have.

If anyone has seen the great movie, Mr. Holland's Opus, it helps show how young people, sometimes unlikely young people, can benefit from a musical education.

So I appreciate my friends across the aisle and my friend Mr. BISHOP from Long Island championing this measure to make sure that music is a part of our curriculum in all of our schools for all of our students.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Con. Res. 355, recognizing the importance of school based music education. In today's climate of high stakes testing, it's important to recognize that skills learned through studying music translate to skills that help students succeed in life.

Empirical data suggest that music students perform higher than their counterparts on the Scholastic Aptitude Test, and also demonstrate higher math skills. Studies also show that students who participate in a band or orchestra show the lowest lifetime use of alcohol, tobacco and illicit drugs. Students that participate in music classes are less likely to be disruptive students in class. Among minority students, more identify their music teachers as role models than any other subject area. These students demonstrate higher self-esteem and thinking skills than their counterparts.

As a parent, I know that students who learn to think critically, perform analysis, and express themselves through written and verbal communication have a greater chance at success in life. Within a larger context, music is an essential cultural thread. How many people, whether listening to the O'Jay's, Bon Jovi, or Jill Scott, know that the term ''Rock and Roll'' is African American slang dating back to the early 20th Century? But music, whether rock and roll, classical, or jazz has come to mean much more. Within my district, the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum and the Cleveland Institute of Music provide music history and distance learning programs for many schools that haven't been able to afford their own music education teachers. The usefulness of these music programs underscores the importance of filling student needs at a time when our society needs better teaching methods and a greater understanding of diversity, not less.

Educators with whom I meet, often express frustration that compressed school schedules and the focus on high stakes testing are failing to help our children develop the critical thinking skills needed to compete in an increasingly complex world. Music education aids critical thinking and more. I believe it imperative that we recognize its importance in the lives of our children, and strive to make school based music education available to all of America's youth.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to support this resolution, H. Con. Res. 355, recognizing the benefits and importance of school-based music education programs.

I have long been a strong advocate for music education programs, both in my home State of Maryland and nationally. I believe that music education should be available to students of all ages and a part of every student's academic experience.

Music education programs enrich the whole student, and are a critical component of a well-rounded academic curriculum. In my home State of Maryland, educators and administrators have worked to integrate music and arts programs into academic curriculums in order to provide students with these important benefits. At a time when education programs are struggling for adequate funding and State and local governments across the country face tremendous budget pressures, it is more important than ever to highlight and emphasize the importance of music education programs.

I frequently meet with artists, songwriters, musicians and other creators who are actively engaged in ensuring that schools and communities continue to work music and arts into the school curriculum. These artists know that music education can enhance intellectual development and skills integral to improved learning. Skills learned through the study of music help children become better students. Skills learned through music transfer to improve study skills, communication skills, and cognitive skills. Also, studies have shown that students involved in music classes are less likely to be disruptive, have better attendance, and are more likely to receive academic honors and awards.

Studies have also shown that participation in school-based music education can increase student success. For example, in 2001 the College-Bound Seniors National Report showed that students with coursework in music performance and music appreciation scored notably higher on the SATs than students with no arts participation. Studies have shown that participation in music class correlates with increased proficiency in mathematics and success in science.

We must place a high value on music education. I am pleased to be a cosponsor of this resolution supporting the importance of music education programs and urging that the benefits of music education should be available to every student.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Con. Res. 355, recognizing the benefits and importance of school-based music education.

Providing students with the opportunity to learn music is an essential component of a well-rounded education. Often times music programs are considered to be extracurricular activities, whose value and funding are disputed. The benefits and opportunities that music programs provide for students greatly outweigh the financial costs. Music classes enhance students' self esteem and social skills. In addition, several studies have shown that learning music increases students' abilities at reading and math. Learning music requires discipline and responsibility. This training persists throughout music students' academic careers.

I am fortunate enough to have one of the Nation's eminent arts schools in my district, the Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts. More than 700 diverse students attend Booker T. Washington, where talent and drive are the most important components for admission. Booker T. Washington has an outstanding success rate, graduating 99 percent of its students to higher education. The program has graduated 17 Grammy winners, including Nora Jones, Erykah Badu, and Roy Hargrove.

Booker T. Washington is so successful due to the presence of outstanding teachers and rigorous curriculum that provides students with a well rounded education. In addition, Booker T. Washington has brought technology to the forefront of music education and development. These students use computers for everything from ear training to recording and sound production. Dedication, enthusiasm, and proper resources has made Booker T. Washington one of the most successful arts schools in the country.

Mr. KELLER. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BISHOP of New York. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. KELLER. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. KELLER) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 355, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the concurrent resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 6:30 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 3 o'clock and 27 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until approximately 6:30 p.m.

□ 1830

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. PRICE of Georgia) at 6 o'clock and 30 minutes p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on motions to suspend the rules previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

H.J. Res. 81, by the yeas and nays;

H. Res. 703, by the yeas and nays;

H. Res. 744, by the yeas and nays.

Proceedings on H. Res. 692 will be postponed until tomorrow.

The first and third electronic votes will be conducted as 15-minute votes.

The second vote in this series will be a 5-minute vote.

PROVIDING FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF PHILLIP FROST AS A CITIZEN REGENT OF THE BOARD OF REGENTS OF THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The pending business is the question of suspending the rules and passing the joint resolution, H.J. Res. 81.

The Clerk read the title of the joint resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. EHLERS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the joint resolution, H.J. Res. 81, on which the yeas and nays are ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 406, nays 0, not voting 26, as follows:

[Roll No. 82]

YEAS—406

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Aderholt
Akin
Alexander
Allen
Andrews
Baca
Bachus
Baird
Baker
Baldwin
Barrett (SC)
Barrow
Bartlett (MD)
Barton (TX)
Bass
Bean
Beauprez
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
Berry
Biggert
Bilirakis
Bishop (NY)
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blumenauer
Blunt
Boehlert
Boehner
Bonilla
Bonner
Bono
Boozman
Boren
Boswell
Boucher
Boustany
Boyd
Bradley (NH)
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Brown (OH)
Brown (SC)
Brown, Corrine
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Burgess
Burton (IN)
Butterfield
Buyer
Camp (MI)
Campbell (CA)
Cannon
Cantor
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Cardin
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carter
Case
Castle
Chabot
Chandler
Chocola
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coble
Cole (OK)
Conaway
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Cramer
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cubin
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (FL)
Davis (IL)
Davis (KY)
Davis (TN)
Davis, Jo Ann
Davis, Tom
Deal (GA)
DeFazio
DeGette
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Doolittle
Doyle
Drake
Dreier
Duncan
Edwards
Ehlers
Emanuel
Engel
English (PA)
Eshoo
Etheridge
Everett
Farr
Fattah
Feeney
Ferguson
Filner
Fitzpatrick (PA)
Flake
Foley
Forbes
Ford
Fortenberry
Foxx
Frank (MA)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Gerlach
Gibbons
Gillmor
Gingrey
Gohmert
Gonzalez
Goode
Goodlatte
Gordon
Graves
Green (WI)
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutierrez
Gutknecht
Hall
Harman
Harris
Hart
Hastings (FL)
Hastings (WA)
Hayes
Hayworth
Hefley
Hensarling
Herger
Herseth
Higgins
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Hobson
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hooley
Hostettler
Hoyer
Hulshof
Hunter
Hyde
Inglis (SC)
Inslee
Israel
Issa
Istook
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jefferson
Jindal
Johnson (CT)
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jones (NC)
Jones (OH)
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Keller
Kelly
Kennedy (MN)
Kennedy (RI)
Kildee
Kilpatrick (MI)
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kirk
Kline
Knollenberg
Kolbe
Kucinich
Kuhl (NY)
LaHood
Langevin
Lantos
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
LaTourette
Leach
Lee
Levin
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (GA)
Lewis (KY)
Linder
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lucas
Lungren, Daniel E.
Lynch
Mack
Maloney
Manzullo
Marchant
Markey
Marshall
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy
McCaul (TX)
McCollum (MN)
McCotter
McCrery
McDermott
McHenry
McHugh
McIntyre
McKeon
McKinney
McMorris
McNulty
Meehan
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Melancon
Mica
Michaud
Millender-McDonald
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller (NC)
Miller, Gary
Miller, George
Mollohan
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Moran (KS)
Moran (VA)
Murphy
Murtha
Musgrave
Myrick
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Neugebauer
Ney
Northup
Norwood
Nunes
Nussle
Oberstar
Obey
Olver
Ortiz
Osborne
Otter
Owens
Oxley
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Paul
Pearce
Pelosi
Pence
Peterson (MN)
Peterson (PA)
Petri
Pickering
Pitts
Platts
Poe
Pombo
Pomeroy
Porter
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Pryce (OH)
Putnam
Radanovich
Rahall
Ramstad
Rangel
Regula
Rehberg
Reichert
Renzi
Reyes
Reynolds
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Ros-Lehtinen
Ross
Rothman
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Ryun (KS)
Sabo
Salazar
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Saxton
Schiff
Schmidt
Schwartz (PA)
Schwarz (MI)
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Shadegg
Shaw
Shays
Sherman
Sherwood
Shimkus
Shuster
Simmons
Simpson
Skelton
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Sodrel
Solis
Spratt
Stark
Stearns
Strickland
Stupak
Sullivan
Tancredo
Tauscher
Taylor (NC)
Terry
Thomas
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Tierney
Towns
Turner
Udall (NM)
Upton
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walden (OR)
Walsh
Wamp
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watt
Waxman
Weiner
Weldon (FL)
Weldon (PA)
Weller
Westmoreland
Wexler
Whitfield
Wicker
Wilson (NM)
Wilson (SC)
Woolsey
Wu
Wynn
Young (FL)

NOT VOTING—26

Bishop (GA)
Calvert
Carson
Costello
Culberson
DeLay
Emerson
Evans
Fossella
Gilchrest
Granger
Hoekstra
Jenkins
McGovern
Payne
Sanders
Schakowsky
Slaughter
Souder
Sweeney
Tanner
Taylor (MS)
Udall (CO)
Watson
Wolf
Young (AK)

□ 1853

Mr. MOORE of Kansas changed his vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

So (two-thirds of those voting having responded in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the joint resolution was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated for:

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 82 I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

RECOGNIZING THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CHERNOBYL NUCLEAR DISASTER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The pending business is the question of suspending the rules and agreeing to the resolution, H. Res. 703.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LEACH) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 703, on which the yeas and nays are ordered.

This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 402, nays 1, not voting 29, as follows:

[Roll No. 83]

YEAS—402

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Aderholt
Akin
Alexander
Allen
Andrews
Baca
Bachus
Baird
Baker
Baldwin
Barrett (SC)
Barrow
Bartlett (MD)
Barton (TX)
Bass
Bean
Beauprez
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
Berry
Biggert
Bilirakis
Bishop (NY)
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blumenauer
Blunt
Boehlert
Boehner
Bonilla
Bonner
Bono
Boozman
Boren
Boswell
Boucher
Boustany
Boyd
Bradley (NH)
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Brown (OH)
Brown (SC)
Brown, Corrine
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Burgess
Burton (IN)
Butterfield
Camp (MI)
Campbell (CA)
Cannon
Cantor
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Cardin
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carter
Case
Castle
Chabot
Chandler
Chocola
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coble
Cole (OK)
Conaway
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Cramer
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cubin
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (FL)
Davis (IL)
Davis (KY)
Davis (TN)
Davis, Jo Ann
Davis, Tom
Deal (GA)
DeFazio
DeGette
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Doolittle
Doyle
Drake
Dreier
Duncan
Edwards
Ehlers
Emanuel
Engel
English (PA)
Eshoo
Etheridge
Everett
Farr
Fattah
Feeney
Ferguson
Filner
Fitzpatrick (PA)
Flake
Foley
Forbes
Ford
Fortenberry
Foxx
Frank (MA)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Gerlach
Gibbons
Gillmor
Gingrey
Gohmert
Gonzalez
Goode
Goodlatte
Gordon
Graves
Green (WI)
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutierrez
Gutknecht
Hall
Harman
Harris
Hart
Hastings (FL)
Hastings (WA)
Hayes
Hayworth
Hefley
Hensarling
Herger
Herseth
Higgins
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Hobson
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hooley
Hostettler
Hoyer
Hulshof
Hunter
Hyde
Inglis (SC)
Inslee
Israel
Issa
Istook
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jefferson
Jindal
Johnson (CT)
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jones (NC)
Jones (OH)
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Keller

Kelly
Kennedy (MN)
Kennedy (RI)
Kildee
Kilpatrick (MI)
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kirk
Kline
Knollenberg
Kolbe
Kucinich
Kuhl (NY)
LaHood
Langevin
Lantos
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
LaTourette
Leach
Lee
Levin
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (GA)
Lewis (KY)
Linder
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lucas
Lungren, Daniel E.
Lynch
Mack
Maloney
Manzullo
Marchant
Markey
Marshall
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy
McCaul (TX)
McCollum (MN)
McCotter
McCrery
McDermott
McHenry
McIntyre
McKeon
McKinney
McMorris
McNulty
Meehan
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Melancon
Mica
Michaud
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller (NC)
Miller, Gary
Miller, George
Mollohan
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Moran (KS)
Moran (VA)
Murphy
Murtha
Musgrave
Myrick
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Neugebauer
Ney
Northup
Norwood
Nunes
Nussle
Oberstar
Obey
Olver
Ortiz
Osborne
Otter
Owens
Oxley
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Pearce
Pelosi
Pence
Peterson (MN)
Peterson (PA)
Petri
Pickering
Pitts
Platts
Poe
Pombo
Pomeroy
Porter
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Pryce (OH)
Putnam
Radanovich
Rahall
Ramstad
Regula
Rehberg
Reichert
Renzi
Reyes
Reynolds
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Ros-Lehtinen
Ross
Rothman
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Ryun (KS)
Sabo
Salazar
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Saxton
Schiff
Schmidt
Schwartz (PA)
Schwarz (MI)
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Shadegg
Shaw
Shays
Sherman
Sherwood
Shimkus
Shuster
Simmons
Simpson
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Sodrel
Solis
Spratt
Stark
Stearns
Strickland
Stupak
Sullivan
Tancredo
Tauscher
Taylor (NC)
Terry
Thomas
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Tierney
Towns
Turner
Udall (NM)
Upton
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walden (OR)
Walsh
Wamp
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watt
Waxman
Weiner
Weldon (FL)
Weldon (PA)
Weller
Westmoreland
Wexler
Whitfield
Wicker
Wilson (NM)
Wilson (SC)
Woolsey
Wu
Wynn
Young (FL)

NAYS—1

Paul

NOT VOTING—29

Bishop (GA)
Buyer
Calvert
Carson
Costello
Culberson
DeLay
Emerson
Evans
Fossella
Gilchrest
Granger
Hoekstra
Jenkins
McGovern
McHugh
Millender-McDonald
Payne
Rangel
Sanders
Schakowsky
Souder
Sweeney
Tanner
Taylor (MS)
Udall (CO)
Watson
Wolf
Young (AK)

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). Members are advised there are 2 minutes remaining.

□ 1903

So (two-thirds of those voting having responded in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR GOOD FRIDAY AGREEMENT AND CONTINUED POLICE REFORM IN NORTHERN IRELAND

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The pending business is the question of suspending the rules and agreeing to the resolution, H. Res. 744.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LEACH) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 744, on which the yeas and nays are ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 399, nays 1, answered ''present'' 1, not voting 31, as follows:

[Roll No. 84]

YEAS—399

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Aderholt
Akin
Alexander
Allen
Andrews
Baca
Bachus
Baird
Baker
Baldwin
Barrett (SC)
Barrow
Bartlett (MD)
Barton (TX)
Bass
Bean
Beauprez
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
Berry
Biggert
Bilirakis
Bishop (NY)
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blumenauer
Blunt
Boehlert
Boehner
Bonilla
Bonner
Bono
Boozman
Boren
Boswell
Boucher
Boustany
Boyd
Bradley (NH)
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Brown (OH)
Brown (SC)
Brown, Corrine
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Burgess
Burton (IN)
Butterfield
Buyer
Camp (MI)
Campbell (CA)
Cannon
Cantor
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Cardin
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carter
Case
Castle
Chabot
Chandler
Chocola
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coble
Cole (OK)
Conaway
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Cramer
Crenshaw
Cubin
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (FL)
Davis (IL)
Davis (KY)
Davis (TN)
Davis, Jo Ann
Davis, Tom
Deal (GA)
DeFazio
DeGette
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Doolittle
Doyle
Drake
Dreier
Duncan
Edwards
Ehlers
Emanuel
Engel
English (PA)
Eshoo
Etheridge
Everett
Farr
Fattah
Feeney
Ferguson
Filner
Fitzpatrick (PA)
Flake
Foley
Forbes
Ford
Fortenberry
Foxx
Frank (MA)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Gerlach
Gibbons
Gillmor
Gingrey
Gonzalez
Goode
Goodlatte
Gordon
Graves
Green (WI)
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutierrez
Gutknecht
Hall
Harman
Harris
Hart
Hastings (FL)
Hastings (WA)
Hayes
Hayworth
Hefley
Hensarling
Herger
Herseth
Higgins
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Hobson
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hooley
Hostettler
Hoyer
Hulshof
Hyde
Inglis (SC)
Inslee
Israel
Issa
Istook
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jefferson
Jindal
Johnson (CT)
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jones (NC)
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Keller
Kelly
Kennedy (MN)
Kennedy (RI)
Kildee
Kilpatrick (MI)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kirk
Kline
Knollenberg
Kolbe
Kucinich
Kuhl (NY)
LaHood
Langevin
Lantos
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
LaTourette
Leach
Lee
Levin
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (GA)
Lewis (KY)
Linder
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lucas
Lungren, Daniel E.
Lynch
Mack
Maloney
Marchant
Markey
Marshall
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy
McCaul (TX)
McCollum (MN)
McCotter
McCrery
McDermott
McHenry
McHugh
McIntyre
McKeon
McKinney
McMorris
McNulty
Meehan
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Melancon
Mica
Michaud
Millender-McDonald
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller (NC)
Miller, Gary
Miller, George
Mollohan
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Moran (KS)
Moran (VA)
Murphy
Murtha
Musgrave
Myrick
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Neugebauer
Ney
Northup
Norwood
Nunes
Nussle
Oberstar
Obey
Olver
Ortiz
Osborne
Otter
Owens
Oxley
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Paul
Pearce
Pelosi
Pence
Peterson (MN)
Peterson (PA)
Petri
Pickering
Pitts
Platts
Poe
Pombo
Pomeroy
Porter
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Pryce (OH)
Putnam
Rahall
Ramstad
Rangel
Regula
Rehberg
Reichert
Renzi
Reyes
Reynolds
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Ros-Lehtinen
Ross
Rothman
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Ryun (KS)
Sabo
Salazar
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Saxton
Schiff
Schmidt
Schwartz (PA)
Schwarz (MI)
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Shadegg
Shaw
Shays
Sherman
Sherwood
Shimkus
Shuster
Simmons
Simpson
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Sodrel
Solis
Spratt
Stark
Stearns
Strickland
Stupak
Sullivan
Tancredo
Tauscher
Taylor (NC)
Terry
Thomas
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Tierney
Towns
Turner
Udall (NM)
Upton
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walden (OR)
Walsh
Wamp
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watt
Waxman
Weiner
Weldon (FL)
Weldon (PA)
Weller
Westmoreland
Wexler
Whitfield
Wicker
Wilson (NM)
Wilson (SC)
Woolsey
Wu
Wynn
Young (FL)

NAYS—1

Manzullo

ANSWERED ''PRESENT''—1

Gohmert

NOT VOTING—31

Bishop (GA)
Calvert
Carson
Costello
Crowley
Culberson
DeLay
Emerson
Evans
Fossella
Gilchrest
Granger
Hoekstra
Hunter
Jenkins
Jones (OH)
Kind
McGovern
Payne
Radanovich
Rush
Sanders
Schakowsky
Souder
Sweeney
Tanner
Taylor (MS)
Udall (CO)
Watson
Wolf
Young (AK)

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). Members are advised that there are 2 minutes remaining in this vote.

□ 1919

So (two-thirds of those voting having responded in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, because of a previously scheduled event which required my attendance at a high school in my congressional district this evening, I missed the three rollcall votes under suspension of the rules today. In conjunction with the Loudoun County Public Schools' Academy of Science, I had invited Dr. Robert Ballard, founder of the JASON project, to speak to students and parents at Dominion High School in Loudoun County about the importance of science education in our Nation's schools. JASON is funded through the Science-State-Justice-Commerce appropriations subcommittee which I chair. Dr. Ballard also is the explorer-in residence at the National Geographic Society and discoverer of the RMS Titanic shipwreck.

Had I been present and voting, I would have voted "yes" on H.J. Res. 81, providing for the appointment of Phillip Frost as a citizen regent of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution; H. Res. 703, recognizing the 20th anniversary of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster and supporting continued efforts to control radiation and mitigate the adverse health consequences related to the Chernobyl nuclear power plant, and H. Res. 744, expression support for the Good Friday Agreement of 1998 as the blueprint for lasting peace in Northern Ireland and support for continued police reform in Northern Ireland as a critical element in the peace process.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Ms. CARSON. Mr. Speaker, due to increased traffic resulting from the 2006 NCAA Final Four in Indianapolis, I was unavoidably detained in my home district and unable to record my vote for rollcall votes 82–84. Had I been present I would have voted "yes."

ANNOUNCEMENT OF INTENTION TO OFFER MOTION TO INSTRUCT CONFEREES ON H.R. 4297, TAX RELIEF EXTENSION RECONCILIATION ACT OF 2005

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. Speaker, under rule XXII, clause 7(c), I hereby announce my intention to offer a motion to instruct on H.R. 4297, the tax reconciliation conference report.

The form of the motion is as follows:

I move that the managers on the part of the House at the conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the Senate amendment to the bill H.R. 4297 be instructed—

(1) to agree to the provisions of section 102 (relating to credit for elective deferrals and IRA contributions), and section 108 (relating to extension and modification of research credit), of the Senate amendment,

(2) to agree to the provisions of section 106 of the Senate amendment (relating to extension and increase in minimum tax relief to individuals),

(3) to recede from the provisions of the House bill that extend the lower tax rate on dividends and capital gains that would otherwise terminate at the close of 2008, and

(4) to the maximum extent possible within the scope of conference, to insist on a conference report which will neither increase the Federal budget deficit nor increase the amount of the debt subject to the public debt limit.

ELECTION OF MEMBERS TO COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE

Mr. LATHAM. Mr. Speaker, I offer a resolution (H. Res. 754) and I ask unanimous consent for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 754

Resolved, That the following Members be and are hereby elected to the following standing committee of the House of Representatives:

Committee on Science: Mr. Neugebauer to rank after Mr. Feeney, and Mr. Mario Diaz-Balart of Florida.

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

There was no objection.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SADDAM HUSSEIN CHARGED WITH GENOCIDE

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

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, the Iraqi tribunal recently announced additional charges against Iraq's former dictator. These include genocide, crimes against humanity, and the use of chemical weapons on thousands of innocent civilians.

The new case involves Saddam's role in "Operation Anfal," which resulted in 5,000 men, women and children being murdered through a gas attack on their village.

One of the pieces of evidence to be presented at the trial is a government decree signed by Saddam in 1987 in which he ordered special artillery bombs to kill as many people as possible in the Kurdish area.

This new case clearly shows that the world is indeed a safer place without Saddam Hussein, and it shows the progress being made in Iraq as the Iraqi people are finally able to seek justice through their legal system.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, on March 30 I was detained on official business at the installation and inauguration of the Prime Minister of Jamaica as part of the congressional delegation that was authorized by the Speaker and therefore I was not present on the following rollcall votes. Rollcall vote No. 75, the rule, if present, I would have voted "no," H. Res. 742.

Rollcall vote No. 76, the Pelosi resolution, if present, I would have voted "no" on the motion to table.

Rollcall vote No. 77, on the Gohmert amendment, if present, I would have voted "yes."

Rollcall vote No. 78, the Kennedy of Rhode Island amendment, if present, I would have voted "yes."

Rollcall vote No. 79, the King of Iowa amendment, if present, I would have voted "no."

Rollcall vote No. 80, the Miller substitute, if present, I would have voted "yes."

And on final passage, rollcall vote No. 81, if present, I would have voted "no."

CONGRATULATING NCAA BASKETBALL CHAMPION FLORIDA GATORS

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

Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate my University of Florida basketball team for winning the first NCAA basketball championship for any college or university in the State of Florida. Go Gators.

Last night the Gators finished their run of winning six games in the tournament, winning by an average of 16 point per game.

The waltz was all blue and orange.

The Final Four's most outstanding player, Joakim Noah, certainly deserves the praise. He broke the title record with six blocked shots, in addition to 16 points, nine rebounds and three assists. He also owns the tournament record of 29 blocks.

Coach Billy Donovan deserves credit for building this team from scratch and teaching the players how to win and act like champions. On behalf of all of the people of Florida, I want to say, "Go Gators."

TRIBUTE TO NORMAN BORLAUG

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

Mr. LEACH. Mr. Speaker, when all is said and done, what defines our country is the people who are the American family.

In a world which today is rife with conflict, it is particularly appropriate to pause and give recognition to an individual who has dedicated his life to bringing hope and sustenance to the family of man. No one symbolizes a sense of common purpose and community more than a native son of Iowa, Norman Borlaug.

In the spring of 1941, the newly elected Vice President of the United States,

another son of the Iowa soil, Henry Wallace, attended his first Cabinet meeting and suggested that the greatest challenge of the era involved the need to develop higher yielding crops in the developing world. Franklin Roosevelt's preoccupation at the time was presumably on the war in Europe and the possibility that the United States would soon become engaged. Accordingly, he suggested that Wallace, an agronomist credited with the development of hybrid corn, contact principals of the Rockefeller Brothers Foundation in New York to see if they would be interested in advancing such a project, initially in Mexico. They were and they did. The individual they selected to lead the initiative was Norman Borlaug, who three decades later received the Nobel Peace Prize for pioneering leadership of the Green Revolution, the astonishing biogenetic advancement which saved the lives of millions on the planet.

The Congress and the American people have reason to suggest with pride that part of the American family is this gentle scientist from Cresco, Iowa. We honor him tonight and thank him for his service to humanity.

GATORS WIN IT ALL

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

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, as a proud University of Florida alumnus who bleeds orange and blue, I too want to add my congratulations to the Gator men's basketball team on winning their first national championship last night. The University of Florida is renowned and has always excelled in academics, and has been noted for their accomplishments on the football field. Now we can add basketball to the list of accomplishments.

The Gator nation continues to make its mark and make her alumni and the Gator family proud.

Mr. Speaker, I have only one additional thing to say and that is, 2 bits, 4 bits, 6 bits, a dollar, all for the Gators, stand up and holler. Go Gators.

HONORING NORMAN BORLAUG

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

Mr. KENNEDY of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise today also to honor Dr. Norman Borlaug, whose contributions have unquestionably made the world a better place.

Dr. Borlaug grew up in Iowa, but earned his Ph.D. in 1942 at the University of Minnesota in my home State. Go Gophers.

In 1944 Dr. Borlaug participated in a project to boost wheat production that began in Mexico and spread to India, Pakistan and Africa. The project sparked the Green Revolution that literally saved millions, hundreds of millions of lives.

In recognition for these efforts, Dr. Borlaug was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1970, the only person to have received the award in either the agriculture or food production fields.

On behalf of all Minnesotans I would like to congratulate Dr. Borlaug on his distinguished career and remarkable contributions, and thank my good friend, TOM LATHAM of Iowa, for his leadership on this matter.

□ 1930

THE CHERNOBYL NUCLEAR DISASTER

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

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, as the world prepares to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster, I rise in support of House Resolution 703 recognizing the 20th anniversary of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster and supporting continued efforts to control radiation and mitigate the adverse health consequences related to the Chernobyl nuclear power plant.

The scope of the devastation that followed that explosion was truly unprecedented. More than 600,000 emergency workers, liquidators, risked their lives putting out the reactor's inferno that raged for 10 days while exposing themselves to extremely high and deadly doses of radiation. Hundreds of thousands of people were forced to leave their homes because of radioactive contamination. More than 5 million people in Ukraine, Belarus, and Western Russia found themselves coping with life in towns and villages contaminated by iodine and cesium.

In the RECORD I will place a full statement regarding this resolution as well as support from the Children of Chernobyl Relief Fund and the Chernobyl Children's Project International for the incredible work that they continue to do two decades later in dealing with the devastation that still lives.

HONORING DR. NORMAN BORLAUG

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

Mr. LATHAM. Mr. Speaker, Dr. Norman Borlaug is an American superhero that few people have ever heard of.

Dr. Borlaug's campaign to save the lives of the world's neediest people through agricultural science deserves special recognition.

How many lives has he saved? Dr. Borlaug's innovative leadership in plant breeding and agricultural production is credited with saving the lives of nearly 1 billion people from starvation. That is right: one billion souls.

In 1994 he was given the task of researching high-yield and disease-resistant cereal grains. Through trial and error, Dr. Borlaug's successful efforts led to the development of varieties of wheat that completely altered production agriculture as it was known then in places like Pakistan and India and Mexico.

The dwarf wheat variety he developed allowed farmers to produce far more grain per acre than anyone could have predicted. This newfound bounty gave the world's poorest people access to food, ensuring that children, who would have been victims of malnutrition, could thrive. His landmark discoveries in agriculture led to what is called today the ''Green Revolution.''

Dr. Borlaug is a legendary figure within the agricultural community, and his name is held in high regard around the world. However, this Cresco, Iowa, native is a very modest man who once said that his accomplishments were ''a temporary success in man's war against hunger and deprivation.''

Almost 40 years since receiving the Nobel Peace Prize, he continues at age 92 to work for improvement of mankind.

For this reason I introduced H.R. 4924, which is a bill to award Dr. Norman Borlaug the Congressional Gold Medal for his lifetime of service to the world.

Dr. Borlaug's leadership has inspired so many of our best and brightest students to pursue careers in agricultural sciences. His work and the work of future innovators will live on in the lives of those who have been spared the misery of starvation.

I ask my colleagues to consider adding their names to H.R. 4924 so that we can officially recognize this great humanitarian.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM IS INCOMPLETE

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

Mr. MCHENRY. Mr. Speaker, campaign finance reform is incomplete. So many years ago this House and the Senate passed what was called BCRA, the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act, and you know what? It created a glaring loophole that led to the rise in the 527 groups where a half billion dollars flowed through these groups that are not subjected to the Federal Elections Commission laws, rules, and regulations.

So this week this House is going to take on the need for clamping down on these rogue groups that funnel campaign money in noncampaign entities. It is important for us, as leaders of this country, to have full disclosure of people that participate in politics. So I am proud that this House is going to do what is right and reform 527s and apply the Federal elections law to them. And that is what this House is going to do.

I ask my colleagues on the left, I ask my Democrat colleagues, to join with us and complete the reforms of campaign finance reform.

GATOR NATION

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

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the University of Florida's first-ever men's basketball national championship. Coach Billy Donovan and his young, explosive team beat UCLA, one of the most storied college basketball programs ever, 73–57. The Gators took the lead in the very beginning and never looked back.

Truly a testament to the power of youth, the Gators were led by four sophomores and one junior. Coach Donovan himself became the second youngest coach to win a national title. In addition, he is now one of three people to coach a national champion and play in a Final Four.

Florida is now one of only seven schools to win a national championship in football and basketball. While the University of Florida has had a reputation as a football school, this championship proves that Gator basketball has arrived.

I congratulate the University of Florida on their victory. It is great to be a Florida Gator.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CAMPBELL of California). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

PORT SECURITY

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, members of the public might be surprised to learn that we are defending United States ports against the threat of nuclear weapons for the most part with a faith-based honor system.

Here is how it works: there is something called the C-TPAT program. Now, foreign interests, so far 10,000, have indicated interest, file paperwork with the Department of Homeland Security. Now the Department of Homeland Security is a little understaffed. We have to have tax cuts for the rich people. So they do not have enough people to process these things. But once you file that form with them, you are considered to not be a threat because you filled out the paperwork. So far 5,800 have filed. About a third of them have been visited once. One site visit and then you are certified for 3 years. One site visit.

So all you do is you get all the terrorists with the AK–47s and the kafias to get off the property for a day and you say, look, good place, security plan, legitimate business, you get the stamp of approval. Now you are no longer considered a high risk in terms of what you might put in a container. What you then have to do is when you want to ship a container to the United States, you have to send the shipping invoice a day in advance before it is put on the ship. So what you do is you say this container contains 200 birdbaths, because, of course, you would not say 199 birdbaths and one small tactical nuclear weapon. You would not do that. But we do not check those containers until they get to the United States of America, and then we check a very small percentage of them here using high technology.

Now, today we have the Assistant Secretary, Mr. JACKSON, in, who told us what their future plans are. Now, remember we have this threat. Things are coming to the United States of America. We do not really know what they are, on this honor system. We have not inspected those facilities. Even if they had been inspected, they were only inspected one day every three years. They have set a goal here, and he said that their goal is 100 percent inspection of all containers as they depart a U.S. port headed into our country.

First I thought that was a misprint. I thought his staff screwed up his testimony here. No, he meant it. He is saying we know that these containers, when they come to the United States, might have a nuclear bomb inside; so their goal is that they will check all those containers with our technology within a very few years before they leave the port to an interior city. He did not really respond when I asked if that meant our ports have become sacrifice zones.

They are so uncertain of the faith-based honor system, the C–TPAT system, and what is going on overseas that they want to put in place technology at taxpayer expense, technology to check 100 percent of those containers for nuclear weapons before they go from U.S. ports to inland U.S. cities.

When I asked him if maybe we might extend that perimeter overseas and require that all containers be inspected overseas for nuclear weapons, he was saying that would be very difficult, but he actually admitted it might be possible given the technology recently modeled in Hong Kong.

But the Republican majority on the committee said no way, we are not going to allow the inspection of those containers overseas. It would slow down those Chinese goods flooding into the United States of America and other things manufactured overseas. It would hurt commerce. There would be trucks lined up for miles back into mainland China with goods on them waiting to come to Wal-Mart here.

This is fairly extraordinary to me. The Republican majority and the Republican administration are admitting that there are potential threats in these containers. They have put in place a faith-based honor system, but they are working hard to see that we will check those containers after they have arrived at an American port before they go to another American city. Those of us who live a little bit inland will be thankful for that, but I really do not agree with the philosophy that turns our ports into sacrifice zones.

No. We need to check 100 percent of these containers for threats meaningfully with high technology equipment overseas before they come to the United States of America.

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

REMEMBERING ALICIA BONURA AND ASHLEY BROWN

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time of the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES).

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, every day parents send their children to school with the faith that they will return after their classes, their sports practice, or even clubs after school. As a father of four, I know the feeling. I did the same for many years on different occasions. We as parents send our kids off, and we trust that we will see them that night for supper.

But for two Beaumont, Texas, families last Thursday morning, it did not occur that way. West Brook High School students Alicia Bonura and Ashley Brown were playing in the soccer playoffs after school that day. That morning their parents wished them good luck and sent them on their way, anticipating news of a win upon their return. When they sent their daughters to school, they had no idea of the nightmare that would unfold that afternoon. Tragically, their star soccer players never came home.

It was supposed to be an exciting day. Mr. Speaker, Beaumont, Texas, has suffered through a rough year with many families still feeling the effects of Hurricane Rita. The West Brook High School girls soccer team and their successes were good news to this storm-torn city.

□ 1945

The Bruins were coming off a 14–5–2 record, and they were traveling to

Humble, Texas, to take on the Houston Lamar Redskins in the Class 5A playoffs. The game had already been postponed once and it was raining again, but the game was set to take place at 5 p.m. in Humble. Unfortunately, the team never made it to the game.

Around 2 p.m., about 28 miles from home in Devers, Texas, the chartered bus carrying the team, the coach and one parent chaperone swerved to miss debris that had fallen off a truck in front of them. The bus rolled onto its side into a muddy ditch.

Sadly, senior Alicia Bonura and sophomore Ashley Brown lost their lives in this tragedy. Six other girls were hospitalized in serious condition. Goalie Devin Martindale lost her arm in this accident. The other five girls were Lauree Thibaut, Allison Forman, Sarah Beach, Courtney Garrod, and Sarah Babin. Two of those girls have been released from the hospital and are back home.

News of the accident quickly spread back to the town and West Brook students set up a vigil in the high school gymnasium where friends and faculty prayed and hoped for the best. Soon the students were hit with the horrendous news that two of their own had been killed in this catastrophe.

According to the Beaumont Enterprise, the girls are remembered for ''loving soccer, loving their school and loving everyone they came in touch with.''

Alicia Bonura, in addition to playing soccer, had played basketball, she ran cross-country, and was a trainer for the West Brook football team. She played the drums in the band and sometimes she sang vocals as well. She is remembered for her wonderful laugh and a smile that would light up a room. She was ranked number five in her class of 535, and she recently decided to attend Texas A&M University to study mechanical engineering.

On her MySpace Web page she wrote: ''I love to smile and love life in general and I love God. He is such a fantastic guy.'' Under people she would like to meet, she writes, ''I can't wait to meet God.'' Moving words from one of God's children.

Ashley Brown was a freckle-faced girl with long red hair. Her friends said she always made people laugh and was a free spirit and had a smile that would light up a room. Her teachers said that her fellow students gravitated to her. She was an active member in her youth ministry at her church, Calvary Baptist. Besides soccer, she loved singing, playing volleyball, skiing and playing the electric guitar.

Ashley had a bulletin board in her home covered in photos and memorabilia. In the middle of the board there was a handwritten note stating the following: ''You can't choose how you are going to die, but you can choose how you are going to live.''

Mr. Speaker, in her 16 years on Earth, Ashley Brown lived life to the fullest, and she is going to be missed.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this moment to extend prayers and condolences to Alicia's and Ashley's parents, relatives, friends, and the community of Beaumont, Texas, the students and teachers and the coaches at West Brook High School and the Bruins girls soccer team. We hope that they find happiness in their fond memories of these special girls.

Alicia and Ashley truly led remarkable lives. They clearly touched so many people in their short time on Earth. Heaven is certainly brighter with Alicia and Ashley there, and the community of Beaumont Texas should take comfort. They now have two extra guardian angels looking down on them.

Mr. Speaker, that's just the way it is.

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

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

COSTS OF GUN VIOLENCE

Mrs. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, I ask permission to take the time of the gentleman from New Jersey.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentlewoman is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

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

Mrs. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, every week I stand here and talk about commonsense approaches to reducing gun violence in this country. And yet this body sees fit to chip away at existing gun laws. So tonight I want to talk about the effects of gun violence in terms that everybody in this body can understand, dollars and cents.

Throughout America, our States are experiencing extraordinary budget problems, forcing them to cut spending on many important initiatives. A great deal of these budget woes are caused by skyrocketing health care costs, and the continued cuts to Medicaid aren't going to help the situation.

Of course, Congress will not allow funding for the Centers for Disease Control to study the true economic cost of gun violence, so we have to use data from independent sources.

Independent sources have shown gun violence costs our economy over $100 billion every year. In fact, each gun death costs our economy $2.8 million. Gun violence increases law enforcement spending. Gun violence costs the economy billions in lost productivity. And while Congress won't let us learn the exact amount, gun violence costs our health care system more than $2 billion every single year.

Since gun violence plagues so many low-income communities, victims are often uninsured. And who picks up the tab for uninsured victims of gun violence? American taxpayers, that's who. So even if you don't think about gun violence as an important issue, you are paying for it.

It is obvious something must be done, and it is also obvious that this body has no plans to intervene in this public health crisis. So it is up to our local communities and neighborhoods.

Across the country people are fed up, but they are trying to make a difference in their own area. I have been to many events that have had politicians, school officials, law enforcement officers and others telling young people about the dangers of guns. But not once has anybody turned the microphone around and asked the kids what do they think.

So many young people live on the front lines of the gun violence epidemic. The rhetoric on both sides of this issue must stop, and we must start to learn to listen.

This isn't about the second amendment; this isn't about kids dying. Many of the people who disagree with my views on the gun issue will say, Guns don't kill people; people do.

But what that doesn't mean is we can't take steps to make sure guns don't fall into the hands of the wrong people. This isn't about taking away guns from law-abiding citizens who hunt or shoot skeet, nor is it about depriving law-abiding citizens from defending themselves and their families. In fact, we can save so many lives without affecting a single lawful gun owner in this country.

This is about keeping guns away from felons and gang members. This is about making sure our police departments have the tools they need to track down illegal guns. This isn't about running honest gun dealers out of business. It is about cracking down on the 1 percent of corrupt gun dealers who sell 57 percent of the guns used in crimes.

Gun rights advocates have as much stake in this as anybody else. Many see gun violence as an inner-city problem. But let's not forget that gang violence and drug crime also started out as an inner-city problem. We acted too late, and now gangs and drugs are commonplace in suburbs and rural communities.

So as we head home for the spring recess, I ask my colleagues to do something we don't do very often or very well: listen. It is time to listen to the people being affected by gun violence. Listen to our young people in underserved communities. Listen to our police departments who are losing officers to illegal guns every week. And listen to the families who have lost loved ones due to gun violence.

The answers to this epidemic of gun violence do not reside in this Chamber or on K Street, but in the hearts and minds of the people that we represent. It is time that they are heard.

The vast majority of legal gun owners understand the need to stop gun violence. We must all work together, regardless of our interpretation of the second amendment, or whether we live in an urban, suburban, or rural area.

Let us make a commitment to replace our rhetoric with action. Let us make our communities a better and safer place for all young people of all backgrounds.

Together, we can stop this public health care crisis and save lives. I came to Congress to save lives. I will not give up on this fight. We can reduce gun violence in this country. We just have to find common ground on how we are going to do that.

COMMENDING AND HONORING THE UNITED STATES CAPITOL POLICE

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

Mr. MCHENRY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and commend the men and women of the Capitol Hill Police Force. I think it is important at this time that Members of Congress step forward to say thank you: thank you for your service, thank you for your sacrifice, thank you for putting so much emphasis on training, and thank you for putting the emphasis on keeping this Capitol building and all the Members and staff and visitors who come here on a frequent basis to be safe, to be secure.

I think it is important, with so much attention right now on the Capitol Police Force, that all Members of Congress, Republican and Democrat, unite to say that we support you; we think you are doing an honorable and good job.

Mr. Speaker, the statistics show that there are over 1,500 Capitol Police officers, men and women of diverse backgrounds from all over the country, and some from around the world. They come here to save lives, to protect lives.

There are over 3 million visitors that come to this historic place that we call our Nation's Capital, both Washington, D.C. and this Capitol building and this complex where we work, where some of us live.

But I want to tell you, Mr. Speaker, that with so much attention on the Capitol Police, it is necessary that we look at what they do on a daily basis.

It is not always easy, Mr. Speaker, to deal with the public, to see them on a daily basis; for visitors to come in, tourists, staff, Members of Congress; to see them on a daily basis. People aren't always courteous.

But what I found out about the Capitol Police officers, these men and women, is that they always will greet you with a smiling face, even when they are having a bad day; that their training is shown through by the way that they have acted over the years that they have been in service here on Capitol Hill.

As Members of Congress, we must say thank you: thank you for your sacrifice, thank you for your commitment, thank you for your dedication to our country, because after all, they are here to protect and save lives; and as Members of Congress, we should respect them for their dedication and their training; and we must honor them each and every day that we are here, because they are our colleagues as well here in the Capitol complex.

Mr. Speaker, I rise, as I said, to commend and honor the Capitol Police. It is the right thing to do. I think my colleagues should join with me in supporting the resolution that Congressman MARIO DIAZ-BALART and I filed just this evening to honor them for their work and their service.

So I urge my colleagues to join with me on this resolution; and I urge you, Mr. Speaker, to schedule a vote for us, so that we can honor these men and women who work with us each and every day.

Thank you to the Capitol Police officers.

THE HOUSE THAT JACK BUILT

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

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, we live in quite interesting times. Where else could you invest about $1 billion and get $100 billion in return? A Republican Congress, but of course.

As the New York Times recently pointed out, the people's House has turned into the House that Jack built. Here is what the Times says in an op-ed:

These are the men
That fleeced the tribes
That paid the money
That made the bribes
That purchased the Congress
That Jack built.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to read the rest of this poem, written and published last Friday, because it nails right on the head this is the House that Jack built.

Let's look at the $1.2 billion that Jack Abramoff bought. Let's look at the house he built. The energy industry, oil and gas interests, they spent about $87 million. What did they get? $14.5 billion in tax breaks, given and paid for by the United States taxpayers; given access to $65 billion in oil and gas from the Gulf of Mexico, costing the taxpayers $7 billion in royalties they should be paying back to the Treasury that they did not get; given $2 billion to the ultra-deepwater drilling fund. They were given that money, all for $87 million in contributions and expenses paid on lobbying. $14 billion in tax breaks, $7 billion in lost revenue for royalties in the Gulf of Mexico, $2 billion in tax subsidies there to the ultra-deepwater drilling fund.

You can't get a return on your investment like that on Wall Street. Where can you get a return like that? The Republican Congress, of course. But that is not limited. In fact, that is prevalent.

Let's take the health care industry. They spent about $173 million on lobbying and campaign contributions. Yet the pharmaceutical interests, $139 billion in additional profits over 8 years. The prescription drug bill here, which was supposed to cost $394 billion, ended up costing close to $790 billion to the American people.

□ 2000

Private insurers will make $130 billion in extra profits in Medicare overpayments, HMOs given a $10 billion slush fund, all for $173 million in lobbying expenses and contributions mainly to the Republican Party.

Take business interests, spent $500 million on lobbying. We had a corporate tax bill to fix a $5 billion disagreement with Europe. By the time it was done, it cost $150 billion, not $5 billion, and it never fixed the problem. $150 billion in corporate giveaways to special interests on the corporate tax bill, $139 billion in additional profits for the pharmaceutical interests, $130 billion in additional profits to the HMOs, and in lost revenue to oil and gas companies close to about $22 billion while oil and gas interests are trading and oil is trading at $66 a barrel, all in The House That Jack Built.

This is the operative philosophy of the Republican Congress. They have turned the Capitol upside down to figure out how much change they can take over from the American people and pass it off to the special interests.

When the gavel for the Speaker comes down, it is intended to open the people's House, not the auction house. For the last 6 years that gavel has been turned over to the auction house, whether it is the oil and gas interests, whether it is private insurers, whether it is the HMO industry, whether it is in fact the pharmaceutical industry, or whether it came to the corporate tax bill.

Oil is approaching about $70 a barrel, now nearly $3 at the pump. Gas home heating costs, up 38 percent. Health care costs are up 58 percent for the average family, $3,600 in the last 4 years. College costs and tuition, up 38 percent for the American people, yet median incomes are down 2.3 percent, and yet what does this Congress continue to do? It continues to turn itself into an auction house for the special interests. When college costs were up 38 percent, the Republican Congress cut student loans by $13 billion. Yet, we have continued to pass on over the last 4 years $3 trillion in additional debt that was borrowed, more than all the predecessors of the last 42 Presidents combined.

One thing you can say about the Republican Congress and President Bush when it comes to the economy: We will be forever in your debt, because that is all you have left is a sea of red ink, and

you have turned the American people and the treasures that this country has over to the special interests when it did not need to be this way.

Mr. Speaker, the special interests may have bought the Capitol, but the American people are paying for it. Jack is gone, but others are leaving. This place will remain The House That Jack Built until we get serious and undertake real lobby and ethics reform and return to the work of the American people. They are struggling under the interests of higher energy costs, higher health care costs, higher educational costs. They have not had a raise in over 5 years, and the politics as usual, business as usual continues with the policies and making sure that the special interests get heard first.

This House is the time and this election will be about returning the people's House back to the American people and ensuring that that gavel does not open up the auction house but the people's House.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 513, 527 REFORM ACT OF 2005

Mr. DREIER, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 109–404) on the resolution (H. Res. 755) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 513) to amend the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 to clarify when organizations described in section 527 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 must register as political committees, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

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

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

OCALA NATIONAL FOREST

Mr. KELLER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time of the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON).

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. KELLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to the proposed sale of 300,000 acres of national forest lands, which includes almost 1,000 acres of the Ocala National Forest in my congressional district.

The administration's 2007 budget proposes this sale. Their rationale for selling our national forest lands is to raise $800 million for rural roads and schools; and they say these parcels are not crown jewels of our national forests. Well, a picture is worth a thousand words, so let me show you a photograph of a specific piece of land in the Ocala National Forest which is marked for sale by the administration. This looks like a crown jewel to me. Does anyone really believe that this piece of land would look better as a shopping center, strip mall, or as a condominium development?

While our budget shortfall is temporary, ruining pristine national lands is permanent. We cannot sell national forest land every time there is a budget shortfall. This is a dangerous precedent for Congress to set. Our financial problems need to be addressed over the long terms, not through the shortsighted sale of national forest treasures to the highest bidder.

Mr. Speaker, our national forest lands are worth protecting. Millions of Americans each year use our national forests to go hiking, fishing, hunting, camping, swimming, horseback riding, and canoeing. The Ocala National Forest also provides a habitat for thousands of animal species such as rare birds and black bears.

Mr. Speaker, to sum it all up, I believe the idea of selling off our national forest lands is environmentally reckless and financially shortsighted, and I am not alone. On March 7, I submitted a Florida delegation letter to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. It was signed by both of our U.S. Senators, Republican Senator Mel Martinez and Democrat Senator BILL NELSON. It was also signed by an overwhelming bipartisan majority of our U.S. House Members. This letter specifically opposes the sale of 1,000 acres of the Ocala National Forest, and, in general, also opposes the sale of 300,000 acres of forest lands all across the country in 41 different States.

On March 13, all four of the living former Chiefs of the U.S. Forest Service sent a letter to Congress also strongly opposing the auctioning off of 300,000 acres of national forest lands. On March 28, I submitted a bipartisan letter with Congressman BEN CHANDLER, the Democrat from Kentucky, to the House Budget Committee, signed by 54 Congressmen opposing the sale of 300,000 acres of national forest lands.

Well, where do we go from here? The U.S. Department of Agriculture will continue to receive comments on this proposed sale until May 1. It is our hope and request that the administration withdraw this proposal.

Fortunately, the House budget which we will be voting on this week does not contain any language endorsing the administration's proposal to sell these forest lands. If the administration does not withdraw their proposal, I am confident and optimistic that this House will vote down this proposal with a very large bipartisan vote. Our children and grandchildren deserve no less.

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

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

MEDICARE PRESCRIPTION DRUG PROGRAM

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time of the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to address the confusing new Medicare Prescription Drug Program, in light of yesterday's visit to my Ohio congressional district by Bush administration Health and Human Services Director Michael Leavitt. Yesterday, Monday, April 3, Secretary Leavitt arrived hours late in a blue bus after people had waited and waited in very cold weather. He spent only a few minutes, shook the hands of a couple of staff people, and spoke briefly with only two hand-picked seniors, and, by the way, spoke to them in front of the news cameras, before making his prepared remarks to the press.

To the one senior that had a chance to ask the Secretary a question, explaining that they could not afford their medicines, he towed the administration line saying, ''This is a good program that helps a lot of people.''

When asked by one senior about the program not covering his wife's medication needs, incredibly, the Secretary answered in the same way, and this was to the one person, ''This is a good program that helps a lot of people.''

Now, the Secretary had his picture taken. It was on the front page of our newspaper, but of the 79 people in the room, he shook hands with only two, spoke to only one and left. I guess he is doing this all over the country.

The Secretary says, yeah, this program has had a few bumps in the road. It is a new program but we fixed them. No, Mr. Secretary, you have not fixed them and they are more than bumps in the road. The one thing that is guaranteed is that the pharmaceutical companies are making billions.

Here are a couple of comments that have come from consumers and seniors in my district. A husband and wife team says they take five prescriptions each. Under their old plan they had a 20 percent co-pay, but by this summer they will have reached the $2,250 cap. And the new drug plan is a farce and an insult to seniors of this country because now they are going to have to pay the amounts beyond that and they ask, ''Is there anyone that cares or is listening in Washington?''

Another husband wrote, ''It is costing my wife and me more per month for

the new Medicare coverage premium. The only way we have any coverage is to purchase an insurance policy from a private insurance company. On top of that there are the ridiculous amounts that Medicare has set that won't cover any meds until we reach some huge amount in the thousands of dollars. My wife informed me today she is going off her psychiatric medicine. We used to receive patient assistance directly from the drug manufacturers through a clinic and we can no longer receive the drug samples or any patient assistance. We cannot afford to purchase our meds, Congresswoman. Isn't it wonderful how the Bush government has helped us?''

Another senior writes they find that their medical costs increase at every turn in the road. They currently pay nearly $6,000 annually for prescriptions of which insurance pays $600. ''For the first four months of the year,'' this senior says, ''I have to pay $5 for generic drugs, $18 for preferred drugs, with a cap of $35 for the brand name drugs. But under this new plan that will increase to $10, $25 and $50. And believe it or not, of the eight prescription drugs I need, only two are on the preferred list for $25 each and the rest will each cost $50 each. Congresswoman, please do your part in righting this wrong.''

Health professionals have been writing to us. Another senior wrote us, ''When I went to the pharmacy to pick up my prescription I brought $20 with me because that is what I always paid. I couldn't believe it when the pharmacist said I had to pay $260. I had to leave the pharmacy without medicine. It was embarrassing. How am I going to afford $260 a month? I just don't have it. I guess the people who are for this plan want us to die.''

Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight not just to outline problems with the program, because they are significant, but also to place in the RECORD what we can do to fix it. First of all, to let the government negotiate the prices that seniors have to pay with these pharmaceutical companies. They can't stand up to these big companies. We need to extend the deadline this year so that they can try to get qualified for the program, but there is so much confusion out there. Why should there be a May deadline? We ought to cushion that.

We ought to standardize plans like we did for Medicare part B so there is only 10 standard plans and people know what is in them. We ought to ban the gifts that these pharmaceutical companies are giving to people as lures in order to try to sign them up for these inadequate programs.

We ought to disclose coverage gaps. Companies which do not offer gap coverage should be required to make that fact known in writing.

We ought to disclose plan changes. It should be stated clearly that a company might drop a drug from coverage. We ought to create uniform ID numbers, simplify the application, expand extra help eligibility, and require broad formularies.

There are many other ways to fix this program, Mr. Speaker, but we surely should not put that burden on our seniors.

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

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

21ST CENTURY ECONOMY

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take my special order in the place of the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. KENNEDY).

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, every day Americans are living the 21st century economy. We use BlackBerries and cell phones to stay in touch and stay in business. We order birthday presents online. We buy German cars made by American workers in South Carolina. We use Google to find restaurant recommendations. We treat previously debilitating illnesses with innovative pharmaceutical products, non-invasive surgery techniques and cutting-edge medical devices.

Nearly every aspect of our daily lives is impacted by our high-tech, innovation-driven, globally engaged economy. It has so thoroughly revolutionized our lives that it almost seems absurd to point out that the modern economy is vastly different than the economy of the 1930s and 1940s. And yet our methods for measuring this economy remain much the same as they did during the Great Depression and the era that followed.

Gross domestic product is still calculated by tallying industrial investments like heavy machinery and taking an old-economy view of exports and imports. Mr. Speaker, under this system new factory equipment counts as a long-term investment, but R&D does not. And an iPOD which became a global powerhouse band on the strength of its superior design and savvy marketing strategies, developed by Apple in my State of California, is simply counted as another good imported from China, where the final product is assembled. Clearly, these products do not fully account for the essential role that knowledge and innovation play in our global economic leadership role.

Our economic strength here in the United States is no longer based solely on the goods we produce but on the ideas that we as innovative, creative Americans create. We add value and increase productivity, not by manufacturing more widgets, but by improving the widgets' design, by making the global distribution of widgets more efficient, by marketing, financing and servicing widgets.

□ 2015

The full value of innovation, knowledge and best practices can be difficult to ascertain, but they have replaced mere goods as the bedrock of our Nation's economy.

Michael Mandel at Business Week demonstrates how Wal-Mart is an excellent example of this. Few companies have revolutionized their industries the way that Wal-Mart has revolutionized the retail world. Its operational and managerial innovations have made it a global leader that its competitors fail to emulate at their peril: the big-box format; the everyday low prices; the electronic data interchange with suppliers; the highly sophisticated data analysis, done to such detail that inventory managers know to order extra strawberry Pop-tarts when the weather gets bad, because the data crunchers have discovered that customers stock up on them just before a storm.

Mr. Speaker, these innovations and best practices, developed by Wal-Mart and copied by its competitors, have led to enormous productivity gains throughout the retail industry and our economy at large.

A study conducted by the McKinsey Global Institute in 2002 found that 25 percent of the major jump in productivity that came during the second half of the 1990s was due to gains in the retail sector, of which Wal-Mart is clearly a major contributor.

According to the study: ''More than half of the productivity acceleration in the retailing of general merchandise can be explained by only two syllables: Wal-Mart.'' By innovating its operational structure, Mr. Speaker, Wal-Mart became one of the single greatest contributors to American productivity at the height of the tech stock bubble.

This is an instructive and remarkable fact, that a single company made a major contribution to the productivity of the world's largest economy, not by building new factories or buying new equipment, but by developing new ideas and applying them so successfully that they transformed their company and their entire sector.

And yet, as Mandel points out, these operational innovations, less tangible than a widget but far more valuable, do not get counted in our gross domestic product calculation. They are not tallied as an investment, nor are they counted as an export when Wal-Mart buys stores overseas and applies their innovations and best practices abroad to other countries.

Recent GDP numbers have certainly demonstrated tremendous economic strength, with 17 straight quarters of growth, 3.5 percent of GDP growth last year, and projections of nearly 5 percent growth for the first quarter this year. Mr. Speaker, when knowledge-

economy intangibles are included, the positive economic outlook becomes all the brighter for us as a Nation.

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

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

CAMPAIGN REFORM LEGISLATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD. Mr. Speaker, I come tonight because I am concerned over this Republican Congress that is now speaking about having further campaign reform legislation put before us tomorrow, and I rise tonight to clarify the myths and to speak the truth about the reforms that we have done, the reforms that are not needed, and the reforms that this Republican House is about to undertake.

You would think, Mr. Speaker, that the scandals that are permeating the Congress would be a wake-up call for the majority not to continue their business as usual in terms of running the people's House. Yet, they have introduced H.R. 4975 as a feeble answer to their ethics problems.

Unfortunately, the bill that is going to come before us, called a reform campaign bill, will not only be a bogus bill, but it includes language that restricts the first amendment rights of Americans.

Instead, the majority reveals their ongoing and reckless infatuation by thwarting the constitutional freedom of speech and association rights of concerned citizen groups. Now, we know these groups were under the BCRA law that are called 527s, and these groups, Mr. Speaker, were groups that had never really had a voice in the political process.

In this last election, they came out and they were a very strong force in providing an increasing voter participation, giving voice to the voiceless and becoming more involved in this democracy of ours.

When I hear the Republicans talk about gaping loopholes that they must close, how do you close gaping loopholes when we have a chart that speaks about total U.S. voter turnout? This is not gaping loopholes, for heaven's sake. This is democracy.

In 1990, we had a 105.1 million voter turnout. In the 2000 election year, we had a 110.8 million turnout. In 2004, we had a record-breaking 125.7 million people become involved in this political process. So why are we now trying to pass legislation that merely muffles the mouths and the voices of those who want to take part in this democracy?

When the majority of Democrats and a handful of Republicans voted for this Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act of 2002, we sought to sever the connections between Federal office holders and the raising of non-Federal money, which is so-called soft money. BCRA, which is the campaign bill, was necessary, Mr. Speaker, to cut the perceived corrupting link between office holders, the formation and adoption of Federal policies, and soft money; and yet the majority is bringing us a bill that is so broad in its application that it stands to severely hamper voter registration and get-out-the-vote activities for civic-minded, nonpartisan organizations. It casts such a wide net that it will ensnare groups whose activities Congress should be promoting, not impeding. This is America. We should be promoting democracy, not impeding it.

By failing to distinguish between groups whose activities are designed to influence the election of clearly identified Federal candidates and those whose sole purpose it is to enhance participation, this legislation imposes too high of a price on election activities.

Now we have heard that the 527s do not have to report. So wrong, Mr. Speaker.

The Internal Revenue Service suggests that during an election year the political organizations have the option of filing on either a quarterly or a monthly schedule, and these organizations must continue on this same filing schedule for the entire calendar year. So it is absurd for them to say that these organizations do not have disclosure and do not file. In the last 6 years, Congress has increased the regulations of independent political committees organized under the section of 527s of the Internal Revenue Code.

Mr. Speaker, we must not allow this legislation to pass this floor. We must continue to allow the American people to have a voice in this democracy. We must continue to have American voices heard.

When the majority of Democrats and a handful of Republicans voted for the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act of 2002, they sought to sever the connection between Federal officeholders and the raising of non-federal money, so called "soft money." BCRA was necessary to cut the perceived corrupting link between officer holders, the formation and adoption of federal policies, and soft money.

The majority's legislation is so broad in its application that it stands to severely hamper voter registration and get-out-the-vote activities of civic minded non-partisan organizations. It casts such a wide net that it will ensnare groups whose activities Congress should be promoting, not impeding. By failing to distinguish between groups whose activities are designed to influence the election of clearly identified Federal candidates and those whose sole purpose is to enhance participation, this legislation imposes too high a price on election activity.

My particular concern is that the fundamental rights and needs of all Americans, including the voices of women, the elderly, and the poor, not be left out of the political dialog merely because of the perceived notion that a few millionaires are funding all 527's. Americans are playing an ever-increasing role in holding public officials accountable for their actions through 1st Amendment protections, public policy debate, and the shaping of American democracy.

The proponents of this bill like to argue that by passing this bill, it will be impossible for wealthy individuals to "unfairly" impact elections. Wrong again. Ending 527's will not end the ability of wealthy donors and wealthy corporations to impact elections. They still have a multitude of ways to do so by donating to trade associations like 501(c)(6)'s, many of which have less stringent, not more stringent, reporting requirements than 527's. The majority seems incredibly troubled by the independent voices of concerned citizens, but there is nothing in the law that could stop any individual from financing TV ads on her own. Nevertheless, the real truth is that many 527's are predominantly financed by small donor contributions from individuals who are concerned about holding their elected leaders accountable for failing to address the very issues important to them.

The majority's priorities are misplaced. Without our assistance, few victims of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita will be able to vote in the upcoming elections, wounded war veterans still struggle to obtain adequate health care, and gas prices continue to soar skyward.

The majority should not be in the business of legislating for partisan gain at the expense of the American people.

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

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

IMMIGRATION REFORM

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to assume the time of the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LATHAM).

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, people sometimes resort to scurrilous personal abuse or childish sarcasm when their case is weak. Let me repeat: people sometimes resort to scurrilous personal abuse or childish sarcasm when their case is weak.

For instance, on foreign policy, you know instantly when someone uses the word "isolationist," they are resorting to name calling, rather than a serious discussion on the merits or the lack thereof.

On the issue of immigration, the scurrilous, personal abuse is when people imply or say that someone is a racist or a bigot if they want our immigration laws enforced.

The childish sarcasm is when a columnist or someone else says we would have to line up 200,000 buses to remove 12 million immigrants.

No one thinks you can enforce all our immigration laws overnight or instantly solve this problem, but just because we cannot solve this problem all at once does not mean we should just give up and open up our borders.

Our government estimated several years ago that half the people of the world would come here very quickly if allowed to do so. Our schools, hospitals, roads, jails, sewers, our entire infrastructure simply could not handle such a rapid, massive influx of people.

A couple of years ago, Newsweek magazine said half the people of the world have to get by on $2 or less a day. Consistent with this was a column I read a few months later that said half the people in the world do not even have a second pair of shoes.

We are blessed beyond belief to live in this country. We all have great sympathy for those who have to live under difficult circumstances in other countries.

God has blessed every nation with natural beauty and/or natural sources that can make those countries rich. However, in most countries, people have fallen for the myth that government could solve all problems, and they have voted in liberal or left-wing governments or they have had dictators who forced big governments on them, and the economies have been ruined.

You cannot blame so many people for wanting to come here, and we all admire the work ethic of many who come here from other countries; but we cannot take in half the people of the world, especially in a short time. We have to have a legal, orderly system of immigration, and it has to be enforced.

Rush Limbaugh said a few months ago that if you do not have borders, you do not have a country.

Thomas Sowell, writing about this a few days ago, said, ''We could solve the problem of all illegal activity anywhere by legalizing it. Why use this approach only with immigration? Why should any of us pay a speeding ticket if immigration scofflaws are legalized after the fact for committing a Federal crime?

''Most of the arguments for not enforcing our immigration laws are exercises in frivolous rhetoric and slippery sophistry, rather than serious arguments that will stand up under scrutiny.''

Mr. Sowell continues, ''How often have we heard that illegal immigrants 'take jobs that Americans will not do'? What is missing in this argument is what is crucial in any economic argument: price.

''Americans will not take many jobs at their current pay levels, and those pay levels will not rise so long as poverty-stricken immigrants are willing to take those jobs.''

And he went on in this column to say, ''The old inevitability ploy is often trotted out in immigration debates: it is not possible to either keep out illegal immigrants or to expel the ones already here.

''If you mean stopping every single illegal immigrant from getting in or expelling every single illegal immigrant who is already here, that may well be true.''

Mr. Sowell said, ''But does the fact that we cannot prevent every single murder cause us to stop enforcing the laws against murder?''

Mr. Speaker, with the Simpson-Mazzoli Act 20 years ago, we tried the same type of law that some who want to be soft on immigration are advocating today, but that law led to a quadrupling of illegal immigrants. We simply cannot afford to let that happen again.

President Theodore Roosevelt said many years ago, in fact in 1919, ''In the first place we should insist that if the immigrant who comes here in good faith becomes an American and assimilates himself to us, he shall be treated on an exact equality with everyone else, for it is an outrage to discriminate against any such man because of creed, or birthplace, or origin.''

□ 2030

But this is predicated upon the man's becoming in very fact an American and nothing but an American.

And Theodore Roosevelt continued. He said, ''There can be no divided allegiance here. Any man who says he is an American but something else also isn't an American at all. We have room for but one flag, the American flag, and this excludes the red flag, which symbolizes all wars against liberty and civilization, just as much as it excludes any foreign flag of a nation to which we are hostile.''

And Theodore Roosevelt concluded this statement by saying, ''We have room for but one language here, and that is the English language. And we have room but for one sole loyalty, and that is the loyalty to the American people.''

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I would say that if people want the rights, privileges, and opportunities of American citizens, they should wave the American flag. If they want to be Mexicans and wave the Mexican flag, and there is nothing wrong with that, but they should go home to Mexico to do that.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SOLIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. SOLIS addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

LEGISLATION TO FIX THE MEDICARE MODERNIZATION ACT

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take the time of the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SOLIS).

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

There was no objection.

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. Mr. Speaker, I join my colleague and friend, Representative MARCY KAPTUR, in talking about the trip to Ohio this week of Michael Leavitt, who oversees Medicare and Medicaid and our Nation's various health agencies as America's Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services.

Michael Leavitt is a decent man, but he is manning a ship weighed down by wrongheaded laws and misplaced priorities. Take the so-called Medicare Modernization Act, the legislation written by the drug industry, written by the HMOs in this Congress, pushed through Congress in the middle of the night by literally one vote. The Federal Government, through that bill, the Federal Government is hand-feeding the prescription drug and HMO industries literally hundreds of billions of dollars of our tax dollars to manufacture or to make up and to build a new private insurance market for seniors' drug coverage, and not to provide the coverage directly through Medicare the way people choose their doctor in Medicare, the way people choose their hospital. This is done through 30, 40, or 50 different private insurance companies instead of being done the way that history shows works best.

Why? Because the drug and insurance industry want it that way. This new drug law, this new Medicare law, as I said, written by the drug industry and written by the HMOs, with seniors barely given a second thought, prohibits the Medicare program from negotiating bulk discounts on prescription drugs. And according to the Congressional Budget Office, it overpays insurers, the HMOs, by tens of billions of dollars. So much for fiscal responsibility.

The new drug law also undercuts the core Medicare program. If you want Medicare to wither on the vine, as former Speaker Gingrich said, wall it off and force seniors into the private market, force them out of Medicare, put them into the private market to give them additional benefits. It is ingenious. It is also underhanded and it is fiscal suicide.

Do my Republican colleagues really believe that when the private insurance market controls Medicare that they will give the government and they will give seniors a good deal on coverage? Do they really believe the drug industry will voluntarily charge lower prices for prescription drugs?

The new Medicare drug law isn't about seniors, it isn't about modernization, it isn't about fiscal responsibility. It is about a Republican-run Congress that is a little too cozy with the drug industry and the HMOs.

I am a cosponsor of legislation that would begin to fix this bill. It would enable seniors and disabled Medicare enrollees to bypass the private insurance market, to say, no, I don't want to compare 30 or 40 different insurance plans and 30 or 40 different insurance company brochures, and talk to 30 or 40 different insurance agents. I want to bypass the private insurance market, check a box, and simply add a prescription drug benefit to my Medicare. I get to choose my doctor as a Medicare beneficiary, I get to choose the hospital, I ought to be able to choose my drug formulary.

It would also authorize Medicare to negotiate bulk discounts on prescription drugs. That is the way the Veterans' Administration does it. That is the way most countries in the world do it. That is why drug prices are a third or a fourth or a fifth in every other country in the world, much, much lower prices than there are in the United States.

In other words, this legislation, this new law as we propose the changes, would give seniors and taxpayers a break. Perhaps Secretary Leavitt will make use of his Ohio trip to announce the administration's support for these bills. Perhaps.

May 15 is the cutoff for Medicare beneficiaries to enroll in the new prescription drug program. If they enroll after that date, believe it or not, they have to pay a penalty for late enrollment. Let's think about that. My Republican colleagues in Congress and the Bush administration have finally acknowledged that the drug program got off to a rocky start and is very confusing to seniors. Seniors have sat on the phone for up to 2 hours waiting for someone from the Medicare hotline to help with enrollment questions.

I talked to seniors in Vandalia, Ohio, in Cincinnati, in Norton, and in London, Ohio. All of them say this Medicare drug benefit is way too confusing. Not just prospective enrollees are confused, but State agencies, local service agencies, Federal bureaucrats, even the insurers who offer the new coverage. Finding the right answer to an enrollment question is almost as difficult as choosing which of the 30 or 40 plans to enroll in.

And when seniors did enroll in a plan, there were paperwork problems, there were systems problems, there were transition problems, there were formulary problems, and there were problems in the drugstores where one pharmacist at least, one pharmacy in London, Ohio, had to close because of the additional cost imposed on these small businesses by this bureaucracy created by a Congress that listened to the drug industry and the HMOs more than it listened to drugstores, to pharmacists or to seniors.

The various failings of this drug program made the news virtually every day for 4 months. Maybe Secretary Leavitt will make use of his trip to Ohio to announce the Republican leadership is listening, they have changed their minds, and they want to see a better law. Maybe.

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

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

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed a Joint Resolution and a Concurrent Resolution of the following titles in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S.J. Res. 28. Joint resolution approving the location of the commemorative work in the District of Columbia honoring former President Dwight D. Eisenhower.

S. Con. Res. 60. Concurrent resolution designating the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum in Kansas City, Missouri, as America's National Negro Leagues Baseball Museum.

BLUE DOG COALITION

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

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, this evening, as every Tuesday evening, the members of the 37-Member strong fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition come to the floor of the United States House of Representatives, here at our Nation's Capitol, to address the debt, the deficit, and tonight also the budget.

And for those of you who have walked the halls of Congress, it is easy to spot when you are walking by a Member's office that is a member of the fiscally conservative Blue Dog Coalition because you will see one of these posters, one of these posters that displays the current national debt. And every American citizen shares the National debt.

As you can see, at the moment, the U.S. national debt is $8,378,143,406,405 and some change. And for every man, woman, and child in America, including those being born this hour, your share of the national debt is $28,000.

We raise these issues for a number of reasons, Mr. Speaker. It is hard now to remember, but from 1998 to 2001, our Nation enjoyed a balanced budget. We had a surplus. We could meet many of America's priorities. But today, for the sixth year in a row, we have the largest budget deficit ever in our Nation's history. Our Nation is borrowing a billion dollars a day. We are sending $279 million a day to Iraq, $57 million a day to Afghanistan, a billion a day we are borrowing, and on top of that we are spending half a billion dollars a day simply paying interest, not principal but just interest on the debt that we already have.

As members of the Blue Dog Coalition, we believe it is time to get our Nation's fiscal house in order. Now, the Republicans in this year's budget they will present this week on the floor of the United States House of Representatives indicates that their priorities do not reflect our priorities or our values. We are going to spend a lot of the time this evening talking about that.

They will say, well, we are trying to balance the budget, which they do not do. They will say that, well, we are cutting this program or that program to try and reduce the deficit. But what they do not tell you is that their budget includes $1.7 trillion over the next 10 years in tax cuts that primarily benefit those earning over $400,000 a year.

So when they talk about cutting programs, they will tell you that they are trying to cut programs to reduce these numbers. Not so. Because you don't cut taxes for folks earning over $400,000 a year at a time when you are in a nation that is borrowing a billion dollars a day; at a time when you are in a nation that is spending half a billion a day simply paying interest on the debt you already have.

So it is about priorities. And the Republican priorities in this year's budget include cuts to the Dale Bumpers Small Farms Research Center in my Congressional District. In fact, there are 25 or 26 agricultural research centers all over America that are being cut. They create good paying jobs in these rural communities that invest in the kind of agricultural research that our farm families so desperately need.

The development of the Dale Bumpers Small Farms Research Center began back in 1977 with their initial work starting in 1980. It is a partnership among three agencies, Agricultural Research Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service.

Their mission, the mission at the Agricultural Research Service unit at the Dale Bumpers Small Farms Research Center, is to develop scientific principles and technologies to enhance the profitability and sustainability of small-scale farms, because they are threatened by a lack of profitability. Yet in this year's budget, in this year's budget that the President submitted to this Congress and that this Republican Congress may very well pass this week, it includes zeroing out, eliminating 25 or 26 of these agricultural research centers all across America.

Again, this budget is about priorities, and this budget that we are going to vote on this week does not reflect my priorities or my values. It certainly does not represent the kind of conservative small-town values that I was raised on, where I was raised to value our farm families who simply try to do their best to provide us with a safe and reliable source for food and fiber.

We can get into a debate about how we have become too dependent on foreign oil. If we are not too careful, we

are going to become too dependent on other countries for our food and fiber. And I submit to you, Mr. Speaker, that that is a dangerous road to go down, and one in which America has no business going down.

This is just one example of many of what is wrong with this budget. There are ways to balance the budget, and we are going to talk tonight about an alternative that I believe makes sense, that reinstates a thing called PAYGO. Pay as you go rules mean if you want to fund a new program, you have to cut something else. If you want to pass a tax cut, you have to cut a program. You just don't go borrow more money from China to fund it. It also balances the budget within, I believe, 10 years.

Yes, in 10 years we would have a balanced budget again, and that is an alternative that will be presented on the floor this week that many of us will be supporting.

We will be talking a lot tonight about the debt, the budget, and the deficit and these things, and I am very honored to be joined tonight by a number of my Blue Dog friends, and DENNIS CARDOZA is the co-chair of the Blue Dog Coalition. He is the co-chair for communications. He is a Member of Congress from California. A lot of people, when they think of fiscally conservative Democrats, they think we are just in the South, but we are spread from California to Long Island. This is a national movement. This is a national movement of 37 fiscally conservatives Democrats that believe it is time to restore some common sense and fiscal discipline to our Nation's government.

So, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to turn this thing over to one of the leaders of our group, DENNIS CARDOZA from California.

Mr. CARDOZA. Well, I want to thank the gentleman from Arkansas both for relinquishing of some time and also for the leadership that he has shown by hosting this hour for the Blue Dog Democrats each Tuesday night this year.

Before I get started in my prepared remarks, I wanted to just acknowledge something that came to mind. The previous presiding officer, the gentleman that was acting as Speaker a few moments ago, is my former colleague from the legislature in California, a wonderful man, JOHN CAMPBELL. And it struck me that when we were in the legislature together in California, every year we had to balance the budget. We could not leave Sacramento, we had to stay in session until we had a balanced budget. It is so unfortunate that here in Washington, as we have both graduated up the ladder, that we don't have that same kind of fiscal accountability and the same responsibility.

And sitting here with my colleague, JIM COSTA, who used to be one of the leaders in the California State Senate, we took it very seriously. In fact, it was mandated in law that every year, and I believe almost every State in the country has to do that, but here in Washington, in our Nation's Capital, we cannot find the fiscal responsibility to balance our Nation's budget and get our fiscal house in order.

□ 2045

The Blue Dog Coalition has made repeated calls for responsible budget reforms that will put our country back on this path of fiscal responsibility and fiscal sanity that I have discussed.

As moderates and as fiscal hawks, we have tried to reach across the aisle to engage in real debate on fiscal responsibility. For years now, our appeals for commonsense, bipartisan reforms have been brushed aside by both the White House and this Republican leadership.

Instead, this Republican Congress and the White House have pursued policies that have resulted in exploding deficits and over $8 trillion in debt. Rather than taking this fiscal mess seriously and putting forward a plan to change course, we are being fed more of the same in this year's budget. The Republican budget resolution is a rehashed version of misguided policies that have gotten us into this mess in the first place. It is said that the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and over yet expecting different results. That is exactly how I feel about the Republican leadership's fiscal policies. No matter how deep they dig this fiscal hole, they want to keep shoveling, they want to keep digging; and we have to make it stop.

The administration has requested and Congress has provided for four increases in the debt ceiling since 2001. This budget resolution does not fix the broken budget; it actually makes it worse. The Budget Committee passed a budget resolution that includes a deficit of $372 billion for the fiscal year 2006 and a deficit of $348 for 2007. This means that under this Congress and this White House, Republicans totally, we will have seen the five biggest budget deficits in American history in 5 consecutive years. Under this budget, the statutory debt by 2011 will go up another $2.3 trillion, leaving the statutory debt at a record level of $11.3 trillion. Ladies and gentlemen, this is unacceptable.

The Blue Dog Coalition has put forth a comprehensive 12-step plan that is designed to cure our Nation's addiction to deficit spending. Our proposal will include commonsense measures such as reinstating the pay-as-you-go rules such as what you use to balance your own budget at home. Every American understands that they need to balance their own checkbook; so does America. These pay-as-you-go rules are the first step.

In the 1990s with PAYGO rules on the books, we saw deficits disappear. We had record surpluses and rapid economic growth. In 2001, the Republican-controlled Congress abandoned PAYGO, and we have been awash in red ink ever since. It is time for Congress to bring back PAYGO and bring back some fiscal sanity for our country.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. ROSS for having us here tonight and thank him for his leadership.

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the co-chair, Mr. CARDOZA, and for communications within the 37-Member strong, fiscally conservative Blue Dog Coalition for his insightful information and knowledge about the process and what we are trying to accomplish. We have Members here from Georgia and Illinois and Oklahoma and from all over the Nation that have come to speak the truth, to hold this Republican Congress accountable and demand some commonsense and fiscal discipline be restored to our Nation's government.

We are going to hear from people other than California, but it just so happens our first two presenters are both from California. The other is a gentleman who has not been here long, but has been quite effective within our coalition and a real leader within our coalition, and that is the gentleman from California (Mr. COSTA).

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise to add my voice to my fellow Blue Dog Coalition members who are here this evening to have a dose of fiscal sanity, to allow the American people to understand that there is indeed a another choice. Therefore, tonight we hope to give an accurate picture on the budget process that we are about to embark on this week and the lack of fiscal integrity that this budget process unfortunately has, because it lacks a bipartisan effort to provide the sort of financial support that the American public demands.

I too want to commend Mr. ROSS and Mr. CARDOZA for allowing me to join with them in this effort. I think that Blue Dogs who are fiscally conservative really reflect the mainstream of what America is all about.

The fact of the matter is that this budget resolution that we will debate this week has in its very basic underpinnings a lack of fiscal integrity. Let me talk about a dirty little secret contained in this budget resolution that all Members ought to be aware of. The secret is the offloading of our Federal financial problems onto our States as a strategy to reduce our Nation's budget deficit.

The hypocrisy is clear, through the preemption of State laws, and in spite of a little-used Federal law that prevents unfunded mandates on States, Congress has arrogantly chosen to do just that, and that is to offload on our States.

Do the States have the ability to fill that gap? Well, the National Council of State Legislatures has identified the minimum gap in Federal funding to States caused by unfunded mandates in 2004 fiscal year as being approximately $25.6 billion. In the fiscal year 2005, the amount rose to $26.2 billion.

Evidence by the National Council of State Legislatures shows that this gap

will continue over the next decade and could grow as high as $50 billion annually, and we offload our financial responsibilities to States and let them be on their own.

The evidence is clear. It does not take into account inflation and other changes in discretionary spending over the next decade.

I ask my colleagues to recall recent history. In the 1980s and in the 1990s, President Reagan, a former State Governor, understood the necessity of a bipartisan effort to protect the States. President Clinton, another State Governor, codified that recognition of States by signing the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act in which the Congress pledged to no longer continue this practice of passing laws and then telling the States it is your job to figure out how to pay for it.

But this White House, also currently occupied by another former State Governor and many of my colleagues who serve in Congress, over half who come from State legislatures, I believe, have forgotten where they come from.

Do you think we are solving problems when we are just passing them on to our States? I will continue to question the sincerity of those who lead this budget effort to actually achieve responsible fiscal management. The most recent example of that reluctance to embrace sound fiscal management principles was demonstrated last week in the Budget Committee's rejection of an amendment that would reinstitute pay-as-you-go, which my colleagues, Mr. ROSS and Mr. CARDOZA, have spoken to. Pay-as-you-go is a concept that all of our households employ, which means in your family's budget, you do not spend money that you do not have.

As Members may recall, PAYGO was agreed to in the 1990s by then-Speaker Newt Gingrich and signed into law by President Clinton. In the mid-1990s, that led to the first budget surpluses we had in over 40 years. Ladies and gentlemen, let me remind you, over the last 5 years, we have gone from surpluses to massive deficits.

I remember as a young kid watching television on ''Dragnet.'' Remember Sergeant Friday? He used to say ''Just the facts, ma'am.'' These are the facts, and I think Americans are coming to realize these facts do not hold up to the principles of sound fiscal management. We can do better. We should do better. Americans deserve it.

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. COSTA for joining us this evening to discuss these issues that are so important to not only today's generation but to our children and grandchildren.

This week on the floor of the House there is going to be a very close vote. Most votes on the House floor last somewhere between 5 and 15 minutes. Every once in a while we have a vote that goes for an hour or 2 hours, sometimes even 3 hours, while enough arms are twisted to be able to get enough votes for a vote to pass.

I have always said the Prescott Curly Wolves, they have some pretty good years in football. And when there is no time left on the clock, if we are not ahead, if we could just not sound the buzzer until we are ahead, we would be the State champions every year. That is, unfortunately, how many votes run on this House floor. When they are close votes, votes are no longer 5 or 15 minutes; they last until the Republican leadership prevails; and then the horn, the bell, the gavel is sounded. That will likely happen late Thursday night or early Friday morning during the vote on this budget because this budget does not reflect America's priorities, and they are going to have a very difficult time passing it.

In fact, I predict it will be on a strict party-line vote, and they will lose some votes. It is unbelievable the fiscal turnaround from a budget surplus in fiscal year 2001 to the five largest deficits in history, and they have occurred in the last 5 consecutive years with the 2006 deficit being $372 billion. And the projected deficit for fiscal year 2007 is $348 billion; but not really. That is counting the money that the politicians are borrowing from the Social Security trust fund.

If you do not count the money that is being borrowed from the Social Security trust fund, the deficit last year was really $605 billion and for fiscal year 2007, it is $448 billion. I am beginning to understand why the Republican leadership refused to give me a hearing or a vote on the first vote I filed as a Member of Congress, a bill to tell the politicians in Washington to keep their hands off the Social Security trust fund.

When this administration took office, it inherited a projected 10-year surplus of $5.6 trillion. This surplus has become a $3.3 trillion deficit, an embarrassing reversal of $8.9 trillion.

Since 2001, there have been four increases in the debt ceiling to a staggering total of $3 trillion. This Republican-proposed budget increases the statutory debt ceiling by another $2.3 trillion, almost doubling the debt ceiling in 5 years to $11.3 trillion. And if that is not enough, with regards to the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, this budget only includes $50 billion, less than half of what was appropriated for 2006, and goes so far as to actually assume we will be out of Iraq and Afghanistan after 2007. This is not a truthful budget. The budget includes no funding, absolutely no funding for the war efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan beyond 2007.

This Republican Congress is telling us in this budget that the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan will be over by the end of fiscal year 2007. We know better. This is not a truthful budget.

The budget resolution calls for $39 billion in 2007 and $228 billion in new tax cuts over the next 5 years; $39 billion in tax cuts in 2007, $228 billion in new tax cuts over the next 5 years, and $1.7 trillion in new tax cuts over the next 10 years that primarily benefit only those earning over $400,000 a year. And in times of deficit, in times when we are borrowing a billion a day, what does that mean? That means we are borrowing money from places like China. This administration has borrowed more money from foreigners in the past 5 years than the previous 42 Presidents combined. Let me repeat that: this administration has borrowed more money from foreign central banks and foreign investors in the past 5 years than the previous 42 Presidents combined; and yet we are now going to borrow more money from China and Hong Kong and, God forbid, OPEC nations, to give a tax cut to those earning over $400,000 a year.

Over 5 years, the Republican-proposed resolution cuts nondefense discretionary spending by $162 billion, below the amount simply needed to maintain services at current levels.

Our next speaker will talk more about these funding cuts, these cuts that not only cut programs that matter to people but undercut our values, that undercut America's priorities.

□ 2100

And to talk more about this is the gentleman from Oklahoma, who has quickly become a real leader and a real voice within the fiscally conservative Blue Dog Coalition, my friend, DAN BOREN.

Mr. BOREN. Thank you, Congressman ROSS. Mr. Speaker, you know it is not very often that I come to this floor to speak on an issue. As a freshman Member, sometimes we don't come down and talk about issues on this floor. But I think it is very important tonight that we talk about this budget because budgets are a statement of our priorities.

I am going to talk tonight a little bit about rural America. I also want to talk a little bit about our Nation's veterans.

For those of you all who have never been to Oklahoma, I am going to tell you a little bit about my district. My district is in eastern Oklahoma. I represent 25 counties of a very rural part of the United States. The largest community in my district is Muskogee, Oklahoma, population 38,000 people, where my wife, Andrea, and I reside.

There are towns like Broken Bow and Idabel and Miami and Sallisaw, Wapanucka, Bromide, Bluejacket, some of the best people in the world. And let me tell you, this budget does not help my folks back home. I think it is very important that we reduce the national debt and we balance our budget, but we can't do it on the backs of rural America.

Once again, this year the President's budget slashes rural development programs. It freezes funding for rural education and phases out our rural health care grants.

In my district, it abolishes the COPS grant program which is responsible for putting over 200 officers on the street in eastern Oklahoma. We have a real meth problem in eastern Oklahoma.

We have a terrible meth problem. We had a lot of meth labs that were popping up and actually we are doing a lot about that. But we need more cops on the street. This budget cuts 200 police officers.

My good friend, my colleague from Arkansas, Mr. ROSS, mentioned cuts in our ag research centers. Folks, 2 weeks ago I was in Lane, Oklahoma. There is a research center, the Wes Watkins Lane Ag Research Center, employs a lot of folks in my district, has a $3 million impact on the local economy. We are talking about salaries, 70, $80,000 salaries. These are big salaries in my district. In the President's budget that facility is set to close. And I know I am going to be working with my colleague from Arkansas to help stop that.

Here is another couple of statistics. It cuts assistance to rural manufacturers and small businesses by nearly 60 percent. In the State of Oklahoma we lost over 80,000 manufacturing jobs over the past 2 years. And we are talking about taking those investments away from small businesses. We need help in rural Oklahoma.

It also cuts rural health care by 83 percent, and not just in rural America, not just in rural Oklahoma. It also affects all of our veterans. I have got a big Veterans Hospital in my district in Muskogee, Oklahoma. And I get a chance to visit with our veterans all the time. And they talk to me about the TRICARE program.

One example in this budget is an increase in co-pays and enrollment fees for military retirees in the TRICARE program. So this country is saying to you, you go, you enlist in the service, you spend 20 years supporting the flag, going overseas, fighting for our freedoms, and we are going to cut your benefits. That is a wrong priority, and we won't stand for it.

Another thing we have got to think about when we are talking about cutting these programs like TRICARE. Folks, we are facing a recruitment problem right now. We are trying to get more and more young people to join the military. How can we tell those young people to join the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines, how can we tell them to join when we are going to cut their benefits? There is a direct correlation to what we are doing in this budget to our Nation's Armed Forces.

And I stand as a Blue Dog, someone that believes in fiscal accountability. But, at the same time, we have got to make sure that we defend those priorities. And I stand with my colleague from Arkansas. I know we are going to have a few other speakers here in a minute. And with that I am going to yield back to my colleague from Arkansas. And I thank him for allowing me to be a part of this program.

As I mentioned before, I came down as part of the 30-something and gave a few talks, and I rarely come down. But this budget got me so upset, thinking about the people back home in Oklahoma, that I wanted to come to this floor and talk about these priorities. And with that I yield back to my friend, Congressman ROSS.

Mr. ROSS. I thank the gentleman from Oklahoma for being a part of this special order on the budget, the debt and the deficit. And I appreciate the work he is doing with me to try and save all these agricultural research centers from closure that are so important, not only to rural America and to the communities where they are located like Booneville, Arkansas, but also so important to our farm families, all over this great country.

Mr. Speaker, if you have any comments, questions for the Blue Dog Coalition, there are 37 of us. We are a group of fiscally conservative Democrats that come together here on Capitol Hill to try and restore some common sense and fiscal discipline to our Nation's government. And Mr. Speaker, if you have any comments or concerns of our group, I would encourage you to e-mail us at bluedog@mail.house.gov. That is bluedog@mail.house.gov.

At this time I am pleased to turn this over to MELISSA BEAN, Congresswoman from Illinois, a member of the Blue Dog Coalition, who many Tuesday evenings comes down and joins us for this, what I believe is a very healthy debate and healthy discussion about how we need to get our Nation's fiscal house in order and restore some of the conservative values that many of us were raised on and still believe in. And with that I yield.

And we are also joined tonight by, as we are almost every Tuesday night, and I am so proud of that, DAVID SCOTT, Congressman from Georgia, a real leader, a real voice for common sense and conservative values within the fiscally conservative Blue Dog Coalition. And I welcome both of you. And we can have a colloquy or do whatever y'all want to do. I will yield right now to the gentlewoman from Illinois.

Ms. BEAN. I am honored to join my colleagues in the Blue Dog Coalition and, again, want to commend your leadership, Congressman ROSS, of our Blue Dog Coalition, because fiscal responsibility has to be our top priority in this Congress.

So many of us came to this body to address issues of importance and priority to the families in the districts that we represent. And yet, if we don't, first and foremost, act responsibly with the national tax dollars that we have, we can't properly address those regional priorities that we would like to.

I was here on the floor with you just several weeks ago, and I mentioned that I had been with some seventh graders in my district. One of the fun parts of our job is when we can go have civics classes with the kids. And they were pretty mortified just a few weeks ago when I shared with them that their share of our national debt, each individual one of them, was $27,000. And I am sad to see from your last chart, you have now moved it, it is already up to $28,000. So we went from $8.2 trillion to $8.3 trillion in just a couple of weeks. And it is frightening how rampant this irresponsible spending has been and how out of control our Congress has been.

And it is sad that when I spoke to these seventh graders about their family budgets or their parents who worked in the business communities, how did they avoid getting themselves into debt, that those seventh graders could better articulate fiscal common sense by saying, don't spend what you don't have, than this Congress has been able to demonstrate.

And I also serve on a caucus that addresses financial literacy for young people in this country. And it is so hypocritical that we want to talk to these kids about how to better manage their money when we are not doing a good job with our Nation's resources.

Mr. ROSS. The gentlewoman is so right, and I appreciate her sharing her experiences.

I was at Pine Bluff High School on Monday, speaking to a couple of classes, history classes, and that is one of the things we talked about was the debt, the deficit and what it means to their generation, because, you know, it is what I call the debt tax. It is one tax that, debt as in D-E-B-T, not to be confused with the death tax. It is what in the Blue Dog Coalition we have coined as the debt tax, because as long as we have got a debt, as long as we are spending a half a billion a day paying interest on the debt, then that is a half a billion we don't have to meet America's priorities. And that debt tax has got to be paid back by future generations, our children and grandchildren, because I can assure you all these foreign investors and foreign central banks that are now funding our deficit, they are not going to forgive our debt the way that oftentimes in the past we have forgiven others debts.

And I yield to the gentleman from Georgia. Glad to have you with us this evening, Mr. SCOTT.

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Always a pleasure to be with you, Mr. ROSS, and with you, Ms. BEAN. It is always a pleasure.

You were talking about the young kids, and you have got to think about those young kids. You have got to think about the generations coming behind us. Some of those are watching C–SPAN tonight as we speak, and hopefully all across America they are beginning to pay attention to what is happening here on the floor of this Congress.

And as I stand here, I am reminded of what happened on the floor of a Congress and a Senate a few centuries back and is captured really greatly in a play by the great William Shakespeare. William Shakespeare wrote a brilliant play called Julius Caesar. And in that play, a very important part was as Caesar was on the floor as the senators were surrounding him and knives going

into him, he looked out at all of the senators and saw them, Cicero and Cassius, and then he leaned over and he looked over caught the eye of Brutus and grabbed him as Brutus stuck the knife into his ribs. And he said ''Et tu, Brutus. Yours is the meanest cut of all.''

Well, I am here to tell you and tell America, Mr. Speaker, Mr. ROSS, Ms. BEAN, that the meanest cut of all in this budget is the cut to those law enforcement folks, those people that are on the front lines at home, who have our security in their hands, our police officers, our firemen, our first responders and the military, our veterans, our Air Force, our Navy, our Marines, who are being cut unmercifully, Brutus-like, in this budget.

I just want to highlight for the American people so they can actually see and hear how this budget is devastating those that we place our security in their hands. Just think that this budget includes a cut in the funding of first responders by 25 percent at a time when we are in such great need.

Police Departments nationwide do not have the protective gear to safely secure a site after a detonation of a weapon of mass destruction in this country. Fire Departments have only enough radios for half the firefighters on a shift.

And yet, this budget, this Republican budget that they are asking us to vote on in the next day or two, includes a cut in first responder funding within the Department of Homeland Security of $573 million, 25 percent. And within this total, the budget slashes the Firefighters Grant Program by $355 million and eliminates all funding for the law enforcement terrorism prevention, reduction of $385 million.

When we look at our veterans, we are treating them so badly under this budget. It increases the health care costs for one million veterans.

America, we need to pay attention to what this Republican budget is doing. For the fourth year in a row, the budget raises health care costs for 1 million veterans by imposing new fees on veterans, costing them more than $2.6 billion over 5 years and driving at least 200 veterans out of the system.

It doubles the copayment for prescription drugs from $8 to $15, America, and imposes an enrollment fee of $250 a year for Category 7 and 8 veterans who make as little as $26,000 a year.

This is the truth. This is what they are asking us to vote on. And I pray and I hope that we will have enough Republicans to stand with us Democrats and reject this as not in the best interest of the American people.

It fails to address the strain on our troops. Now, Mr. ROSS, I have been over to Iraq, just came back in January; went over to Afghanistan. I have been in the hot spots. I have seen our military, and they are doing a fantastic job in extraordinary circumstances. We are talking about 19- and 20- and 21-year-old kids out there handling extraordinary pressures.

□ 2115

And I will tell you an experience that I had that I will never forget. When I was in Iraq, I went into Camp Victory, standing in the middle of Camp Victory, and I met and was hugged by a soldier. And both of us in the middle of Camp Victory hugging, tears coming down my eyes and down his, and he says to me, ''Congressman SCOTT, when I am hugging you, it's like I am hugging a piece of home.''

I vowed in Iraq on that spot that night, having dinner with those soldiers in Iraq, that I would fight tooth and nail on this floor to treat our veterans and to treat our military right.

And, Mr. ROSS, as I told it to you, what is in this budget, it refuses to end the disabled veterans tax. This Republican budget fails to repeal the veterans tax, which forces disabled military retirees to give up $1 of their pension for every dollar of disability pay they receive. Added to that it fails to end the military family tax, the survivor benefit plan, penalizes survivors, mostly widows, of those soldiers who are killed as a result of combat. That is what this budget does. That is why I say that the meanest cut in this budget is to our military, to our veterans, to our law enforcement people who put their lives on the line for little or no pay. And the only reason to do it is to offset this tax cut for the 1 percent wealthiest people in this country and then have to go borrow the money to pay for that at the sacrifice of our first responders.

This is why I am praying with every ounce of strength in me that this body will stand up to this Republican budget and vote it down because it is not in the best interests of our Nation's security, our national security, or our homeland security.

Mr. ROSS. I thank the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. SCOTT) for his input and would encourage him to stay for what I hope will be a meaningful discussion with the time remaining this evening as we talk about the budget and the debt and deficit. And I want to thank the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. BEAN) for staying with us as well.

Some of this has been mentioned tonight; some has not. But let us just take a look at some of the cuts that will be included in the budget this week. Education, the Republican budget resolution that will be voted on on the floor of this Chamber this week is identical to the administration's proposed budget cuts to education, training, and social services, including $2.2 billion in cuts to the Department of Education.

Let us begin by putting this thing in perspective. We spend more money paying interest on the national debt in 100 days than we spend funding education in 365 days. What does that say about our commitment to our children?

Ms. BEAN. To future generations.

Mr. ROSS. To future generations. And yet they propose to cut $2.2 billion from the Department of Education. The President's budget fully eliminates, fully eliminates, 41 Department of Education programs.

I had folks in my office this week, today, from my district. They are involved in the HIPPI program, programs that are helping young people get ready for kindergarten. They reach those young people at ages 3, 4, and 5. And they also go into the homes and teach the parents how to teach the children. It is a wonderful program.

And I had a meeting yesterday in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, with the chancellor at the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, which is an historically black college, Chancellor Lawrence Davis, and he was telling me that we have a crisis in America with African American males because 60 percent of African American males who do not finish high school end up in prison. And his concern and my concern is that America does not seem to be nearly as alarmed about it as they should be. The way we address this is by investing in education. If we will get to these young people at age 3, 4, and 5, we can spend pennies on the dollar compared to what we are spending warehousing them in their adult life in prison. It is about priorities.

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. ROSS. I yield to the gentleman from Georgia.

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Excellent point. And there is no greater emergency in this country than addressing the plight of African American males. No group in this country has paid the price, has made the contributions, has gone through the struggles, and has faced the vicissitudes of racism as the African American community. Structure, discipline, sanctioned by law. And yet if there was just one tenth of the effort to correct that imbalance, but on every score, you go down the line, and you mentioned them, education, the college grant. They say No Child Left Behind. An excellent idea but underfunded by 3 or $400 billion, not putting the money in. Black college Presidents have come up to this Congress hat in hand, begging, pleading for money for scholarships, and have not gotten a response.

In this budget itself, do you know that the fastest growing part of this budget is the interest we are paying? And the interest we are paying is more than all that we are spending totally on primary education, secondary education, college education, everything education, as well as the environment and veterans. This is dastardly wrong.

Mr. ROSS. The gentleman is so right. And I was sitting there in a meeting in my office today listening to a group pleading with me to vote against this budget, which I am, pleading with me to vote against this budget because it cuts programs that give 3- and 4-year-olds a fighting chance to be ready when they enter kindergarten that can help us be able to give them a chance at success in life.

We live in a free country. We get to choose what we eat and where we worship and whom we marry. Some people do that several times. And one of the few things in life we do not get to choose is who our parents are. Some children, both black and white, get really lucky. Some do not. And I think as a Nation we have a duty and obligation to be there for all young people. And if we can get to these young people at age 3 and 4 and get them ready for kindergarten, then we can have an impact on their lives and turn them into a productive citizen instead of spending $20,000 a year paying for them to sit idly and wastefully behind bars.

Yet these programs, these preschool programs, are being cut in this budget. And one of the women that was in my office today talking to me about it, she said, I was one of those in one of these programs. They came to my home and they taught me how to teach my child, and I started teaching my child, and my child started making the honor roll. And this woman today, she is from my district, she said, Mike, I want you to know I am now going back to college to become a school teacher. She went and got her high school degree. She is now going to college to become a school teacher because of one of these programs that not only has had an impact on her daughter's life but has now had an impact on her life. Yet these programs are either cut or eliminated in this year's budget.

Ms. BEAN. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. ROSS. I yield to the gentlewoman from Illinois.

Ms. BEAN. So much of what we have been talking about, whether it is education, whether it is the environment, it is all about future generations and our commitment to them.

And to go back to the seventh graders that I mentioned that I spoke with, they are all studying the Constitution right now. Some of them probably in your districts as well as mine are taking their Constitution tests. I was so impressed with their knowledge and their youthful idealism as we talked about the Constitution and what it meant to them.

And we had an open discussion, and we took the preamble of the Constitution apart, and we talked about what does it mean in order to form a more perfect union. And they understood that that meant that we have a commitment to make our country better. We talked about providing for the common defense. And they understood that that meant not just national defense but also protecting Americans from natural disaster like we have experienced in the gulf region and then, sadly, just this week from the tornadoes. They talked about establish justice and what did justice mean. And they understood that that meant there should be basic fairness in our laws.

But the part that really resonated with the kids was when we talked about that as we preserve these liberties and these American values, we do them for ourselves and our posterity. And they understood that that meant we as adults should be making decisions not only for them as well as ourselves but for their children. And so they are very concerned that we are not making the right decisions. So they expressed a lot of those issues. And to go back to the fiscal responsibility theme that we have been talking about tonight, they were able to understand the analogy of what we have been doing with this debt, and driving ourselves into debt essentially would be if I got a credit card and went out on a spending spree, but I put the credit card in my daughters' names and said to them, When you are 18 and you get a job, you get to pay it off. And that is what we are doing to these kids, and that is not justice. That is not making good decisions for our posterity. We can do a better job than we have been doing for them.

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. The American people are expecting us to.

I just share with you my own experience. Every weekend I get home, by the time I get off the airplane, I get in my tee-shirt and my jeans and I get out and walk door to door in my district, about 50 percent of which is new out in Cobb and Douglas Counties. And there is a certain experience that you get when you go knock on doors and you talk to your constituents and they say, Oh, the Congressman is here. And, Mr. ROSS, let me tell you America is worried. The people in America are worried about the direction of this country.

At one stop a lady comes out and she says, Yes, put a yard sign in, and I give her a tee-shirt. And she says, Congressman SCOTT, what are we going to do about our education? I am not just talking about the money, but I am talking about the fact that my kid is sitting in a hallway because there is no room, there is no classroom. And in many of our counties across this country, they are meeting in trailers because we have not put the money in the budget in order to deal with it.

Now, I got the latest figures because I think it is very important that the American people know why we must vote down this budget come tomorrow or Thursday. The budget provides $15.4 million less, a cut in funding for education, than promised by the No Child Left Behind. No Child Left Behind. No Child Left Behind, but we are leaving them behind and not only leaving them behind but we are leaving them on the floor, in the hallways to study, overcrowded classrooms, teachers without adequate pay to do all the paperwork and not paying them for it. They are meeting in fire stations. They are meeting down the road in an old church basement. They are meeting in trailers. Damp, unsafe, unsanitary trailers. This is what this budget is doing to our American children.

Under this Republican budget, the cumulative funding shortfall for No Child Left Behind is $55 billion. This Republican budget, as we talked about before about the need, especially in some of our hard cases, this Republican budget completely eliminates several important education programs, including vocational education State grants, educational technology State grants. We are talking about those institutions that are actually taking our youngsters and training them with jobs that are being cut. Americans are worried about that.

Veterans are worried. Down the street another one says he is standing in line, not being able to get his treatment at a VA hospital. We are calling and he says if it was not for this congressional office calling, what would happen? But there are literally thousands of Americans out there, veterans, who are facing these dilemmas every single day. And they are upset about these unwise, foolish, mean, and unnecessary cuts to vital programs not because we cannot afford it, not because we are not wise to do it, but we are doing it just to offset costs for a tax cut for the wealthiest 1 percent in this country.

□ 2130

Even them, even Bill Gates and others at that level, are saying, ''We don't need it.'' But our veterans need it. Our teachers need it. Our children who are in these trailers, they need it.

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I know I feel confident that the Republican leadership will send down a group to follow us. They do that every Tuesday evening. I am honored that they feel a need to do that. I think our message is getting through about trying to restore fiscal discipline and common sense to our Nation's government.

They are going to talk about how we didn't vote for this so-called Deficit Reduction Act. What they are not going to tell you was it was $40 billion to cuts in Medicaid, student loans and the orphan program, and also it was followed by $90 billion in tax cuts for those earning over $400,000 a year.

I wasn't real good in math back in high school or college, but $90 billion in new tax cuts and $40 billion in cuts to the poorest among us equals what, $50 billion of new debt. Only in Washington would they call that the Deficit Reduction Act. That was the name of it.

Then they are going to say this budget we are opposing is making the hard choices and the hard cuts and eliminating important programs in the name of trying to restore some fiscal discipline and balance the budget. What they fail to tell you is it is really about priorities, because their budget includes $1.7 trillion in new tax cuts over 10 years.

Look, I voted for the biggest tax cut in 20 years back in 2001, and a lot of my Democratic colleagues are still mad at me about it. We had a surplus, it was before 9/11, before Iraq and before Afghanistan. We really were giving people some of their money back.

Yet now, every time since then that we have passed a tax cut, because we

no longer have a surplus, we have a deficit, every tax cut we have passed since that time has been funded with money that we are borrowing from places like China.

In 2000, we had borrowed a total of $62 billion from China. From 1976 up until 2000 we owed $62 billion to China, and at the end of 2005 we owed $257 billion to China. Japan, $668.3 billion. Our government, we are borrowing $1 billion a day and spending half a billion a day paying interest on the debt we have already got. That is half a billion that can't go to fund our agricultural research centers or build I–49 or I–69 or many other opportunities and priorities and needs we have in Arkansas' Fourth Congressional District, because our Nation is in debt and running record deficits and borrowing money from all these foreign investors and foreign central banks.

Put it this way: Foreign lenders currently hold a total $2.174 trillion of our public debt. Compare that to only $23 billion in foreign holdings back in 1993.

Here is the top 10 list. Here is who is funding your tax cuts. Here is who is funding our government. We have borrowed $668.3 billion from Japan; we owe now $262.6 billion, and it goes up every week, to China; the United Kingdom, $244.8 billion, Caribbean banking centers, have you ever heard of that? I never heard of a Caribbean banking center before, but we have borrowed $97.9 billion from them; Taiwan, $71.6 billion; OPEC, you wonder why gas is $2.50 a gallon? We have now borrowed $77.6 billion from OPEC; Korea, $68.3 billion; Germany, $65.2 billion; Canada, $54.9 billion; and Hong Kong, $48.3 billion. Those are the top 10 countries that we are borrowing money from to help fund tax cuts in our country to pay for tax cuts for those earning over $400,000 a year.

I yield to the gentleman from Georgia.

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. And here is the danger. Here is the danger when you put your financial security in the hands of foreign nations at the rate that we are doing it. Now we have to worry that some of these nations could very well sell their U.S. dollars in their reserves and then they could switch their currency into other nations. They could do a lot of things when they have our debt.

What happens if they lose patience here? By having so much of our debt in the hands of foreign interests, we place our whole financial security in great peril.

China now has $250 billion of our debt, Japan has $687 billion of our debt, Taiwan has $117 billion of our debt and Hong Kong has $67 billion of our debt. I mention these because these are countries in the Asian Basin. If collectively they came together, for surely geography puts their direct interests more at stake than it does us over here in the Western Hemisphere, if they came together with a pact and just made a decision on what to do with our debt or whether they are going to sell U.S. dollars or reinvest in other countries or do things that will drive down our financial security, look at the bad position that places us in. And when you combine that with the fact that India and China have taken over our manufacturing capabilities, it shows the seriousness of the situation.

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I thank the gentleman from Georgia and the gentlewoman from Illinois for joining me this evening.

At the beginning of this special order, this was the national debt, $8,378,143,406,405 and some change. Just in the hour that we have spent here on the floor in this special order discussing the Nation's debt and the deficit, the debt has gone up approximately $41,666,000. So the new number is $8,378,185,072,405 and some change. Just in the hour we have been here, we have seen the national debt go up that much, $41,666,000, approximately.

So, until our government gets its fiscal house in order, as Members of the fiscally conservative Blue Dog Coalition, we are going to continue to come this to this floor every Tuesday night and talk about restoring some common sense and fiscal discipline to our Nation's government. We will be talking more about the Blue Dog 12 point plan for curing our Nation's addiction to deficit spending and will be talking about our plan, our vision for a better America, a vision that includes a balanced budget and so many other provisions that just make good old-fashioned sense.

THE FALL OF GREAT NATIONS

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

Mr. OSBORNE. Mr. Speaker, in 2003, I was privileged to hear British Prime Minister Tony Blair speak in this Chamber, and one comment he made that particularly caught my attention was this: He said, ''As Britain knows, all predominant power seems for a time invincible, but in fact it is transient.''

What he was referring to, I believe, was that all great nations, when things are going well, assume that they are going to go on forever. But history shows us with example after example that this is really fallacious reasoning. So we might examine three such instances.

First of all, going clear back to Rome, which ruled nearly the entire civilized world 2,000 years ago, Rome appeared to be invincible, but eventually it fell. The reasons given generally by historians are these: There was a general decline in morality; there was an increasing corruption and instability in leadership; an increasing public addiction to every more violent public spectacles; an increase in crime and prostitution; and a population that became more self-absorbed, apathetic and unwilling to sacrifice for the common good.

Secondly, we might look at Great Britain itself. Certainly Great Britain has not fallen from preeminence, but it certainly is not the power it once was during the 1600s up through much of the 1800s, when it really dominated the entire world.

□ 2140

That empire slowly crumbled, and the reasons given again by historians were these: It lost the national resolve to maintain its territory, values that led to its ascendency were eroded, and spiritual underpinnings shifted dramatically.

Thirdly, we might just take a look quickly at a more recent superpower, Russia, which was one of two great superpowers as recently as 20 years ago. In a matter of months Russia disintegrated before our very eyes, and I think I along with many other people were amazed at how quickly this happened. Alexander Solzhenitzyn reflected on this fall when he observed this. He said, ''Over a half century ago when I was still a child, I recall a number of older people offering the following explanation for the great disasters that had befallen Russia,'' and he quotes. ''Men have forgotten God. That is why all of this has happened.'' Marx and Lenin had dismantled Russia's religious heritage and values, and Russia's foundation was broken and it collapsed like a house of cards with nothing to sustain it.

There are some common themes in all of these historic national collapses. First of all, the citizens became less willing to sacrifice for others and for their country; citizens became more self-absorbed, had a greater desire for the state to provide instead of providing for themselves; a weakening of commonly held values, and a decline of spiritual commitment.

You may say, well, what does all of this have to do with the United States, and why are you talking about this this evening? We obviously have the most powerful military, the strongest economy, the most stable government of any nation in the world today.

It is very easy to think that we are invincible and that this may last forever. But as Tony Blair stated so clearly, as Britain knows, all predominant power for a time seems invincible, but in fact it is truly transient.

This statement of Prime Minister Blair's rang a bell with me as I sat and listened to him, because over 36 years of coaching and working with young people I witnessed some trends that were concerning to me. The young men that I worked with were more talented physically and more gifted each year, yet they showed more signs of stress, more personal struggles, less moral clarity as time passed.

This chart illustrates some of the difficulty that we are currently experiencing with some of our young people

that shows the juvenile court delinquency caseload. It starts in 1960 with really not very many cases, and it more than quadrupled by 1995 and 2000, and that trend has continued upward even today.

Several factors I think have contributed to these changes. First of all, the family structure has certainly eroded in our country. In 1960, when I first started coaching, the out-of-wedlock birth rate was 5 percent. Today it is 34 percent; in parts of our country, the out-of-wedlock birth rate is 60 and 70 percent. So we have at least one-third of our young people entering the world with two strikes against them. It does not mean they cannot live a successful life, but it is certainly going to be much more difficult.

In 1960, the great majority of children lived with both parents. Today, nearly 40 percent of our young people grow up without both biological parents. Again, this makes life more difficult. Less than one quarter of families with children under 6 have a parent staying home with them full time. Of course, that again is a tremendous shift from the way it was 40, 50 years ago. One-third of all school-aged kids come home to an empty house for at least part of the week, and the hours between 3 and 6 p.m. are the largest at-risk time for children in our culture at the present time; it is those 3 hours after school, before parents begin to come home.

Twenty-four million children in our culture live without their real father. Fatherless children are two to three times more likely to be abused, have emotional and behavioral problems, abuse drugs, alcohol, or to commit a crime. There is a greeting card company that contacted the inmates in a prison just before Mother's Day, and on a whim they decided that they would provide Mother's Day cards for any inmate that wanted to send a card to his mother. The reception was very good. Almost 100 percent of the inmates accepted cards, sent it to their mother. So they decided that they would try the same thing on Father's Day, and yet they had almost zero response. Practically no inmate would write a card to his father. I would assume the reason is that so many of the people there were people who had been abandoned by their fathers, did not have fathers, and as a result you could see a tremendous dichotomy between those who were still attached in some way to a mother as compared to those who were attached to their father.

The foundation in our culture, the family, is certainly under assault. It does not mean that we do not have good families, we have many good families; but there has been some sign of erosion, some things that are certainly very concerning. Of course, the family unit is the basic element of our social structure. When that begins to fall apart, then things begin to get very difficult indeed.

Also, we might mention that in addition to some of the difficulties that we are experiencing in our families, the environment in which our young people currently exist has certainly changed as well. One thing I am going to talk about here for the next 3 or 4 minutes is underage drinking, alcohol abuse, because this has become a huge problem in our culture. The National Academy of Science study showed that alcohol kills six and a half times more young people than all other drugs combined. So it kind of flies under the radar screen, where we think about cocaine, we think about heroin, we think about methamphetamine, we think about marijuana, and yet six and a half times more young people are killed by alcohol than all of these other substances combined. It costs the U.S. $53 billion annually, alcohol abuse, underage drinking. There are roughly 3 million teenage alcoholics, which is by far the largest number of those who are addicted to some kind of substance. The average first drink in our country today is at 12.8 years of age, and that age is declining.

One of the problems we have with underage drinking is that so often young people binge drink. On average, they will consume twice as much alcohol per occasion of drinking than an adult will. Of course, this leads to some very difficult situations. Twenty percent of eighth graders drink regularly. Children who drink before age 15 are five times more likely to become an alcoholic than those who wait until they are 21 years of age to start drinking. Youth are 96 times more likely to see an ad promoting alcohol than to see an ad discouraging underage drinking. So, obviously, in the advertising world, you can see where the emphasis is. We spend hundreds of millions of dollars to fight drug production in Afghanistan, Colombia, and around the world, and a fraction of that money spent on curbing underage drinking might be more cost effective in our own country.

The National Advertising and Education Campaign has been effective in combating teen tobacco use, and the same thing is needed to combat underage drinking and yet we seem to ignore the problem.

Another substance abuse epidemic that is sweeping the Nation and has really gotten most of our attention is the methamphetamine epidemic. In my State of Nebraska, the problem has become tremendously pernicious and has been somewhat overwhelming. I would like to illustrate this by showing a few charts at this time.

This was the incidence of methamphetamine labs in 1990. California and Texas were the only two States that reported more than 20 meth labs out in the countryside; of course, that changed rather rapidly. We see here in 2004, all but maybe seven or eight States in the Northeast were reporting large numbers of meth labs, and of course in many cases they are reporting as many as 300 or 400 or 500 meth labs that we know about in a given year. So methamphetamine has swept from the west coast and the Southwest all across the country, and the prediction is that certainly those Northeastern States will also be hit very hard by methamphetamine within a relatively short period of time.

Many people have seen the following pictures, but I think it shows rather graphically what methamphetamine does. This was a young lady who was arrested in November of 1979, and was arrested each succeeding year for the next 10 years for methamphetamine. She was picked up by authorities, and each year they took her picture, a mug shot. You can see the first 5 years that she certainly deteriorates somewhat, and then in May of 1986 there is a more dramatic change; in January of 1988, a significant change, and this is where some people begin to believe that she started to inject methamphetamine, and then you see further deterioration in the bottom right picture was taken in January of 1989, 10 years later, after the first picture.

□ 2150

This was taken in the morgue when she had eventually succumbed to her addiction, and so the interesting thing is that she did survive for 10 years. Many people on meth do not do this, but you can see that the aging process was tremendous and it probably took the toll that normally a person would age 50 years in that 10-year period of time, and she did it in 10 with the assistance of methamphetamine.

A report released by Voices For Children found that meth is one of the reasons for a 38 percent increase in child abuse and neglect in the State of Nebraska. This is true all across the country. As we see meth increase, we see child abuse, child neglect goes up, and we see many cases of serious injury and death on the part of young people simply because their parents no longer are able to care for them or care about them. The meth addiction has taken over and occupies all of their time, their attention and their devotion, and children suffer greatly.

According to a recent report to the legislature by the University of Nebraska at Omaha, an estimated 22,396 Nebraskans are methamphetamine dependent or abusers. This is in a relatively sparsely populated State with 1.7 million people. So it constitutes the population of a pretty good-sized town in the State of Nebraska.

A study done by the University of Arkansas found that methamphetamine users cost their employers about $47,500 annually due to increased absenteeism and loss of productivity. If you took $47,500 costs, and that is fairly conservative, times 22,000 individuals addicted, you have got over $1 billion in costs in the State of Nebraska. Of course, I am extrapolating those figures from Arkansas, but I believe that they are probably fairly accurate.

Judge John Icenogle, a drug court judge in Buffalo County, Nebraska, testified at a hearing here in Washington

before the Education and Workforce Committee, and I would like to read you a little bit of what he said: ''In April of 2005, approximately 6,000 children were living in out-of-home foster care placements within the State of Nebraska. More than half of the parents from whom children are removed have problems due to use of methamphetamine.''

So we have 6,000 people in foster care living in out-of-home placements. Roughly 3,000 of those kids are there because their parents are addicted to methamphetamine.

During a recent 2-week period in Lancaster County in Nebraska, the county attorney filed juvenile petitions on behalf of nine newborns because of methamphetamine use by the mothers. This is the interesting part: additional birthing expenses for a meth mother include as much as $1,500 to $25,000 per day for the care of her child. Some children require nearly a quarter of a million dollars of care to ensure the child attains the age of 1. This is simply because of reduced birthrate, damage that methamphetamine causes; and this does not say anything about the horrible suffering that these children go through.

The developmentally delayed children can require up to three-quarters of a million dollars in special care during the child's first 18 years of life. So to get one of these meth babies from birth to age 18 in some cases will cost $700,000, $750,000, not in all cases.

Congress has taken some steps to address meth production by making it more difficult for meth cooks to be able to obtain pseudoephedrine, which is one of the primary ingredients, the only ingredient which you absolutely have to have. That regulation has been helpful, along with some laws from various States.

One thing that I think we did in that bill, which I think is very important for us in Congress to realize, is that at the present time, somewhere in the vicinity of 70 to 80 percent of the methamphetamine coming into the United States today is not made in meth labs. Those are kind of on the way down. Meth is coming, in most cases, from Mexico from superlabs; and in order to have a superlab, you have to purchase huge amounts of precursor chemicals, and chief among these are the pseudoephedrine. There are only six or seven places in the world that manufacture large quantities of pseudoephedrine, and so in the bill that we did, we said we want the five leading exporters of pseudoephedrine and the five leading importing countries of pseudoephedrine to report, to give their invoices to the United States, to report to us, and that way we would be able to track where the pseudoephedrine is going and where those superlabs are.

We think much of it will be in Mexico; and if they do not comply, we are entitled to remove up to 50 percent of their foreign aid, which is a significant penalty, which should get cooperation. This is part of the bill that I think will really help us get a handle on the crystal meth that is currently coming in from those superlabs.

It is critical that we have a balanced approach to this problem of methamphetamine. There is not just one thing you have to do. You have to start out first with education, and probably start with young people in third, fourth, fifth grade and their parents, and of course, photos like I have just shown are very graphic. Sometimes they are rather disturbing, but it shows people exactly what methamphetamine does. We think education is critical because for every one dollar you spend on education and prevention, you are usually going to get anywhere from $10 to $15 from the back end in reduced crime and not having to lock people up and reduced assaults, foster care and so on. So this is important.

The second thing that you have to do is you have to have interdiction. You have to have people on the ground who are attacking the meth problem on a daily basis, and in many parts of the country, drug task forces are critical. This is why the Byrne grants that Congress provides, which fund these drug task forces, is critical. Last year, we were zeroed out in the President's budget on Byrne grants, and we restored as much as we could, about two-thirds of what we probably needed. This year again we are zeroed out, and again we will have to fight to get that funding back; but this is critical to have the Federal money to be able to attack the meth problem in terms of law enforcement.

Then, lastly, the third leg of the stool is the issue of treatment. Right now, we have a lot of people who do not manufacture methamphetamine, people who have not committed crimes on methamphetamine; but these are simply people who are addicted to meth. The question is what are you going to do with them. So often what we are doing is we are sending them to prison for 12 months or 18 months. They get no treatment. Their family usually falls apart, and as a result, they come out as bad off or worse off than when they went in. On the other hand, if you put them in a drug court, they get tested twice a week. So you know that they are clean. You know that they are off the drug. They get treatment. They get to go to group therapy. They can usually hold down a job and pay taxes. They can usually hold their family together. So this is critical, and it is the most cost-effective, efficient way to treat the problem. Again, we need to have substantial amounts of money for those drug courts.

So, anyway, we feel that the meth issue is becoming huge, and it is really impacting our culture.

The United States is also one of the most violent nations in the world for young people. We have the highest youth homicide and assault rates in the developed world, and suicide is currently the third leading cause of death for young people. The violence has certainly escalated.

Pornography has also exploded. There are currently 260 million Internet porn sites cataloged as recently as 2003. Let me repeat that number: 260 million Internet porn sites. Our Internet is simply inundated with this type of activity. Nine out of 10 children between the ages of 9 and 16 have viewed porn on the Internet, mostly unintentional. This was according to a study done by the London School of Economics.

Many of us are dismayed by the way the FCC is regulating obscenity on our Nation's airwaves. We do not feel they are doing enough, and a poll in 2004 found that 82 percent of adult Americans surveyed say that the Federal laws against Internet obscenity should be vigorously enforced, and most people do not believe they are being enforced to the degree that they should be.

Video games, something also impacting our young people. More than 90 percent of American children play video games every day, and one-half of the top sellers contain extreme violence. Some teach stalking and killing of victims, similar to military training and video games; and pornography is sometimes a reward for hitting a target in one of the video games.

The young man who was a school shooter in Kentucky had never fired a gun before the day that he went to the school and started picking off his classmates, but he had been trained and trained on video games, shooting life-like people, and he became remarkably accurate.

□ 2200

So we think that some things should be done in this regard as well. Much music, some television, and many movies are very graphic, and that content would have been impossible to present for public consumption 30 years ago. I have some grandchildren, ages 6 through 13, and I know many people in Congress are concerned about grandchildren, children, and the effects that some of the things we have just mentioned are having on those young people.

Lastly, let me just mention that the value system in our country has certainly shifted. We mentioned that the family has been eroded to some degree, the environment is more threatening, and the value system that we have held dear for so many years seems to be changing to some degree also.

Many folks may have read a book by Steven Covey called ''The Seven Habits of Highly Successful People.'' Covey points out in his book that over the first 150 years of our Nation's history success was defined primarily in terms of character traits. And so a successful person was honest, a successful person was hard working, faithful, loyal, and compassionate. And that was what success was all about. Then he noticed

that over the last 50, 60 years that the definition of success has changed remarkably. He said, success now is viewed as acquiring material possessions, acquiring power, and prestige. And so success is no longer a link to character traits, rather it is linked to those things which are powerful, impressive, and have to do with monetary advantage.

So the value system, obviously, has shifted significantly over the last 50, 60 years. We have seen certainly a discouraging lack of integrity, sometimes in government, sometimes in athletics, sometimes in the business world. We have seen extreme political partisanship. Ofttimes on this floor you hear one side attacking the other. I think that has eroded public confidence to some degree in the political sector.

Presently, Mr. Speaker, the predominant world view is something called post-modernism. Post-modernism is certainly very alive and well in our culture, especially on our college campuses. What post-modernism says, essentially, is this: It says that there are no such things as moral absolutes. There is nothing absolutely right or nothing that is absolutely wrong. Everything is relative. In the case of theft, maybe even murder, maybe even incest, adultery, or treason, it depends on the circumstance. So as a result, we have a whole generation of folks growing up with the idea that there really is nothing that is truly wrong and that everything can be explained away depending upon the circumstance.

In view of all that I have been discussing, this is an extremely difficult time for our children. We are asking them to weave their way through a mine field littered with alcohol, drug abuse in some cases, harmful video games, and sometimes music, television, and movies that are not very healthy. And we are asking them to weave their way through with less parental guidance and an ever shifting value system. So we have to be aware of what is happening to the next generation. We need to pay close attention. There is no culture that is more than one generation away from dissolution.

I am not one who is a doom and gloom individual. Much of what I have talked about this evening is certainly not very cheery or terribly optimistic. But I think unless we begin to look at things in a realistic way we will not be able to do much to correct the problem, maybe before it is too late.

A Frenchman by the name of de Tocqueville made an astute observation early in our Nation's history. He said this about America. He said, ''America is great because America is good.'' And he was referring to the large number of churches and civic clubs and youth groups and individuals who reach out to help those who are less fortunate. To some degree, that is still very true of our country. We are a generous people. We are really basically at heart, I think, a very good people. So he was referring to the inherent decency of the American people. He was referring to the strong moral and spiritual underpinning of the Nation, and he was referring to the basic American ethic, which is essentially do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

Of course, de Tocqueville wrote 200 years ago. So the question is, are his observations true today? Some are. However, as we have pointed out, there are some disturbing signs of change. But what can be done about this? We don't want to leave the subject, Mr. Speaker, without at least talking about some possible solutions.

One thing that I have been very interested in through the last 10 or 15 years and during my time here in Congress has been the issue of mentoring. Mentoring, of course, is providing an adult in the life of a young person who cares, number one. And it is amazing how many young people really don't have an adult in their life that they can absolutely count on; that they can depend on; someone who cares about them unconditionally.

So a mentor is someone who does that. It is not a preacher, not a teacher, not a parent, and not a grandparent. It is not somebody who has an obligation. It is somebody who simply cares enough to show up. And that is very powerful in the life of a young person.

Secondly, a mentor is someone who affirms, who says, I believe in you. Again, there are so many young people today who don't hear a positive message. They do not hear a kind word; that somebody believes that they can be successful; that they can do what they need to do; that they see some strength.

Then the third thing a mentor does is provide a vision of what is possible. Again, so often young people are really limited by their experience. Maybe they have never seen a parent who has completed high school. Maybe they have never seen anyone in their immediate family who has accomplished anything or maybe even has held down a steady job. So their idea of growing up is to drop out of school at age 16 and get a job in a fast food place and maybe buy an old car, and the rest of the future is maybe not very promising. So providing a vision, again, is something that certainly a mentor can do.

Mentoring programs have been proven to reduce dropout rates, drug and alcohol abuse, teenage pregnancy, violence, they increase attendance, graduation, grades, and even peer relationships. So it is one of the best things we have going. And in view of the fact so many young people do not have tremendous parental support, mentoring is one thing that we can provide.

A few years ago, the President proposed $150 million annually for mentoring programs, and Congress has come through pretty well, I think. We provided $184 million over the last 5 years, and this really has reached hundreds of thousands of young people who are now being mentored who would not otherwise have had a chance to have a mentor in their life.

Currently, the National Mentoring Partnership estimates that there are roughly 18 million young people in our country today who badly need a mentor, and yet we are only mentoring somewhere between 2 and 3 million of those 18 million. So there is a lot of work to be done. But if we could begin to fill that gap and get somewhere close to providing an adequate mentor in the lives of those 18 million young people, it would make a huge difference in this country and make a huge difference in the future of this country.

Sometimes legislation can help, and there have been a number of bills introduced. I have introduced H.R. 1422, the Student Athlete Protection Act, to close a Nevada gambling loophole. Some people say that is really not that relevant, but it is interesting in that the State of Nevada is the only State that legalizes betting, gambling on amateur sports. It seems that this is something that we ought to think about a little bit. Currently, thousands of people go to Nevada during the NCAA basketball tournament, also during the football bowl games, because they can bet on game after game after game.

Having been a coach, and the reason this is important, so often you had to win twice. You had to win on the scoreboard and you also were expected to beat the point spread. And that puts a lot of pressure on young people. It certainly puts pressure on coaches. But we are older and we are expected to be able to perform. But I think that that influence has not been healthy on the world of sports and certainly has been difficult for young people.

The Software Accuracy and Fraud Evaluation Rating Act, or SAFE Rating Act, sponsored by JOE BACA and myself, is one that would require the Federal Trade Commission to study the voluntary rating system for video games to determine if its practices are unfair or deceptive.

□ 2210

This is important because right now in the video game industry, you cannot really tell much about the content by looking at the rating. It is not quite like movies and some other rating schemes we have. So the bill holds the video game industry accountable for their products and ensures that parents have accurate information in making purchasing decisions for their children.

I think there are an awful lot of parents who have kids playing video games every day who have no idea what is going on in those games. They simply are not aware of the content.

We certainly could use a fundamental shift in some of the court decisions regarding the first amendment. Legislation passed by Congress will not help if it is overturned by the courts on a regular basis. The court has ruled in some cases to protect pornography. In 1996

Congress passed the Communications Decency Act, which made it illegal to send indecent material to children via the Internet. But in June of 1997, the Supreme Court overturned portions of the law stating ''indecent material is protected by the first amendment.'' Of course that ruling, that decision, set the tone for many other decisions.

In 1996, the Child Pornography Prevent Act outlawed child pornography. In April 2002 the Supreme Court declared the act unconstitutional. Again a precedent was set.

In October 1998, the Children Online Protection Act was signed into law to prohibit the communication of harmful material of children on publicly accessible Web sites. The Supreme Court's refusal to rule on the 1998 law prevent the law from being enacted.

There are many, many cases like this. What we see is sometimes under the guise of free speech, and certainly everyone in Congress believes in the principle of the first amendment. However, we find that some people's rights are being trampled because 80 to 90 percent of rapists and pedophiles use pornography on a regular basis, often before or sometimes during the commission of their crimes. Therefore, we think that it is time that we rethink some of these rulings.

Some people say pornography is harmless. However, what we read and see and think about certainly affects behavior. If this was not the case, I am sure that people would not spend billions of dollars on advertising because advertising does change behavior. There is no question to that effect.

The court has often ruled against school prayer, and I certainly would not advocate that a teacher or superintendent or principle or somebody in the school should be allowed to proselytize or say a prayer in class that would be offensive; but in 1962 the Supreme Court ruled the following prayer unconstitutional: ''Almighty God, we acknowledge our dependence on thee, and we beg Thy blessings upon us, our parents, our teachers, and our country.''

So it would appear that many court rulings regarding separation of church and State have ranged far afield from the intent of the framers of the Constitution. Benjamin Franklin said, ''We have been assured, sir, in the sacred writings that except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it. I firmly believe this. I also believe that without His concurring aid, we shall succeed in the political building no better than builders of Babel; we shall be divided by our little, partial local interests; our projects will be confounded; and we ourselves will become a reproach and a byword down to future ages.''

He continues, ''I therefore beg leave to move that, henceforth, prayers imploring the assistance of Heaven and its blessing on our deliberation be held in this assembly every morning before we proceed to business.'' On Franklin's insistence and urging, the House of Representatives and the Senate open every day with prayer.

I am not suggesting that the same thing needs to happen in our schools, but it does appear that the intent of the framers of the Constitution was maybe a little different than what we have seen played out in the courts.

George Washington said, ''The propitious smiles of Heaven can never be expected on a Nation that disregards the internal rules of order and right which Heaven itself has ordained.''

We have seen that the warnings of Franklin and Washington to some degree have come full circle. As we have moved further and further away from our spiritual underpinnings, we begin to see some of the fruits of that wandering. So despite the fact that the Constitution does not contain a separation of church and State clause, in 1992 the Supreme Court decision declared an invocation and a benediction at a graduation ceremony unconstitutional. The court held a minute of silence in a school was unconstitutional. So if you started the school day with a minute of silence in which students may pray silently, they may think about their history test, that minute of silence was held to be unconstitutional. That seems a little bit strange.

The court ruled a student-led prayer at a football game was unconstitutional. And of course many of us know the words ''under God'' was struck from the Pledge of Allegiance by the Ninth Circuit Court. The Supreme Court restored the phrase, but it threw the case out on a technicality. I am sure that challenge will resurface sometime soon.

So we have seen many examples of different rulings that have certainly affected our culture. A partial-birth abortion ban was recently struck down by the courts. And many in this body who favor abortion voted for this ban. More than 70 percent of the public now oppose partial-birth abortion. I am not going to go further into the abortion issue, but it seems rather strange that something that is disapproved of by so many people in the United States would be struck down.

The Constitution is increasingly interpreted as a living document. So the Constitution is often not interpreted as it was written, but rather as justices believe it should be or maybe how it should have been written. Legal decisions increasingly come down based not upon what the law states, but rather based upon the personal ideology of the jurist.

The Constitution is not based upon absolute principles, but rather the shifting sands of relativism. The philosophical bent of the Supreme Court Justices and district court justices determines the course of the Nation.

And so it will be interesting to see now that we have had some change on the court, and I do not mean to say that the court over a number of years has been totally errant, there are many great decisions they have made, but I am saying that the general drift of the court has been one which has led us down a path that is certainly quite a distance from where we started out in the founding of our Nation.

So the makeup of the courts and the will of Congress will greatly influence whether we continue to drift further from our spiritual heritage or draw close to those values upon which our Nation was founded, the willingness of Congress to focus upon the pernicious influences impacting our children. And sometimes I am concerned because I see people who are here in Congress who fought the fight over the Internet battles and pornography and some of these things, and have simply started to back off because they realize that they have passed laws and they have passed laws and because of various court rulings they have not gotten anywhere and so they have almost quit trying. That is unfortunate.

And also the willingness of the American people to demand that those profiteering at the expense of our culture and our young people be reined in will largely shape the future of our Nation.

Terrorism is an ever-present threat. The economy is of great concern. However, terrorism and economic distress will not prevail as long as our national character is silent. So we are engaged in a cultural and a spiritual struggle of huge proportion, and I can only hope that the principles upon which this Nation was founded remain preeminent. As Congress addresses important issues such as national defense, the economy and health care, it is critical that we not lose sight of the fact that our Nation's survival is directly linked to the character of our people.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate this opportunity to address the House this evening.

□ 2220

30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FITZPATRICK of Pennsylvania). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK) is recognized for half the time remaining before midnight, approximately 50 minutes.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor once again to address the House of Representatives, and we would like to thank the Democratic leadership for allowing us to have this time, Democratic leader NANCY PELOSI, Mr. STENY HOYER, and also our chair and vice chair of our caucus.

I think it is important for us to come to the floor once again in this 30-something Working Group to talk about the issues that are facing America and how the Republican majority is falling short of its responsibility, Mr. Speaker, to fulfill not only the hopes, but aspirations of Americans as we come to Washington, D.C. to represent them in a way that we should, need it be education, health care, what have you.

We have so much to share, Mr. Speaker, tonight, 50 minutes will not even give us justice for what we have to share. I must say that the 30-something Working Group is very, very, very excited and enthusiastic for being here tonight to hopefully drive home the point even better than we have done before of why it is important that we need a new Congress here in Washington, D.C. that is going to represent the American people.

And we are not just talking about Democrats. We are not just talking about Independents. We are not just talking about Republicans. We are talking about the American people. We want to move in a comprehensive way, making sure that we can have true bipartisanship in this chamber. I think we have expressed that in the past. I think that we have shown that in the past when we were in the majority, and it is nothing like third-party validators that we have here tonight, Mr. Speaker, that even drives home the point even better.

We have talked in the past about issues that are facing the American people and this Congress. We talked about the K Street Project back when no one really wanted to talk about the K Street Project, which is a project to encourage lobbyists here in Washington, D.C. to contribute to one side, to the Republican Party to help not only gain the majority, but to also be a part of supporting Republican candidates, to have access to this House. We talked about that. We got some dirty looks from some Members of the majority side about exposing that.

And then later, after Abramoff pleading guilty without a trial, without a jury selection or anything, the Republican majority said we will no longer carry out that project because it was wrong. It was the 30-something Working Group that moved boldly in that direction to expose that practice here in Washington, D.C.

Even when it comes down to our troops as it relates to equipment and supplies that they needed, even though you have some folks on the majority side that said we did it in a way that the American people should be proud of, it was on this side of the aisle that we did so.

So it is not all about who made it to the front of the classroom first, Mr. Speaker. It is about those of us that understand the responsibility of governance, those of us that understand the responsibility of leadership and those of us that cherish the opportunity to be here as part of this elected House of Representatives.

Like I said, Mr. Speaker, it is so much to share tonight, there is not enough time to share it. But I would like to yield to some of my colleagues at this time so that we can start the kind of discourse that is going to head us in the right direction here in Washington, and hopefully the American people will start looking through some of the 30-second ads, looking through some of the targeted media campaigns that are out there. When I say marketing campaigns, Mr. DELAHUNT, and Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, that sometimes mislead the American people and having them believe one thing when the reality is so evident.

Like I said before in the past, this is an unprecedented time, Mr. Speaker, of the fiscal situation here in this country, unprecedented as it relates to unusual things happening here in this House and in this Congress that are unexplainable. But every day, we need to be picking up the Washington Post or local papers. We are finding that the reason why strange things are taking place here in this country is the fact that strange things are taking place here in this House and in the Senate and in the White House. And I think that it is important that we bring this not only to the attention of the American people, but we call the American people to action on behalf of their country, not on behalf of party, not on behalf of age or gender, but on behalf of holding our country together.

With that I would like to yield to Congresswoman DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. And I would just like to say congratulations to your Florida Gators.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Thank you very much. We were thrilled and I had an opportunity to attend the game last night and it was an incredible experience, and congratulations to the Florida Gators.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Can I interrupt here? It's tough to tell that she is a Gators fan tonight, isn't it?

Mr. DELAHUNT. What are the colors of the Gators, could you tell us? Do they happen to be blue and orange?

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Orange and blue. And each and every Gator fan that I know, Mr. DELAHUNT, bleeds orange and blue.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Well, congratulations once more.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Thank you so much. But, all lightheartedness aside, I am struck, in following what the gentleman from Florida touched on, I am struck by a collection of facts that really are staring us in the face that are the direct result of Republican policies; today, this moment, not 5 years ago, not 4 years from now, but the direct result of Republican leadership or, I should say, lack of Republican leadership, because they are obviously in charge.

Let me just go through with you some of the things that we have pulled together and that are the economic facts facing this country and that clearly show why, when I go home and talk to my constituents and have done so recently, I did kind of a run through my district and spoke to many different kinds of organizations, many different kinds of groups, Mr. DELAHUNT, and I am sure that you are hearing the same kinds of things that I am.

Americans' confidence in their government has been so badly shaken. And it is not just that the culture of corruption and cronyism and incompetence that hangs over this building is there by itself. It is that, as a result of that corruption and cronyism, the policy that results from the corruption that is so deeply disturbing.

Let me just go through with you some of the things that we have been able to pull together just related to the economy. This is as of March 2006, just last month. 7.2 million Americans remained unemployed. We have an additional 4.2 million who want a job but are not counted among the unemployed.

Since this President took office, the economy has posted only 15 months of job gains of 150,000 or more. That is the number of jobs that is just needed to keep up with population growth. So all this talk about an explosion in job growth and how we are really on the rise in terms of job growth is just baloney.

Mr. DELAHUNT. If my colleague would yield. I don't want to skip past that, because I think it is important to analyze what kind of jobs are being created. And I think we all concur that the number of jobs are insufficient to move American society ahead to realize the American dream, if you will. But the reality is it is not the kind of jobs that carry with them the ability to have a living standard that most Americans enjoyed 5 years ago, 10 years ago and 15 years ago. These aren't good jobs at good wages. These are menial jobs, in many cases, at low wages. There is a difference.

The truth is that the median income for an American family has declined. It hasn't grown. So that while there may be jobs out there, Americans are falling behind. They are losing their health care. They are losing their pension. And what is really tragic is that they are losing the hope that all Americans have for their children and grandchildren. That is what I am experiencing.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. DELAHUNT. I yield.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. You know, before I yield to the gentlewoman from Florida, you can't convince me that we can't do something about this. I can't be convinced of this. Proper investment. We can go back, GI Bill, space race, you know, we, as a country, transcontinental railroad, we had a program, we had a plan that we would invest back into the United States of America. And now we know it is not the transcontinental railroad. Now we know it is not the space program, at least to the extent it was.

But what is it now? Is it business incubators? Is it math and science graduates? Let's figure this out. Is it high speed rail?

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. I know what it is not.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. What isn't it?

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. It is not just words in the State of the

Union, because it was very nice to hear the President talk about how he wants to make sure that we can have this.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. We have got to get past the rhetoric. Let's get past the words. Words, words, words, no substance.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. What I hear from most people today is it is very nice, you can give a whole lot, it is nice to hear the speeches. They want the action to back up the words.

□ 2230

And let us just go a little bit deeper into this whole issue of job growth. So go beyond the 7.2 million Americans that remain unemployed. Since the President took office, only 15 months of job growth, just keeping up with population growth. The Bush administration has the slowest job growth of any administration in over 70 years. Since January of 2001, 2.9 million manufacturing jobs have been lost. There are now more than 1.3 million more unemployed private sector workers than in January of 2001.

And who has been in charge this whole time, Mr. MEEK? Have Democrats been in charge during these years that talk about the lackluster job performance?

Mr. MEEK of Florida. No, ma'am.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Who has been in charge?

Mr. MEEK of Florida. The Republican majority.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Oh, the Republicans. Okay. That is what I thought. Congressional Republicans.

They talk about how they want to grow jobs, that making sure people can go to work and earn a decent living is what is important. Then why is it that congressional Republicans defeated a Democratic amendment to increase the minimum wage, which has not been increased since 1997, the longest period of time we have gone without increasing the minimum wage? From $5.15, which is what it is now, we proposed to increase it to $7.25.

Mr. DELAHUNT. They prefer jobs at low wages. In essence, it is really that simple. Low-wage jobs are being produced by the policies of this administration and this Congress that is complicit. Complicit. And we know there has not been a single veto by this President because this is a Congress that goes along with this administration.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. This is Bush's Congress. This is President Bush's Congress.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. The bottom line is this: We have a bobble head majority. We have a rubber stamp majority that is willing to do anything and everything the President has asked.

Now, Mr. DELAHUNT, we talked about this last week, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mr. RYAN, about the fact that like 90 percent of the American people understand what is going on here under the Capitol dome, and then the majority runs from the back of the class and runs up and says, We want to govern. We are going to stop the President from doing X, Y, and Z. Why does it take that, Mr. DELAHUNT?

I mean the bottom line is it is about leadership, not how Republicans feel or how Democrats feel or how independents feel. It should be everyday business here in Washington, D.C. But they are so busy trying to cater to the President of the United States or trying to cater to the special interests, we forget about that individual who showed up on a Tuesday on election day in a given community early for representation. Not us on this side, but the majority does. And I think it is important that we share with the other Members that are watching us in their offices or whatever the case may be that they need to get back to the days of the morning when they woke up the next day, when they were newly elected as a Member of Congress, how they felt about representation, how they felt about being a part of the United States Congress, how they felt about representing their local community. And I think that kind of gets lost between the wine and cheese receptions that take place, Mr. Speaker, here in Washington, D.C. I am a Member of Congress. I am offended sometimes when I see Members taking votes against the will of their own constituency.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I am offended that they are not offended. That offends me that they are not offended offended.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. I am dying to make this comparison.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Do not die just yet because you have to share some information.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. I know. We have 6 more months, and I am not through my list yet.

The minimum wage being $5.15 and the Members that you are talking about that were so fresh faced and exuberant the morning after the election and they were going to come to Washington and do the right thing and not be the rubber stamp Republicans, all of them voted against increasing that minimum wage. And if the minimum wage had kept pace with inflation, today it would be $8.88.

I am certain that none of our Republican colleagues have done this recently because, otherwise, they would have voted for the amendment, but have you driven through a McDonald's recently and ordered a number one, which is a Big Mac meal?

Mr. DELAHUNT. I am on a diet myself.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. I am kind of a McDonald's fanatic. And since it is quick and easy and when you have got your kids in the back of the minivan, believe me, the quickest thing sometimes is to go through the drive-through. The number one is just about $5.15 at this point. By the time you get the meal and whatever else you need, to make sure that you have got your soda and your drink and your fries, can you imagine that the minimum wage just barely pays for one Big Mac meal? I mean are the American people not worth more than a Big Mac meal? That is really what it boils down to.

I think they are. I want to make sure that my constituents can afford to feed more than just themselves or more than just one kid. Which kid are they going to pick? Which kid do they pick? Okay, who wants to eat today?

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. That is about $16,000 a year even if it was adjusted accordingly; right? Eight bucks is about $16,000 a year.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Yes. I mean who can live on that?

In our community, Mr. MEEK, look at what housing costs.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, we are with you 110 percent because this is information that needs to be shared and third-party validators can validate this.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. We are talking about the reality.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. This is the reality of the situation. This is not fiction; it is fact.

But if you can, I want you to get through that list because I know that Mr. DELAHUNT and Mr. RYAN are so fired up right now as it relates to sharing this information.

Mr. Speaker, this is almost not fair. I mean this is just so unfair that we have this much information to share with the Members about what they have done and what they have not done and how we are so ready to get in the game, to lead this House in the direction that every American can appreciate. Every American does not work at McDonald's, but guess what. There are a lot of Americans there and family members of Americans that punch in and punch out every day and know what it means to make the minimum wage.

Mr. DELAHUNT. My friend, before we let DEBBIE go through that litany, and it is a long litany, let us also understand it is not just those of us here that recognize that. It is not just Democrats. It is Republicans.

I will tell you I find it particularly ironic that the leader of the Gingrich revolution that brought a Republican majority to this House in 1994 recognizes what has happened to the majority in this particular body.

This is what Newt Gingrich had to say about them: ''They are seen by the country as being in charge of a government that cannot function.''

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Will the gentleman suspend.

Mr. RYAN, would you take that chart over to Mr. DELAHUNT. You all are going to share in this information sharing because Mr. DELAHUNT actually served when Mr. Gingrich was around and I think it is important that we share that factual information with the Members.

And, Mr. DELAHUNT, if you would share that because I know we have a

plethora of information to share tonight.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Again, let me repeat it. This is a quote of Mr. Gingrich that appeared in the Knight Ridder newspaper this past Friday. And this is his observation about what is occurring in this body over which he presided: ''They are seen by the country as being in charge of a government that cannot function.'' That cannot function.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. ''They.''

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. DELAHUNT, I notice Mr. RYAN and Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ and we are so glad to be joined by Ms. JACKSON-LEE, who is one of my sheroes in this process. ''They.''

□ 2040

Mr. Speaker, this is the man who gave the Republican majority birth. ''Them.'' ''They.'' He is saying he is no longer a part of what is going on here. ''They.'' Not ''my colleagues,'' not ''my Republican brethren and sisters.'' It is ''they.''

This goes far beyond the 30-something working group. This goes far beyond Democrats and Republicans. Here is a man who was at the front of the line saying charge, that is now calling the Republican majority ''they.''

Mr. DELAHUNT. It is us versus them, and he ain't part of ''them'' anymore.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Who is with them?

Mr. DELAHUNT. As he said in this particular interview, if I can compose for a moment, here is an additional quote by the former Speaker of the Republican Congress. The reporter writes that he cited a series of blunders under Republican rule, from failures in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina to mismanagement of the war in Iraq. He said the government has squandered billions of dollars in Iraq, Mr. MEEK.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Who is the third party validator in the facts that you are citing now?

Mr. DELAHUNT. That is Newt Gingrich, who I know because when I first came to Congress, he was the presiding officer of this branch.

My colleague, SHEILA JACKSON-LEE, who preceded me in terms of service here in this branch, would also know and clearly could articulate that Newt Gingrich is someone who, whether you agreed with him or not, said it like he saw it. And this is what he sees today: A Republican Party in disarray, a Republican Party that can't govern. That is the bottom line.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. If the Members could indulge me as well just for a moment, because by my good friend Mr. DELAHUNT calling up those memories, Mr. DELAHUNT, you remember in essence Newt Gingrich rode in on a revolution, a revolution of change, a revolution of a government that would be smaller and allegedly more efficient.

His first act was, of course, many of us claim it to be a Contract on America, but he called it at that time a Contract with America. A balanced budget was allegedly his goal, along with a number of other issues.

Certainly, this whole question of a misdirected war or an undeclared war I don't think would have been the kind of effective and efficient government, and, of course, I am not in any way characterizing the work of our soldiers, but that he would have argued. I wanted to raise this point so you can get to that bottom line, Mr. DELAHUNT, which, if I read it correctly, talks about the mismanagement of the Iraq war.

Many people will condemn the words that we have offered about the Iraq war, saying there is a question of patriotism. But this former Speaker says mismanagement of the war in Iraq, and that the government has squandered billions of dollars in Iraq.

Let me just cite this point from the International Relations Committee. The Special Inspector General for Iraq has cast grave doubts on the results and effectiveness of the United States reconstruction plan, including the failure to complete three-quarters of oil and gas reconstruction projects, half of all the electricity projects and about 40 percent of water and sanitation projects financed by the U.S. So Mr. Gingrich is, like you said, Mr. DELAHUNT, telling it is like it is.

I simply leave you with this question: If we are in the business of governance, balancing the budget, why do Democrats have to beg for hearings so that the American people can find out the truth? Not to question the valid, courageous efforts of our soldiers, but why we have money that is wasted, so soldiers, for example, have no equipment? This is what Democrats are trying to do, clear up the mess.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Do you know why? Because this is a rubber stamp Republican Congress. We had an amazing thing happen today, and my good friend from Florida, Mr. MEEK, he has a much bigger rubber stamp that we use to show what is going on in this place.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. You can hold it.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. I feel privileged to hold it, although I don't want to hold it too long, lest it rub off.

But we got today more than 100 of these ''Rubber Stamp Republican Congress'' stamps from bloggers and people in the communities all over the country who are fed up and frustrated and who want us to continue to talk about what is going on here. Because it appears as though, and I mean this respectfully, that when people on the other side of the aisle come in this room, that they are checking, and I don't know whether they are checking their brains at the door or their opinions at the door or their convictions at the door, but we have watched, all of us, the board light up here with yesses and noes, and I know I have had conversations with Republican Members on the other side who say, ''I know I am going in there and I am voting this way.'' Then you watch it, the board, the light next to their name goes from red to green or green to red, and you watch their arm being wrenched behind their back, and out comes the rubber stamp.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. We have seen tears shed on this floor.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Out comes the rubber stamps. We need to throw away the rubber stamps. It is time to be done with the rubber stamps.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I think the whole thing is that is missing here, I think time and time again, there is one little general theme, and I think the former Speaker sums it all up for us in that same article. He noted that a Congressional watchdog agency recently smuggled a truck carrying nuclear material, and we talked about this last week a few nights, into the country, smuggled a truck carrying nuclear material into the country to test security. This is a direct quote from the former Speaker.

''Why isn't the President pounding the table? Why isn't he sending up 16 reform bills?'' Now, nuclear materials snuck into the country, and there is no one really even talking about it in the Republican House, the Republican Senate or the White House right now.

All we are saying is, and we come here every night, sometimes two or three times a week, to basically say there is no leadership in Washington D.C., Mr. Speaker.

The Democrats in this House want to step up and take the lead, because, quite frankly, not only us, you couldn't do any worse than this outfit does. We have plans for security, comprehensive plans. We have plans for innovation, plans for job creation, plans for health care. We have an agenda ready to implement for this country, including balancing the budget. But, time and time again, everything is rubber stamped. The bobblehead Congress. ''Yes, Mr. President. Yes, Mr. President. Yes, Mr. President.'' At some point you have to stop and say, hey, wait a minute. The country is going in the wrong direction.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. What we have been asking, what Democrats have been asking, is where is the outrage? What is their limit? Where do they reach the breaking point, individual Republican Members? When do they say ''that is it? There is a point at which I cannot support the direction that my leadership is taking this country anymore,'' meaning theirs. When do they say, ''I have got to stand up and do the right thing?''

It appears that their tolerance level for being pushed to do exactly as they are instructed is unbelievably high, far higher than my constituents, and I know your constituents, are comfortable with. We have got to make sure that we start moving the country back in the right direction and change some of these facts on the ground here.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I think what we need to do here the last 15 minutes or

so that we have, I think we need to tell the Speaker of the House and the other Members what we are going to do when we get in.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. I think that is a good point. May I just give some history for a moment, because you set the tone or you set sort of the parameters for an indictable offense.

When the Clinton administration was ending its tenure, as many of you are aware, it was one of the most maligned and accused 8 years by this majority-controlled House, even though there was a high degree of success. But I think the most striking success was the Balanced Budget Amendment in 1997, which generated an enormous amount of surplus, putting us in the black, which created the Children's Health Insurance Program that went all over America, except for the State of Texas, which returned back money because with our Republican leadership we couldn't find children to insure.

□ 2250

But we had at that time billions of dollars of surplus. Now we have this gift given to the American people: Republicans increased the debt limit by $3 trillion. And we get to $3 trillion. And if you want to calculate what that means for each child, each grandchild, each mother and father, each grandparent, you can see the enormity of this amount. So it is crucial for Democrats to come and to make and select and to emphasize priorities.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Will the gentlewoman yield?

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. I would be happy to yield.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Because time and time again, how many debates have we had on the floor over the past several years? No one on the majority side, Mr. Speaker, has been able to explain to this House or the American people how this is somehow good. Somebody explain to the Speaker of the House and somebody explain to the Congress how increasing the debt limit by $3 trillion is good. Is it good for the economy? Is it good for the next generation? Who is benefiting from this? Nobody, except foreign countries. This is bad. This is bad for the American economy, this is bad for job creation, this ends up raising the burden for the next generation. This is terrible. Since the President has been in, June of 2002 raised the debt limit $450 billion. May of 2003, $984 billion. November of 2004, $800 billion. And get that poster ready, Mr. MEEK. March of 2006, $781 billion. $3 trillion debt limit increase.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Really quick, because we are going to rapid fire here because we only have a few minutes left. I just want to quickly again, you have seen this, this will be in the National Archives one day because we talk about this time and time again. Let me, Mr. Speaker, move this education plan that Democrats have and this prescription drug plan so the Members can see this chart here. I think it is important. This $1.05 trillion that the President has accumulated with the Republican Congress in just 4 years versus the 42 presidents before this president and this Congress was only able to accumulate $1.01 trillion, and that is World War I, World War II, the Great Depression, you name it. You talk about the Democratic plan, Mr. DELAHUNT, Ms. JACKSON-LEE, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, and Mr. RYAN, the bottom line is that we have countries that are owning America right now, not because Americans went out and made bad decisions; because this administration has made bad decisions, and this Congress, the rubber stamp Congress has allowed it to happen and has been doing this all along. All they have to do is be invited to a breakfast at the White House and it is like, ''Yes, sir, Mr. President. We will do exactly what we have to do. Not only will we do it, we will defend your wrong actions.''

Mr. DELAHUNT. You are saying we have an ownership society, Mr. MEEK.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. So, in closing, you want to know the Democratic plan? The Democratic plan is paying as we go. Paying as we go. Because when you are in debt, you do not continue to use a credit card. So if Americans want to do away with the $882.8 billion that Japan owns, we will pull this off the chart. China, if you want to do away with the $249.8 billion that China owns right now of our debt, and pay as we go, and we have evidence and third-party validators that will be explained to the American people and the Members, have a Democratic Congress. The U.K., you want to get rid of the $223.2 billion in foreign debt that they own of our country? I am destroying this chart here. But get a Democratic Congress, because we have shown, we balanced the budget, and we are committed to doing this because we believe in the way we believe when we were elected that we are here to represent the people. Caribbean nations, many of our folks are going and traveling to the Caribbean and saying, oh, how great America is. Well, when you land there, they are owning a piece of the American pie, so you need to respect them. We will be able to do away with that $115.3 billion that we owe them. Taiwan, $71.3 billion they own of our debt, thanks to the Republican Congress and to the President of the United States. Also, Canada, $53.8 billion. Korea, $66.5 billion. Germany, $65.7 billion. OPEC nations and, you know, Mr. DELAHUNT, I know that is your specialty, I do not really want to talk about that, but those are nations that we are very concerned about at this time that they own $67.8 billion.

So if you want to get the reverse factor of what the Republicans have done in putting us in unprecedented debt, no other time, Mr. Speaker, in the history of the republic, no other time. You cannot say, well, the Democratic Congress was once at this level. That was not ever the case. In 4 years, this has happened, the mismanagement.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. What we have been trying to do over the past so many years consistently and constantly, amendment after amendment after amendment, the Democratic Party has offered and we have it all here, you will be able to go to our Web site and see these charts: In 2006 budget resolution, we offered to put pay as you go, that you are not going to spend any money unless you get it somewhere else or cut it out of a program and pay for it. Democrat, Mr. SPRATT, offered that amendment. Zero Republicans voted for that. Rollcall vote number 87 March 17, 2005. 30-Something's aren't making this up.

Mr. DELAHUNT. But they raised the debt limit. Didn't they?

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. They found the votes to raise the debt limit. Mr. SPRATT again offered the 2005 budget resolution, H. Con. Res. 393, rollcall vote number 91, March 25, 2004, right here in black and white. Republicans, how many voted to put spending under control, reign in this Republican Congress? Zero.

Mr. DELAHUNT. It is a lot easier to raise that debt limit, Mr. RYAN.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. We are tired of the rhetoric, Uncle Bill.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. RYAN, how many Americans, do you think, think it is okay to just put all their debt on their credit card and never mind how much money they have coming in?

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. You cannot do it at home, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. But I guess the Republican leadership think here it is fine.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. They are taking advantage of their power, and it is hurting the country. June 17 of 2003, Mr. OBEY tried to increase port security, which is another huge issue we have been trying to do here. $500 million. And we will go through all this. All these charts will be on our Web site, Mr. Speaker, for other Members to access and find out. We have tried consistently to increase funding for port security, and we will pay for it. We have tried to rein in spending. Republican Congress will not let us.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. If I may add to your question, if you would. I do not think most Americans know that 70 percent of the Nation's ports are owned by foreign operators. Of course, to hear this administration tell the story, they tell you of course that does not interfere with security, the Coast Guard handles it. What they do not tell you is the Coast Guard makes checks on compliance; they do not handle the security operation of our ports. So this is an important issue that was rejected by the Republican Congress time after time, every time we try to rebuild America, put America on the right track, eliminate a $3 trillion debt limit, Republicans turn the clock back. I think the Democrats have a better story to tell for the American people.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. No question about it. I want to follow up

on something that the gentlewoman from Texas focused on, because a lot of people in America, even I have a hard time getting my mind around what a billion and a trillion is. It is hard to think about it in everyday terms. So we had it boiled down in very convenient chart form to help illustrate what a billion is.

For example, a billion hours ago, humans were making their first tools in the Stone Age. A billion minutes ago, it was 104 AD, and the Chinese first invented paper. A billion seconds ago, it was 1975, and the last American troops had just pulled out of Vietnam. All of those things, a very long time ago. A billion is a big, big number, clearly, measured in terms of time.

But a billion dollars ago, under this administration and this Republican Congressional leadership, was only 3 hours and 32 minutes ago at the rate that our government currently spends money. That is astonishing. That is what it means when you think about what a billion means under this Republican leadership.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. We need the American people to give us a chance to lead this country. We want it. Put us in, Coach. We will put the PAYGO back into effect. We will rein in the spending that the Republican Congress that they think they can cut taxes, borrow money, and spend at levels unprecedented. And I am sure many of you saw the USA Today yesterday. I am sure you made it past the sports section with the recap of the games and everything. The Federal Government spending is outstripping economic growth at a rate unseen in more than half a century. The Federal Government, quote, is currently spending 20.8 cents of every dollar the economy generates, up from 18.5 cents as one White House budget document shows. It is not our documents, it is White House documents. That is the most rapid growth during one administration since Franklin Roosevelt.

□ 2300

Now, what happened to this outfit that came in in 1994 that said they wanted a balanced budget amendment, they wanted to make government smaller, spending it like drunken sailors, get this government under control, make it nimble and efficient and address the needs?

With all the technology and ability to communicate in the 21st century, we cannot even respond to a storm we know 5 days in advance is coming. It is ridiculous, and this country deserves better. We should not expect this comedy of errors that we get from FEMA and Halliburton and everybody in Iraq. It is a comedy of errors, and we need to get things straightened up here.

Mr. DELAHUNT. But it is a tragic comedy because the lives of young men and women in Iraq are constantly at risk. We all know what we have lost in terms of our youth, and we all know what the cost has been in terms of the taxpayers' dollars.

What I find extraordinary is, and SHEILA JACKSON-LEE alluded to it earlier, every Democrat on the International Relations Committee recently, in fact yesterday, signed a letter requesting an oversight hearing in terms of what is going on in Iraq, why the rampant fraud, abuse and corruption. We have been requesting that for 2 years, and you know what, we have never received an answer, not a single hearing.

If I were a Republican Member of this House, Mr. Speaker, and I read the op-ed piece by Retired Army Major General Paul Eaton, who was responsible for the training of Iraqi security forces, and received hardly anything in terms of support from the civilian leadership of this Defense Department, if I read what he said, I would insist that we listen to this individual, someone who served his country well, and you know what, they just want to ignore it. But I have to read what General Paul Eaton had to say because I think it is remarkable.

Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld is not competent to lead our Armed Forces. In sum, he has shown himself incompetent strategically, operationally and tactically, and is far more than anyone else responsible for what has happened to our important mission in Iraq. Mr. Rumsfeld must step down.

That is from an individual who has served this country in Iraq with valor and distinction and his recommendation to this Congress is this: ''Congress must assert itself. Too much power has shifted to the executive branch, not just in terms of waging war but also in planning the military of the future. Congress should remember it still has the power of the purse; it should call our generals, colonels, captains and sergeants to testify frequently, so that their opinions and needs are known to the men they lead.

''Our most important, and sometimes most severe, judges are our subordinates. That is a fact I discovered early on in my military career. It is, unfortunately, a lesson Donald Rumsfeld seems incapable of learning.''

What a damning indictment, and yet not a sound from the majority in Congress. If I had read that, I would have asked him to come and testify before the committee of jurisdiction the next day.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Gingrich is saying send up reform, lead, do something; this government cannot function. This is not just us. This is Mr. Gingrich saying the same thing.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. It says shame on them, shame on them that they would tolerate this kind of abuse.

Let me just quickly say, Democrats have been saying this over and over again. Democrats have been asking in the most polite way for Mr. Rumsfeld to step aside, to resign. TOM LANTOS says that Americans will not tolerate this waste of tax dollars, but let me give an anecdotal story.

What is happening in Iraq and other places, where Americans go and make commitments, we are going to build schools, we are going to reconstruct, we give these contracts to no-bid competitor, huge contracts. They sit in their offices. They give it to another contractor, another contractor, another contractor, who takes a piece of the pie. By the time you get down to the reconstruct in Mosul or Baghdad, nothing happens. What do the Iraqi people say? Americans have made a promise. What do the taxpayers say? You want to pay all this money for foreign aid and defense and you give us nothing. Then we get bad diplomacy because our allies or who we are trying to help looks and says we are masquerading.

Let me just finish by saying I have spoken to contractors and to the independent contractors who say they are living large in Iraq, while sadly our soldiers are looking for water, are looking for body armor, and some of the contractors are living large.

Let me say this, there are many who are over there sacrificing in danger. I am not condemning the workers who are on the front lines, who are civilians, who are in those places where our soldiers are. We thank them. But some of those who they work for are layering the contracts, and therefore, by layering the contracts, American people are expending dollars, and no one is turning on the light like the International Relations Committee has asked for, to have oversight to answer the question of what is going on. I believe we owe the American people more than this.

Shame on this House, shame on this leadership.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Amen.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. That is the job. That is the job. That is the responsibility that we have here of oversight.

Mr. DELAHUNT. There is no oversight.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. And it is because the President does not want any oversight, and the Republican Congress says, yes, Mr. President.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. There is no oversight. There is no outrage. There is no conscience. There is no heart. There is no ability of the leadership on the other side to recognize that the country has to move in a new direction and that we have to do something to restore the American people's confidence in their government. When will that happen?

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. As we wrap up, I would suggest that over the course of the next few months, Mr. Speaker, the American people will not get an answer from the leadership on the Republican side about what why the debt limit was increased by $3 trillion, why we are borrowing billions upon billions upon billions and even trillions of dollars from foreign countries, selling off. You will not hear a good answer, reining in spending, the most rapid spending growth during one administration

since Franklin Roosevelt. This is the outfit that wanted to have a revolution.

Mr. Speaker, www.housedemocrats.gov/30something for those Members. All the charts that were up tonight are on the Web site, www.housedemocrats.gov/30something.

Enjoyed it. Go Gators.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, with that, we would not only like to say thanks to Mr. DELAHUNT but Ms. JACKSON-LEE who joined us tonight from the great State of Texas, also Mr. RYAN and Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ for being here tonight.

We would also in the 30 Something Working Group recognize the great contribution of Dr. Martin Luther King who was assassinated on this date and Mr. Ron Brown who was our Secretary of Commerce that went down in a plane crash yesterday, the day before, on Monday. We want to let both families know we appreciate the contributions of these two great Americans to our country. We will be forever better because of their contributions.

At the same time, Mr. Speaker, the evidence that was just overwhelming tonight from the Members of not only what we are saying, because we are concerned as Americans, not just as Democrats, we are saying that we are willing to lead. We are also saying, Mr. Speaker, that when you have the past Speaker of this House, the first Republican Speaker in 40-something years coming before this body and make the statements that he believes the majority will lose the majority this time around because of what he identified this time of the evidence of why it will happen is just powerful and hard to defend on the majority side.

□ 2310

We are not asking for the majority side to defend what the past Speaker has said, but I think it is important to take note and that the American people take note of what is happening right now. So I think the American spirit will rise up over partisan politics and allow us to lead.

With that, I want to thank our vice chair, Mr. LARSON, of the Democratic Caucus; Mr. CLYBURN, our chairman; STENY HOYER, our Democratic whip; and Ms. PELOSI, who is the Democratic leader, for allowing us to have this time. We look forward to coming back to the floor to address not only the Members but the American people.

CUT UNNECESSARY TAB ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FITZPATRICK of Pennsylvania). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) is recognized until midnight.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the privilege of being recognized to address this House this evening, and I would start out with some responses and some answers to these questions that you have been advised you will never hear the answers to. I didn't come prepared to answer these questions, but I actually think I am prepared to answer them.

The remarks with regard to the need to balance the budget. I agree, and I have a plan to balance this budget. I don't want to balance it by raising taxes. I want to balance this budget by controlling our spending. That is the issue. That is what the American people want. That is what I want. That is what we would do if we were a family balancing our budget or a small business balancing our budget or a large business balancing our budget. We would take a look at our spending.

Of course, we would work on the revenue side. Our revenue side has been growing. It grew 14.5 percent more than anticipated last year because we kept the taxes down. So I would suggest my colleagues on the other side of the aisle join with me. I will be introducing a piece of legislation. It is called the CUT legislation, which means cut unnecessary tab. Cut the unnecessary tab of this Federal Government.

It is going to be a new process that has never been offered to this Congress before, Mr. Speaker. It is a process that will allow for a privileged motion to come to the floor under an open rule that would be a rescissions bill once every quarter. Once every quarter, leadership will have the first 10 days of each quarter to offer a recissions bill. If they do not do that, any Member can offer a rescissions bill under a privileged motion. And if the Speaker recognizes them, they can bring forward a shell bill or a bill that has a thousand cuts in it, for that matter, but it will allow every single line item that has been appropriated by this Congress to be brought back before this Congress and removed from the budget under rescissions.

When an appropriation bills leaves the House and goes to the Senate, and the Senate works their will on the appropriation bill and it comes back to conference and we agree and do final passage on an appropriation bill, it then goes to the President for his signature. From the instant that that bill is enacted, and generally from the instant that the President's signature and ink goes on that bill, it will be subject then to rescissions that will happen four times a year in this Congress.

Four times a year Congress will take up a rescissions bill, and it will allow any Member to bring an amendment that will be ruled in order, provided it is in the proper sequence in the structure of the rescissions bill, which will allow actually for rescissions of all appropriations that have gone out that haven't been expended. So every Member then will have that opportunity to have their attempt at a line item veto. And when that budget is done and when the expenditures are spent, then a majority of this Congress will have had their say on every single line item.

If they object to a particular issue, like say, for example the Cowgirls Hall of Fame would be one that comes to mind, they would simply bring an amendment that would be added to the rescissions bill, put it up, debate the amendment, and we would vote that amendment up or down. If the amendment succeeds and it is to strike the funding for the Cowgirls Hall of Fame, then that would become part of the rescissions bill that would come off this floor, presumably pass and go over to the Senate for them to act on it. Now, whether they do or not is an open question as well, Mr. Speaker. But certainly the public would put some pressure on the Senate to do the right thing and do the responsible thing.

That is one way to control earmarks. It would allow Congress to address every single earmark and rescind, if they chose, those earmarks that are not appropriate spending. So the pork and the fat that is in the bill, particularly the appropriations that come in in conference that don't have a vote on the House or the Senate, unless they are part of the overall conference report, those kinds of appropriations then could be singled out in our rescissions bill and we could strike the unnecessary spending.

It would be something that would empower the rank-and-file members of this Congress and help them offset some of the powerful tactics of the appropriations people when they sit down in conference and put these appropriations in the bill. It is appropriate. It is something I believe our Founding Fathers would agree with. It is something that will control, to some degree, the overspending of our budget.

Now, one can argue that it is entitlements that are the big part of this, and I will agree. Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security and interest, those four items, are swallowing up more than half of our budget. Our discretionary portion of the budget is getting smaller and smaller. But we can still address the overspending in our discretionary budget. And this doesn't mean we can't address our entitlements. I am for going down that path of addressing the entitlements too, Mr. Speaker.

Now, my CUT bill will be introduced sometime in the next 2 weeks, and that means Cut the Unnecessary Tab of Congress. It is new. I think it is unique. I do not think anything has ever been offered like this in Congress before. I don't want to go so far as to say that it is revolutionary, but I will go so far as to say that I believe it is necessary. It is necessary for us to shine some sunshine on the things we do here in this Congress and let the people see how we do business, and put people up in this Congress for a vote so we can read their voting record and determine where they really stand.

So these kind of nights when you hear this rhetoric go on over and over and over again, that we are spending too much money and we are irresponsible and the national debt is going up and up and up and up, I would say to the people that have been making

those statements night after night down here, what is your plan? What plan do you propose, other than raising taxes?

You are talking like we don't respond to you. We respond to you. I am responding to you right now and asking you to join me in my CUT bill. We will do something responsible. We will slow down Federal spending and make everybody in this Congress accountable, to have a vote on potentially every single line item in the entire $2.7 trillion budget.

That is a responsible thing for us to do, and I am asking for support on both sides of the aisle. I actually think there will be some significant Democrat support on the other side of the aisle, and I am confident there will be significant support here on the Republican side of the aisle. That is one thing we can do.

Now, this foreign debt issue. Well, foreign debt just comes two ways. One is if we have deficit spending and then we are borrowing to keep this government going. All of that debt isn't foreign debt. A percentage of it is, and I have seen the numbers. It isn't a shocking piece that is foreign debt. But we have foreign countries that invest in U.S. Treasury bills because they believe in our currency. So you can declare that to be foreign debt, and I won't deny it. And I am not comfortable with an ever-growing foreign debt.

Another way we can get foreign debt is to have a negative balance of trade. A year ago it was a minus $617.7 billion in a negative balance of trade. A lot of that is because of oil and another big chunk of it is because of China. Those two things added together, I believe, are nearing about $400 billion between those two categories all together. That was a year ago, minus $617.7 billion. This last year, it was just reported out a month or a little more ago, a minus $725 billion imbalance in trade deficit.

So whenever we come with a trade deficit, that means that there are companies and countries, foreign companies and foreign countries that will hold collateral of the United States. We buy more than we sell, so that deficit becomes collateralized in collateral here in the United States. I know at one point the Japanese owned Rockefeller Plaza. So that would be an example. They have since sold it, but that kind of collateral is held here in this country and it grows: $725 billion.

This kind of growth rate of our trade deficit, we are approaching that point where it will be $1 trillion a year. And if you do $1 trillion a year for 10 years, you have got, miraculously, $10 trillion in debt. These numbers continue to grow. It can't go on forever. We need to reverse that.

Unlike my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, I have a plan to address that as well. And it is not a difficult plan to understand. It is one that serious economists will not disagree with, and it is called the fair tax. The fair tax is a national consumption tax. And what it does is it recognizes that what you tax, you get less of. Well, we're taxing all productivity in America under this policy that we have today under the Internal Revenue Code: The corporate income tax and the individual income tax and all of the taxes we have that roll around that.

□ 2320

I propose under the FAIR Tax, H.R. 25, to take all tax off productivity in America. Ronald Reagan said what you tax you get less of. So I want to take all tax off of all productivity. We will more than double the economy in this country in 10 to 15 years. If we do that and put the tax on consumption, then we are providing the incentive for savings and investment. To take the earnings, put it in savings and investment. People will decide when they will pay the taxes. But the important part is to untax productivity so we get more productivity. When that happens, gross domestic product jumps and doubles. People have 56 percent more money in their pockets because we are not withholding from their paycheck and they go out into the retail businesses and spend money. The tax is collected there, and it comes into the national treasury and that is a wash. We do not collect any more or less taxes than we do under the income tax system, but what we have done is taken this burden of our taxes off. We have gotten rid of a trillion dollars in anchor that we are dragging every year to fund our IRS and force our IRS, and then the disincentives when people will no longer work that overtime or invest that money in their production line.

The FAIR tax is the solution to this economy. It fixes the balance of trade. The way it does that, for example, if you had a Mazda on a dealer's lot with a $30,000 price tag and you had a Chevy or a Ford sitting on a dealer's lot with a $30,000 price tag. Competitively they have matched their prices so the vehicles are built with competitive value and competitive prices; $30,000 is an example.

Then we pass the FAIR tax, and it will remove 22 percent out of that automobile because that is the embedded Federal tax that has to be built into that price so that the corporations can pay taxes: Their corporate income tax, their payroll tax, and a series of other taxes that are built into the burden of running a company. Passing the FAIR tax takes the income tax pricing component out of that automobile, the $30,000 Ford or Chevy or American-made vehicle goes down to $23,400. And the Mazda made in Japan stays at $30,000.

Then we add the embedded tax back in, the 23 percent tax and you write the check for the Chevy or the Ford for $30,420. You write the check for the Mazda for $39,000. That is a 28 percent marketing advantage for the American-made vehicle. That means those $800 million worth of Mazdas coming over from Japan every year do not come in any where as near as great of numbers any more, and some of those Chevies and Fords go to Japan to be sold. And over there, they are priced at 22 percent less because we have taken the Federal tax out of the pricing component and put it on the sales size.

That is how we fix this minus $725 billion imbalance of trade. And when we have revenue coming into the Federal Government, we also have repaired the problem with regard to balancing our budget. We will be able to do this. What we need, though, 44 percent of Americans are not paying taxes at all. They are not filing their returns. They do not have a tax liability.

It was Alexander Tyler who said that when Americans understand that a majority of them can vote themselves benefits from the public treasury, on that day democracy ceases to exist. We are closing in on that 51 percent number that Alexander Tyler was so concerned about. It is 44 percent today, and perhaps the number is larger. We need to turn that around. We need to make taxpayers out of every American. Get them vested in this. We can untax the poor in America at the same time.

But I want to point out an anecdote that I think illustrates how the face of America gradually would be changed. That is I have often said that little Johnny would have to put a couple dimes up on the counter when he bought his baseball cards or little Sally on her Barbie doll clothes, and they would understand that they had to fund the expensive Federal Government. That would change the politics of America one transaction at a time, one child at a time, growing to adulthood. Every time they make a transaction, they would realize they had to pay for this expensive Federal Government. That has been the story I have used and created because it illustrated something I wanted to express.

Well, last Friday night I was at a dinner in Iowa. A young candidate for Congress stepped forward and he told about his son, Michael, who was buying a package of Skittles for 85 cents. I believe Michael is 8 years old. He put the Skittles on the counter and the checkout lady said that will be 91 cents. And Michael said the Skittles are 85 cents, why do you want 91 cents?

You have to pay the tax.

I have to pay tax on Skittles, he said.

Yes. The answer is you have to pay tax on the Skittles, the baseball cards, the automobile, the Barbie doll clothes, the prom dress, the pampers and the limousine service if it is for personal service, all of those things. And every time we dug into our pocket and put that cash out for Uncle Sam, all of us would be reminded we have an expensive Federal Government and we would ask, can we get along without some of these services. Can we be a little more personally responsible? Could we get a little more efficiency out of our churches because we do not get much efficiency out of our Federal

Government? Those kinds of questions would go on one at a time by the tens and hundreds of millions over the generations, and the face of America and attitude of America toward government would change.

So two things, fix the problems which have been laid out here tonight by the people on the other side of the aisle, and one of those things is the CUT bill, the Cut the Unnecessary Tab that America has so we can do a rescissions bill under an open rule so we can cut the earmarks that are unnecessary, the pork that is unnecessary, and put a final stamp of approval on a budget and all of us be proud that we voted our conscience and our needs.

The other side is let us reform our taxes. Serious economists will not argue with the position I have taken here tonight. But what I do recognize is we have had a long, strong economy. This long, strong economy, we had ten quarters in a row where we had 3 percent or more growth in our gross domestic product. Unemployment has been ratcheting down. It is about 4.7 percent right now. When you get that kind of smooth sailing for 10 quarters, and now the 11th quarter was the last one and I think that settled in around 1.6 or 1.7. You cannot carry that run on forever, but no one can find a better run in this economy at least going back to the early Reagan years and perhaps well before that because even before a similar kind of 3 percent run of growth for 10 consecutive quarters did exist in the early 1980s, it existed in an environment of 22 percent interest and high unemployment and high inflation rates. We had to get that under control.

A strong growth and economy was not doing as much as the strong growth we have had over the last 11 quarters here in the United States of America. So this solid economy that we have really works against us in a way because I do not believe we will find the political will to reform our taxes under this kind of an economic environment.

So I will say there are only two ways we can pass H.R. 25, the FAIR tax bill, and one of those ways is if we had an economic collapse or a dramatic economic downturn. That would cause us to look for solutions to bring our economy out of the potential doldrums.

That is not something I anticipate nor do I desire. I do not want to do business and get tax reform under that kind of an environment, although I think it would be better for us to go through that kind of pain and come out the other side with the FAIR tax as a policy.

I want to avoid an economic collapse or a downturn, so the other alternative is if we had a Presidential candidate who runs for the candidacy on the FAIR tax and wins the Presidency and receives a mandate from the American people. That kind of mandate from the American people would bring it to this Congress, good economy or not, and we could hammer out a good fair tax policy that would be a reform. That fixes our balance of trade and our deficit spending and it fixes the borrowing from foreign governments and lets us pay all of that back. It makes the United States of America the destination Nation of choice for the capital in the world. It brings back $11 trillion in stranded American capital that is in foreign economies.

□ 2330

All of those things happened good out of this. These are solutions, Mr. Speaker, to the problems that were raised over here on the other side of the aisle tonight. I ask again, what is your plan? I have laid out my plan and there are clear solutions. There are well thought out solutions, and I present them to this Congress, Mr. Speaker, and ask for endorsement and support of those clear and logical and rational and, in fact, with regard to the FAIR tax, irrefutably solid economic plan, one that serious economists will not challenge.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I didn't come here to the floor to talk about taxes. I came here and listened to the statements made by my colleagues and that, Mr. Speaker, is my rebuttal for their remarks.

I came here to talk about immigration because I think it is important for us to look ahead to the future of this Nation. And I have watched people marching in the streets across this country. It sounds to me as though they have a series of marches that are planned in the near future.

I recall in my mind's eye the television shots of a half a million people in the streets of Los Angeles, a half a million pouring into the streets to march and march under the Mexican flag in a big way. And as I looked across there and tried to do my count, my judgment was that perhaps there were 10 Mexican flags for every American flag in the streets of Los Angeles.

These protests went on in other cities around the country as well. Students walked out of school in places like Marshalltown, Iowa, for example, and marched with Mexican flags. I don't know how many of them actually knew what they were doing or understood the issue at all. Part of it might have just been a reason to get out of school. And I don't know how many of them salute our American flag, put their hand over their heart and pledge allegiance to the flag. Perhaps most of them do.

But I also saw anger in the streets of Los Angeles, and it reminds me that was the place where the American soccer team some years ago played the Mexican soccer team, and the American soccer team, when they came through the tunnel, were pummeled with garbage and trash and food wrappers and anything that the people in the stands in Los Angeles could throw at our American soccer team.

There is a friction there, Mr. Speaker. And the people that are marching under Mexican flags aren't marching with a request that we accept them underneath the American flag. If they were, they would be marching under an American flag. I think that is a simple piece of logic.

The questions that are not asked on this immigration issue, it is much rhetoric. It has been an intense effort to repeat over and over again certain fallacies, and those fallacies seem to be, they seem to believe if they repeat them enough, soon or later people will accept them and regard them to be true.

For example, we can't deport 12 million people. Yes, we can. We could do that if we mobilized our Nation. We could deport 12 million people. It would be the largest human deportation ever in the history of the world. We don't have the will to do that. I don't propose that we do that, but I don't accept the idea that we could not deport 12 million people if we chose to do so.

But I will submit instead, Mr. Speaker, that we set policies in place that shut off the jobs magnet. The 12 million people and, in fact, I believe that number is significantly larger than 12 million people. But the 12 million number that the Pew Foundation has put out within the last couple of weeks, and now we have adjusted our 11 million to 12 million, they came here on their own. They got here on their own dime, so to speak and maybe on $1,500 or so to a coyote to get them across the border and up into the United States. But they came here on their own. They found their own resources to get here on their own, and we can set up policies that shut off this jobs magnet and they can find a way to go back home on their own. That's the right kind of policy to have.

We don't want to go out and pull people out of houses and load them up in buses and haul them back down to south of the border. We want to set a policy that we should have had in place a long time ago, and we want to enforce the policy that we should have had in place a long time ago.

I sit on the Immigration Subcommittee of the House Judiciary Committee. I sit on immigration hearings, sometimes two, three, perhaps even more per week. I have done that for more than 3 years, listening in these hearings, and you get educated about immigration policy if you are listening in that fashion and asking questions and reading and probing.

And I will say the part that is missing is this: Employer sanctions. I cannot determine that the Federal Government has sanctioned a single employer in the last 2 years. I did get a report that they have sanctioned three employers in the last year. But then I got a report that there were none in the year before. And when I drill down into that information I tend to find out they were civil actions that were brought, not other actions from our Department of Justice. And so I would ask the Department of Justice demonstrate what employers have been

sanctioned, how many and for how much and what are the violations, Mr. Speaker.

I am going to live with the belief though that there are no effective employer sanctions. That is probably the most accurate way to state at least the last 2 years, and the years prior to that there have been a few sanctions but they get less and less as the years go on, and it demonstrates the administration has no will to enforce these laws in the workplace. So I submit that we need to enforce employer sanctions to the fullest extent the law. I support enhancing those employer sanctions.

I do not know how to get the administration to do their job and enforce the law. And so since Americans know that there is no enforcement of employer sanctions, employers know that they can hire illegals with impunity. They are not accountable.

Now if you are an employer and you are competing against other businesses, perhaps in foreign countries or maybe across town, and those other businesses have a cheaper labor supply than you have, if they are across town they might be hiring illegal labor.

Say, perhaps you are a landscape company and you go out and cut grass and spray lawns and fertilize them and trim trees and lay sod and do yards for new houses and those kind of things where it takes a lot of labor, labor that can go out and be effective in their work. If you do that, Mr. Speaker, and you are competing against someone who is paying half the price for labor that you are, you have got to get twice the work out of your employees in order to be able to compete with that. And you can only push people so hard.

And I have spent my life in the construction business and hired a lot of men and we have done a lot of work. And I met payroll for over 28 years, over 1,400 some consecutive weeks, signed pay checks, met the cash flow, hired people, took on all the liability, the Worker's Comp, the Unemployment, the health insurance, the retirement fund and the liability insurance that goes with that, the H.R. issues that go with hiring personnel when you know you want to keep them there. I put my people in a seasonal business, giving them 12 months out of the year work with vacation pay and benefits because I wanted to keep those employees and have them on hand when I needed them.

Now, some of my competition looked at it the other way and decided, well, if STEVE KING has to pay $17 an hour to start out an unskilled employee, we can go out here and get ourselves one for 7 or $8 an hour, and we will put them on the job and we can have twice as many. Actually they could have three times as many because the illegals don't carry with them those burdens of health insurance, unemployment benefits, you know, I gave you the list. So smart money will go for the cheap help.

And they don't have to maintain that help throughout the winter, the non working season. They can just simply work them when they need them, cut them loose when they don't need them. And I won't say that is necessarily abuse because these people are willing to accept that wage. They are glad to. It is the opportunity that they have. But it puts the worker who is working legally at a disadvantage. It puts the employer who wants to hire legal employees at a disadvantage. And we are doing a tremendous disservice against the people who are complying with our laws. And I don't hear anything coming out of the United States Senate these days that would change that, Mr. Speaker. I don't hear a word that would change that with regard to the guest worker/ temporary worker policies that are coming.

There are those who stand with me on this issue certainly. And those I applaud for standing for American sovereignty.

Borders. If there is any institution that has survived and thrived in the 20th century, it is the nation state. The nation state has come through all of the chaos of two world wars and a Cold War and numerous other battles and economic collapse that we saw in 1929 and other blips in our economic bubble that we have had, and throughout all of that and through all the strife and the stress that goes on, the nation state survives.

A nation state must have borders. And you can't call them borders if you don't enforce them. If you simply draw a line on a map but people cross that border at will, if they haul goods and services across the border at will, if they haul contraband across the border at will, you don't have a border, and pretty soon you don't have a nation.

I made a point before a group in Texas last weekend on Saturday night down in Dallas, and I asked them to forgive me if my precision on Texas history wasn't exactly right. But I am going to make another attempt here tonight on the floor of the Congress, Mr. Speaker, and it is going to be close, if not precisely correct.

I would take us all back to 1821 in Texas. Texas was a territory of Mexico at the time. And one of the earliest Anglo settlers in Texas was the father of the famous Steven F. Austin. His name was Moses Austin.

□ 2340

He negotiated with the king of Spain for a permit to establish an Anglo colony in Texas, the first nonHispanic, I guess we could call it, or they all called it the Anglo colony in Texas. In 1821 he negotiated to establish that settlement. He began to establish that settlement, and then there was a revolution in Mexico. Spain lost control of Mexico later that same year, in 1821, and the successor then to the king of Spain was the new king of Mexico, King Augustin de Iturbide. And that new king of Mexico honored the agreement with Moses Austin and allowed them to continue with their colony that they were establishing, I believe, near Nacogdoches, Texas.

So as these years unfolded and there was a contest and a battle for who could be the leader of Mexico, in 1825, Texas still being a territory of Mexico, they issued an offer out to the rest of the continent, and the offer was this: If you are married and you will come to Texas and promise to pay $30 over the next 6 years to the government of Mexico, we will give you a league of land. A league of land being 4,428 acres. Well, that is a pretty good offer even back in those days when $30 was really $30.

So that started a vast land stampede, and people came from the United States, all over the United States, but, of course, we always think of Davy Crockett from Tennessee and Colonel Travis and Jim Bowie. Those folks poured into Texas. They came in to seek their fortune. They came in to claim that league of land. I do not know how many of those guys were actually married so they could do that, but a lot of Anglos poured into Texas. That was 1825 when that offer came, and Texas was well on its way to independence by 1836, 11 years later. Only 11 years after an open borders plan that was offered by the territory of Texas, which was a territory of Mexico, they said, Come down here. We will give you some land. We need some folks to settle here. It will be good for our economy. We cannot get along in Texas unless we have some settlers down here; so we are going to take them from wherever we can get them, and it does not matter if they do not culturally match the people that are there. Well, it was clear that that was the clash that came at Goliad, the clash that came at the Alamo, the clash that culminated down at San Jacinto.

So I posed that question in Dallas Saturday night. Texas is not part of Mexico anymore, is it? Or is it yet, Mr. Speaker? That is the question that is before this Congress. That is the question that is before the Senate today. It makes a difference when you open borders up. It makes a difference when you allow in perhaps 4 million people a year that have contempt for our laws.

Their very first act upon setting foot in the United States of America is to violate our laws, and we think they are going to respect our laws if we grant them a free pass?

Thomas Sowell wrote some words. He said, What if bank robbers who were caught were simply told to give the money back and not to do it again? What if murderers who were caught were turned loose and warned not to kill again? Would that be proof that it is futile to take action when no action was taken? Could it be that it is impossible to enforce our border laws when no one has tried? That is Thomas Sowell, Mr. Speaker.

And I think I have quite a lot of material here, but I am not so unique in my presentation that I would not love to concede some of this time to the gentleman from Texas, my good friend Mr. GOHMERT.

I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. GOHMERT. Well, I appreciate very much my friend from Iowa for sharing this Special Order. And I appreciate the things that you have been pointing out.

Of course, as you talk about Texas history, you are talking about my State. It is where I was born, reared, grew up. Except for my 4 years in the service and the summer I spent in the Soviet Union on an exchange program, it has been home. And when you talk about Nacogdoches and San Augustine, right in that area where the first settlement in Texas occurred, that is my district. That is my home. That is my district. So it is interesting. And I love history. I was a history major in college.

And one of the things we were taught in elementary school, one of the things we were taught in junior high; high school; and college; Texas A&M, where I attended, we got the same thing all the way through schooling: What two words in common language are the basis for America's strength? ''Melting pot.'' We are a melting pot. People came from all over the world to America. They assimilated. They came together through heat and difficulties and problems of the day. And the heat that tests people and makes them pure and stronger, that heat brought us together and melted us together into one Nation under God, indivisible, and, yes, there was liberty and eventually justice for all.

But I thought about it as you mentioned earlier, Mr. KING, the discussion about immigration. Immigration has been a lifeblood to this country, and that does not need to stop. But as we have gotten wise in our own eyes, as you can find reference in the old Testament, ''wise in our own eyes,'' we quit using the melting pot metaphor and gone to using something that some people today like to say is even better: We are now a tossed salad, where each ingredient retains its individuality and just mixes together.

A tossed salad. That was never the strength of America. The America that became strong, the America that we studied, the America that made it through world wars, the America that is responsible for France not speaking anything but French now and Germany speaking German, the great America that has allowed England to speak the language that it was accustomed to, the America that has not been imperialist, as some French people would say. Some French people say, You are imperialist. I say, Then why are you not speaking English instead of French? That is because it was never our intention. Why do Iraqis not speak English? Because that is not our intention. We are a great country and have always been.

And if you would allow me and indulge me, the thing that I would like to share further is the oath of allegiance that is taken when someone becomes a citizen, and if the gentleman would continue to yield, I would like to go through that.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is important for people to be reminded. This is the oath. You want to assimilate in this country? You want to be a citizen of this country? Take this oath. And you have got to mean it. It is under oath.

''I hereby declare, on oath, that I absolutely and entirely renounce and abjure,'' and, of course, in Texas we do not abjure a lot, but we know what ''renounce'' means, ''renounce and abjure all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince, potentate, state, or sovereignty of whom or which I have heretofore been a subject or citizen.'' That is pretty strong language.

And if you have any comments on that first part of this oath.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Well, thank you, Mr. GOHMERT. I have got to speak to naturalized citizens in the courthouse. Sioux City is a location where we have the most activity there in my district, and I look forward to those events and take that very seriously.

In fact, I bring a Constitution to every one of those new students, and this will be an example of it. And I will sign that and date that and present that to them as a cherished document.

And in the Constitution, of course, we have also the Declaration of Independence as part of that. And I talk to them about the immigrant heritage of my family and how we had opportunities here and how my ancestors and myself and my children and then my grandchildren, hopefully, will remain grateful for the privilege that this country has offered.

And I know that my grandmother came from Germany, and she reared six sons. She sent one to the South Pacific. That was my father. And one was physically unable to serve in the military, and the other four went back to Europe to fight against the old country.

□ 2350

They put their roots down in this country solid and hard from the beginning. And my father went his first day to kindergarten speaking only German. And when he came home from school that day, he said ''hello'' to his mother in German. And she turned to him and said ''Speaking German in this household is for you from now on verboten. I came here to become an American, and you will go to school and learn English, and you will bring it home and you will teach it to me. That is the only way that I can learn.''

She never really came away from her German accent, but she spoke English well, and I could always understand her.

I yield back to you, Mr. GOHMERT, if you have other comments.

Mr. GOHMERT. The gentleman from Iowa understands what it means then through his heritage to absolutely, entirely renounce fidelity to any foreign state or sovereignty. That is critical. And my great grandfather came over, was a European immigrant, in around 1870, came to South Texas and settled there. He didn't speak English and he had about $20.

Within 25 years, he built one of the nicest homes that is still there, it has a historical marker, State of Texas and national historical marker, because he learned English and he worked his tail off and he assimilated and he made the community better, the State better and the country better. And that has been the legacy of immigrants.

But it goes on. That is not enough. That means I am going to wave my American flag. That American flag is what is going to be the most important flag to me in my heart and soul. That is what in that oath means, American flag.

Mr. KING of Iowa. I might point out that in one of my travels around Iowa, I pulled down around in Keokuk, and there used to be an old Federal hospital there that was built and put in place during the Civil War. They would bring the wounded up the river and then offload them there at the hospital in Keokuk and take care of them.

So one of the monuments there, down in the river bottom near the Mississippi River, is a big stone, a great big heavy stone, and there is a big brass plate in there, and it is mounted in there by the daughters of the American Revolution. And it says ''One Nation, One Flag, One Language.'' That was established just after the Civil War.

They understood how important and powerful it was to have a common, unifying language. That is something that has been recognized by all nations in the world. They all have established an official language, except here in the United States. It becomes more and more important for us to bond each other together by having that common form of communications currency.

''One Nation, One Flag, One Language.'' That was the creed in 1865, and it should be the creed today.

I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. GOHMERT. I thank the gentleman, my good friend. I would continue on with the oath. That I will support and defend the Constitution, not just the Constitution, it goes on, I will support and defend the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America. All laws. The Constitution and the laws of the United States of America.

Gee, that would seem to include immigration laws, wouldn't it?

It goes on, against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I will bear arms on behalf of the United States when required by law.

It is not enough simply to pledge allegiance. You have to be willing to risk your life for the American flag and all that it stands for. You have to be willing to pledge allegiance to the United States, the Constitution and the laws of the United States.

It goes on, and I know your time is running short and I don't want to intrude on the gentleman's time. I guess

we have got about 7 minutes, but I did want to point this out, at least this point of the oath of citizenship.

If this Nation is going to continue to be stronger, I would only submit to you the Hispanics that have settled in my district from Central America, from Mexico and assimilated, have made East Texas a better place in which to live.

I have some dear friends. As a judge I presided over the wedding of some dear Hispanic friends that had come in and assimilated. I am telling you, they have made Tyler, Texas, and East Texas a better place. They have assimilated. They are wonderful people. They bring family values, and they are strong in their faith and love and joy and mirth. It has just been wonderful. But they assimilated.

That would be the one thing I just wanted to add. Melting pot is the strength, and that is what we need to get back to.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Thank you, Mr. GOHMERT. I appreciate the gentleman coming to the floor at this hour of the evening to add to the dialogue here.

Mr. Speaker, I want to pick up with that. Certainly assimilation, we are the nation that has been successful in assimilation. The Israelis established their country in 1948, and in 1954 they established Hebrew as their official language. They did that because they needed a common language to tie them together.

I asked them, why did you do that? Where did you get that inspiration? They said, well, we saw the success the United States had with assimilation, so we wanted to adopt a similar policy.

They resurrected a language that wasn't used functionally other than in prayer for 2,000 years and put it in the workplace, and everyone that comes to Israel learns Hebrew, and that is how they tie themselves together as a nation.

But I would like to point out another statement that gets repeated that is not challenged often, and that is we can't replace all these workers, the ones that are here illegally. If we shut off the jobs magnet and they go home, we can't replace them.

Here are some numbers that one might work with to give us an idea on whether we can replace them or not. The Pew Foundation put out some numbers, this is a year ago, so they have raised them a little bit, but at that time they were working with 11 million illegals in America. 6.3 million of them were working. About the same proportion if you want to go to 12 million, but I don't have that factor figured in.

If you are were going to replace the 6.3 million working illegals in the United States, the first place we would go would be the unemployment rolls. That is 17.5 million on unemployment. We are paying them not to work. One would think we could just simply pay them to work and replace the 6.3 million. Maybe they continue to have the skills necessary and you can develop some skills in them, but there would be 7.5 million there in that category.

Then of those who have exhausted their unemployment benefits, that is another 5.2 million that are looking for work but they are not on the unemployment roles. So we are at 12.7 million.

Another 9.3 million teenagers between the ages of 16 and 19 are not in the workforce, even on a part-time basis. We would go to them to help work in our fields, for example, and flip some burgers. Add to that 4.5 million who are the young seniors, ages 65 to 69. Some of those people would go to work if they didn't have a disincentive, Mr. Speaker.

Then of those between the ages of 20 and 64, the really prime work age, there is another 51 million in America that are simply not in the workforce. They could be retired, they could be working on the black market, they maybe are doing some kind of dishonest enterprise, but they are not in the workforce in any meaningful way. They would also become part of that force that we could hire from.

Added up altogether, 77.5 million non-working Americans between the ages of 16 and 69. We could surely tap one out of every 12.3 of those to fill the gap for the 6.3 million illegals that are working in this country. That is before we bring technology to bear. That is before we find other solutions for any kind of gaps we might have in our hiring practices. So there are solutions out here, Mr. Speaker.

And it is not true that there are jobs that Americans won't do. Americans are doing all of these jobs right now today. For example, in the construction business, 12 percent in the construction industry are illegal workers. Thirteen percent is the unemployment rate in the construction industry.

There are the other comparable rates. In those kind of sectors where there is a high concentration of illegals, there is also a high unemployment that corresponds with that. The reason is because those American workers have been displaced by cheaper labor and they can't afford to go do that work for that kind of money.

So, Mr. Speaker, there is piece after piece of this immigration issue that needs to be discussed. It is a very, very complicated issue. It is a very emotional issue. I stand on enforcement first. Let's establish that we can defend and protect our borders. Let's build a fence. Let's eliminate birthright for citizenship. Let's shut off the jobs magnet. Let's pass my New Idea bill, which removes the Federal deductibility for wages and benefits paid to illegals.

If we can do those things and establish that we can enforce the law in this country and respect for the law, then we can have a legitimate debate on what kind of workforce we need and where they need to come from.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. MCGOVERN (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today.

Mr. TANNER (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today and the balance of the week on account of a death in the family.

Ms. WATSON (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today and the balance of the week on account of a death in the family.

Mr. CULBERSON (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today on account of official business.

Mrs. EMERSON (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today on account of inspecting tornado damage in her district.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. DEFAZIO, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. PALLONE, for 5 minutes, today.

Mrs. MCCARTHY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. EMANUEL, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. RANGEL, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. KAPTUR, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. MCDERMOTT, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. SOLIS, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. CUMMINGS, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. MCHENRY) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. DREIER, for 5 minutes, today and April 5 and 6.

Mr. MCHENRY, for 5 minutes, today and April 5, 6, and 7.

Mr. POE, for 5 minutes, today and April 5, 6, and 7.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana, for 5 minutes, today, and April 5, 6, and 7.

Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania, for 5 minutes, April 7.

Mr. KELLER, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. KENNEDY of Minnesota, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. LATHAM, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DUNCAN, for 5 minutes, today.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION REFERRED

A concurrent resolution of the Senate of the following title was taken from the Speaker's table and, under the rule, referred as follows:

S. Con. Res. 60. Concurrent resolution designating the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum in Kansas City, Missouri, as America's

National Negro Leagues Baseball Museum; to the Committee on Resources.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 59 minutes p.m.), the House adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, April 5, 2006, at 10 a.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 8 of rule XII, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

6865. A letter from the Comptroller, Department of Defense, transmitting a report of a violation of the Antideficiency Act by the Department of the Army, Case Number 05-02, pursuant to 31 U.S.C. 1517(b); to the Committee on Appropriations.

6866. A letter from the Under Secretary for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's report on the amount of purchases from foreign entities for Fiscal Year 2005, pursuant to Public Law 104–201, section 827 (110 Stat. 2611); to the Committee on Armed Services.

6867. A letter from the Under Secretary for Personnel and Readiness, Department of Defense, transmitting a letter on the approved retirement of General Charles F. Wald, United States Air Force, and his advancement to the grade of general on the retired list; to the Committee on Armed Services.

6868. A letter from the Under Secretary for Personnel and Readiness, Department of Defense, transmitting authorization of the enclosed list of officers to wear the insignia of the grade of major general accordance with title 10, United States Code, section 777; to the Committee on Armed Services.

6869. A letter from the Assistant Attorney General, Civil Rights Division, Department of Justice, transmitting the 2005 Annual Report regarding the Department's enforcement activities under the Equal Credit Opportunity Act, pursuant to 15 U.S.C. 1691f; to the Committee on Financial Services.

6870. A letter from the Assistant Legal Adviser for Treaty Affairs, Department of State, transmitting Copies of international agreements, other than treaties, entered into by the United States, pursuant to 1 U.S.C. 112b(a); to the Committee on International Relations.

6871. A letter from the Deputy Director, Defense Security Cooperation Agency, transmitting pursuant to Section 62(a) of the Arms Export Control Act (AECA), notification concerning the Department of the Air Force's proposed lease of defense articles to the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany (Transmittal No. 05-05); to the Committee on International Relations.

6872. A letter from the Deputy Director, Defense Security Cooperation Agency, transmitting pursuant to Section 62(a) of the Arms Export Control Act (AECA), notification concerning the Defense Information Services Agency's proposed lease of defense articles to the Government of Argentina (Transmittal No. 02-06); to the Committee on International Relations.

6873. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting pursuant to section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act, certification regarding the proposed license for the export of defense articles and services to the Government of the United Kingdom (Transmittal No. DDTC 055-05); to the Committee on International Relations.

6874. A letter from the Director, Office of Management, Department of Energy, transmitting the Department's Year 2005 Inventory of Commercial Activities, as required by the Federal Activities Reform Act of 1997, Pub. L. 105-270; to the Committee on Government Reform.

6875. A letter from the General Counsel, Department of Housing and Urban Development, transmitting a report pursuant to the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998; to the Committee on Government Reform.

6876. A letter from the Attorney Advisor, Department of Transportation, transmitting a report pursuant to the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998; to the Committee on Government Reform.

6877. A letter from the Board Members, Railroad Retirement Board, transmitting a copy of the annual report for Calendar Year 2005, in compliance with the Government in the Sunshine Act, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 552b(j); to the Committee on Government Reform.

6878. A letter from the Chief Administrative Officer, United States Capitol Police, transmitting the semiannual report of receipts and expenditures of appropriations and other funds for the period October 1, 2005 through March 31, 2006 as compiled by the Chief Administrative Officer, pursuant to Public Law 109–55, section 1005; (H. Doc. No. 109–96); to the Committee on House Administration and ordered to be printed.

6879. A letter from the Chief Scout Executive and President, Boy Scouts of America, transmitting the Boy Scouts of America's 2005 Report to the Nation, pursuant to 36 U.S.C. 28; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

6880. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting As required by Section 417(b) of the USA Patriot Act of 2001 (Public Law 107-56), the fourth annual report on the status of the implementation of machine-readable passports (MRPs) in countries participating in the Visa Waiver Program (VWP); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

6881. A letter from the United States Trade Representative, Executive Office of the President, transmitting a report on the intent to initiate negotiations for a free trade agreement between the United States and Malaysia, pursuant to Section 2104(a)(1) of the Trade Act of 2002; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

6882. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's report to Congress on Critical Infrastructure Risk Assessment and Readiness, pursuant to Public Law 108–458, section 7306; to the Committee on Homeland Security.

6883. A letter from the Under Secretary for Personnel and Readiness, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's annual report on entitlement transfers of basic educational assistance to eligible dependents under the Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB); jointly to the Committees on Armed Services and Veterans' Affairs.

6884. A letter from the Acting Chairman, National Transportation Safety Board, transmitting a legislative proposal and justification to amend the Independent Safety Board Act of 1974 to provide authorization for the National Transportation Safety Board; jointly to the Committees on Transportation and Infrastructure and Appropriations.

6885. A letter from the Chairman, Federal Election Commission, transmitting the Commission's FY 2007 Budget Request Justification, pursuant to 2 U.S.C. 437d(d)(1); jointly to the Committees on House Administration, Appropriations, and Government Reform.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows:

Mr. OXLEY: Committee on Financial Services. H.R. 4916. A bill to authorize United States participation in, and appropriations for, the United States contribution to the first replenishment of the resources of the Enterprise for the Americas Multilateral Investment Fund (Rept. 109–403). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union.

Mr. DREIER: Committee on Rules. House Resolution 755. Resolution providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 513) to amend the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 to clarify when organizations described in section 527 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 must register as political committees, and for other purposes (Rept. 109–404). Referred to the House Calendar.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. YOUNG of Alaska (for himself, Mr. OBERSTAR, Mr. LATOURETTE, and Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida):

H.R. 5074. A bill to amend the Railroad Retirement Act of 1974 to provide for continued payment of railroad retirement annuities by the Department of the Treasury, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. STARK (for himself, Mr. MCDERMOTT, Ms. BEAN, and Mr. INSLEE):

H.R. 5075. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to clarify the restriction on disclosures and use of information by tax return preparers; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. YOUNG of Alaska (for himself, Mr. OBERSTAR, Mr. MICA, and Mr. COSTELLO):

H.R. 5076. A bill to amend title 49, United States Code, to authorize appropriations for fiscal years 2007, 2008, and 2009, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. LUCAS:

H.R. 5077. A bill to amend title 31, United States Code, to provide a clear line of demarcation with regard to private ownership of any coin, medal, or numismatic item made or issued by the United States Government before January 1, 1933, that is not in the possession of the United States Government, to establish certain guidelines and requirements with respect to the inventory, preservation, public display, and disposition of certain United States coins, medals, and numismatic items that were struck or made after December 31, 1932, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. BOEHLERT (for himself and Mr. MICHAUD):

H.R. 5078. A bill to elevate the Environmental Protection Agency to Cabinet-level status and redesignate such agency as the Department of Environmental Protection; to the Committee on Government Reform.

By Mr. WALDEN of Oregon:

H.R. 5079. A bill to provide for the modification of an amendatory repayment contract between the Secretary of the Interior

and the North Unit Irrigation District, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Resources.

By Mr. BRADY of Texas:

H.R. 5080. A bill to provide for the expansion of human clinical trials qualifying for the orphan drug credit; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. CARTER (for himself, Mr. REYES, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, Mr. KUHL of New York, Mr. HAYES, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. ROTHMAN, Mr. EVANS, Mr. CALVERT, Mr. GOODE, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. STRICKLAND, Mr. GONZALEZ, Mr. MCCAUL of Texas, Mr. KLINE, Mr. LUCAS, Mr. POMBO, Mr. MCKEON, Mr. REHBERG, Mr. PORTER, Mr. CULBERSON, Mr. DELAY, Mr. BURTON of Indiana, Mr. MARCHANT, Mr. JENKINS, Mr. COBLE, Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. PEARCE, Mr. WALSH, Mr. SMITH of Texas, Ms. HARRIS, Mr. KINGSTON, Ms. GRANGER, Mr. BURGESS, Mr. SHIMKUS, Mr. RENZI, Mr. WAMP, Mr. CANTOR, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. MCHENRY, Mr. BRADY of Texas, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. DAVIS of Tennessee, Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida, Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida, Mr. HAYWORTH, Mr. SHAW, Mr. BONILLA, Mr. GERLACH, Mr. KELLER, Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina, Mr. NEUGEBAUER, Mr. FEENEY, Mr. GOHMERT, Mr. MICA, Mr. GINGREY, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Mr. ORTIZ, Mr. EDWARDS, Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida, Mr. OTTER, Mr. TERRY, Mr. ROGERS of Alabama, Mr. ROGERS of Michigan, Mr. LINDER, Mr. COLE of Oklahoma, Mr. SIMMONS, Mr. OXLEY, Mr. DOOLITTLE, Mr. HASTINGS of Washington, Mr. HUNTER, Mr. AKIN, Mr. POE, Mr. EHLERS, Mrs. MYRICK, Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, Mr. PETRI, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. JONES of North Carolina, Mr. PAUL, Mrs. LOWEY, Mr. KING of New York, Mr. BONNER, Mr. COOPER, Mr. LAHOOD, Mrs. CUBIN, Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania, Mrs. CAPITO, Mrs. MUSGRAVE, Mr. KING of Iowa, Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California, Mr. WICKER, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. BOEHNER, Mr. SHUSTER, Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey, Mr. FITZPATRICK of Pennsylvania, Mr. REYNOLDS, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. CAMP of Michigan, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mr. RYUN of Kansas, Mr. LOBIONDO, and Mr. OSBORNE):

H.R. 5081. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to make employers of spouses of military personnel eligible for the work opportunity credit; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. DAVIS of Alabama:

H.R. 5082. A bill to amend the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act to provide for comprehensive community and economic development in the distressed Southern Black Belt and Mississippi Delta region while leveraging existing efforts, entities, and resources; to the Committee on Agriculture, and in addition to the Committees on Transportation and Infrastructure, and Financial Services, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky (for himself, Mr. BOUSTANY, and Mr. ISRAEL):

H.R. 5083. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to provide equity between active and reserve component members of the Armed Forces in the computation of disability retired pay for members wounded in action; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. DINGELL:

H.R. 5084. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to restrict the disclosure information by tax return preparers to third party entities and to prohibit private tax collection contracts; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. INSLEE (for himself, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. GILLMOR, and Mr. BOUCHER):

H.R. 5085. A bill to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to promote and expedite wireless broadband deployment in rural and other areas, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. LAHOOD (for himself, Mr. HASTERT, Mr. RUSH, Mr. JACKSON of Illinois, Mr. LIPINSKI, Mr. GUTIERREZ, Mr. EMANUEL, Mr. HYDE, Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, Ms. BEAN, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. KIRK, Mr. WELLER, Mr. COSTELLO, Mrs. BIGGERT, Mr. JOHNSON of Illinois, Mr. MANZULLO, and Mr. SHIMKUS):

H.R. 5086. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 2633 11th Street in Rock Island, Illinois, as the ''Lane Evans Post Office Building''; to the Committee on Government Reform.

By Mr. PALLONE (for himself and Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California):

H.R. 5087. A bill to amend title 5, United States Code, to increase the maximum age up to which an individual may be afforded health coverage under chapter 89 of such title as a dependent child; to the Committee on Government Reform.

By Ms. SOLIS:

H.R. 5088. A bill to require Federal agencies to support health impact assessments and take other actions to improve health and the environmental quality of communities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. STUPAK:

H.R. 5089. A bill to enable the Great Lakes Fishery Commission to investigate effects of migratory birds on sustained productivity of stocks of fish of common concern in the Great Lakes; to the Committee on Resources.

By Mr. POMBO:

H.J. Res. 83. A joint resolution to memorialize and honor the contribution of Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist; to the Committee on Resources.

By Mr. FATTAH:

H. Con. Res. 377. Concurrent resolution honoring the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG) for fifty years of distinguished service; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. BOEHLERT (for himself and Mr. DEFAZIO):

H. Res. 753. A resolution commending American craft brewers; to the Committee on Government Reform.

By Mr. LATHAM:

H. Res. 754. A resolution electing Members to certain standing Committees of the House of Representatives; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida (for himself, Mr. MCHENRY, Mr. MILLER of Florida, Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida, and Mrs. MILLER of Michigan):

H. Res. 756. A resolution expressing the gratitude and appreciation of the House of Representatives to the professionalism and dedication of the United States Capitol Police; to the Committee on House Administration.

By Mrs. DRAKE:

H. Res. 757. A resolution commending the Virginia Wesleyan College Marlins men's basketball team for winning the 2006 National Collegiate Athletic Association Division III National Basketball Championship; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. DREIER (for himself, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, Mr. KOLBE, Mr. GILLMOR, Mr. KIRK, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. COLE of Oklahoma, Mrs. MILLER of Michigan, Mr. FORTENBERRY, Mr. REYES, Mrs. CAPPS, Mr. HOLT, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. DAVIS of Alabama, and Ms. SCHWARTZ of Pennsylvania):

H. Res. 758. A resolution welcoming the members and staff of the parliaments of East Timor, Georgia, Indonesia, and Macedonia to the House of Representatives as the first partner parliaments of the House Democracy Assistance Commission; to the Committee on International Relations.

By Mr. EVANS (for himself and Mr. SMITH of New Jersey):

H. Res. 759. A resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the Government of Japan should formally acknowledge and accept responsibility for its sexual enslavement of young women, known to the world as ''comfort women'', during its colonial occupation of Asia and the Pacific Islands from the 1930s through the duration of World War II, and for other purposes; to the Committee on International Relations.

By Mr. PALLONE (for himself and Mr. SHAW):

H. Res. 760. A resolution supporting the goals and ideals of National Clean Beaches Week and recognizing the considerable value of American beaches and their role in American culture; to the Committee on Resources.

By Mr. STEARNS (for himself, Mr. MILLER of Florida, Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida, Mr. MEEK of Florida, Mr. FEENEY, Mr. MACK, Mr. CRENSHAW, Mr. BOYD, Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Mr. DAVIS of Florida, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mr. FOLEY, Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Mr. SHAW, Mr. MICA, Mr. WELDON of Florida, Mr. YOUNG of Florida, Mr. PUTNAM, Mr. KELLER, Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida, and Ms. HARRIS):

H. Res. 761. A resolution to commend the University of Florida Gators for their historic win in the 2006 National Collegiate Athletic Association Division I Men's Basketball Tournament; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

PRIVATE BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 3 of rule XII,

Mr. GILLMOR introduced a bill (H.R. 5090) for the relief of Manuel Bartsch; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary.

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions as follows:

H.R. 23: Mr. SCOTT of Virginia.

H.R. 94: Mrs. JONES of Ohio.

H.R. 202: Mr. MOORE of Kansas.

H.R. 294: Mr. JONES of North Carolina.

H.R. 389: Mrs. KELLY.

H.R. 450: Mr. SOUDER and Mr. PRICE of North Carolina.

H.R. 503: Mrs. DAVIS of California.

H.R. 517: Mr. GALLEGLY.

H.R. 559: Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas and Mr. RANGEL.

H.R. 583: Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky, Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin, Mr. CAPUANO, and Mr. DOGGETT.
H.R. 697: Mrs. MCCARTHY.
H.R. 699: Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. CAPUANO, Mr. EHLERS, and Mr. JOHNSON of Illinois.
H.R. 713: Mr. DOOLITTLE.
H.R. 717: Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida.
H.R. 809: Mrs. NORTHUP.
H.R. 865: Mr. FILNER and Mr. AL GREEN of Texas.
H.R. 874: Mr. CAMPBELL of California.
H.R. 886: Mr. SHIMKUS, Mr. MEEKS of New York, and Mr. BERMAN.
H.R. 910: Mr. DOYLE.
H.R. 986: Mr. MARSHALL.
H.R. 998: Ms. CARSON.
H.R. 1002: Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida.
H.R. 1016: Ms. HERSETH.
H.R. 1105: Mr. KUHL of New York.
H.R. 1227: Mr. GUTKNECHT, Mr. MEEHAN, Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin, Mr. REICHERT, Ms. WOOLSEY, Mrs. BLACKBURN, and Mr. CONYERS.
H.R. 1249: Mr. EVANS.
H.R. 1288: Mr. GALLEGLY.
H.R. 1356: Ms. MATSUI, Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD, Mr. ACKERMAN, and Mr. ABERCROMBIE.
H.R. 1357: Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. HUNTER, Mr. REHBERG, Mr. SMITH of Texas, Mr. HYDE, and Mr. MCCRERY.
H.R. 1393: Ms. BERKLEY, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. SCHWARZ of Michigan, Mr. MILLER of North Carolina, and Ms. HERSETH.
H.R. 1402: Mr. POMEROY.
H.R. 1425: Mr. FITZPATRICK of Pennsylvania.
H.R. 1426: Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS of Virginia and Mr. LATHAM.
H.R. 1548: Mr. CHABOT and Mr. CAMPBELL of California.
H.R. 1578: Mr. KANJORSKI and Mr. LAHOOD.
H.R. 1582: Mr. CAPUANO.
H.R. 1639: Mr. MCGOVERN.
H.R. 1687: Ms. HOOLEY.
H.R. 1709: Mr. SCOTT of Georgia and Mr. BISHOP of New York.
H.R. 1798: Mr. ANDREWS.
H.R. 1951: Mr. RANGEL, Mr. KING of New York, Mr. NADLER, and Mrs. MALONEY.
H.R. 2037: Mr. BROWN of Ohio.
H.R. 2071: Mr. LEVIN.
H.R. 2121: Mr. DENT and Mr. MARSHALL.
H.R. 2134: Mr. MCCOTTER.
H.R. 2206: Mr. FORD, Mr. SOUDER, Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts, Mr. BONNER, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. BAIRD, and Mr. POMEROY.
H.R. 2230: Ms. BALDWIN.
H.R. 2250: Mr. KENNEDY of Minnesota.
H.R. 2328: Mr. BISHOP of New York.
H.R. 2357: Mr. JEFFERSON.
H.R. 2369: Mr. BACA and Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California.
H.R. 2421: Mr. ORTIZ, Mr. UPTON, and Mr. DAVIS of Illinois.
H.R. 2429: Mr. MURTHA.
H.R. 2458: Mr. PETRI and Mr. POE.
H.R. 2629: Mr. CUMMINGS.
H.R. 2669: Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia.
H.R. 2730: Mr. HONDA.
H.R. 2793: Mr. LATHAM.
H.R. 2861: Mr. FOLEY.
H.R. 3098: Mr. BLUNT and Mr. NORWOOD.
H.R. 3131: Mr. BURGESS.
H.R. 3142: Mr. LEACH.
H.R. 3144: Mr. KENNEDY of Minnesota.
H.R. 3151: Mr. WYNN.
H.R. 3183: Mr. FEENEY and Ms. HERSETH.
H.R. 3185: Mr. CONYERS.
H.R. 3318: Mr. ALEXANDER.
H.R. 3323: Ms. HERSETH.
H.R. 3361: Mr. WELLER and Mr. KENNEDY of Minnesota.
H.R. 3385: Mr. LATHAM and Mr. VAN HOLLEN.
H.R. 3436: Mr. GALLEGLY.
H.R. 3476: Mrs. LOWEY.
H.R. 3579: Mr. HIGGINS and Ms. BERKLEY.
H.R. 3628: Mr. SCHWARZ of Michigan and Mr. CONYERS.
H.R. 3658: Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California, Ms. CARSON, and Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas.
H.R. 3685: Mr. WAMP.
H.R. 3717: Mr. BOUSTANY.
H.R. 3753: Mr. EHLERS, Mr. PICKERING, Mr. LATHAM, and Mrs. CUBIN.
H.R. 3779: Mr. SANDERS.
H.R. 3883: Mr. MARCHANT and Mr. BONILLA.
H.R. 3997: Mr. WOLF, Mr. MCCOTTER, and Mr. FOLEY.
H.R. 4005: Mr. SANDERS.
H.R. 4025: Ms. MATSUI.
H.R. 4183: Mr. SANDERS.
H.R. 4184: Ms. HERSETH and Mr. MOORE of Kansas.
H.R. 4190: Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. WAXMAN, and Ms. HERSETH.
H.R. 4229: Mr. CASE.
H.R. 4259: Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mr. MICHAUD, and Mr. PUTNAM.
H.R. 4282: Mr. GOODE.
H.R. 4398: Mr. FORD.
H.R. 4399: Mr. SMITH of New Jersey.
H.R. 4421: Mr. HAYWORTH.
H.R. 4423: Ms. WATSON.
H.R. 4452: Mr. PASCRELL.
H.R. 4542: Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Mr. SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, Ms. HARMAN, Mr. SERRANO, Ms. CARSON, and Mr. MARKEY.
H.R. 4547: Mr. GALLEGLY, Mr. KINGSTON, and Mr. NORWOOD.
H.R. 4624: Mr. MICHAUD.
H.R. 4681: Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. SCHWARZ of Michigan, Mr. FATTAH, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Mr. MCCOTTER, Mr. DAVIS of Alabama, Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN, Mr. SALAZAR, Mr. PASTOR, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Mr. HOYER, Mr. PALLONE, Ms. GRANGER, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. FLAKE, Mr. OTTER, Mr. WU, and Mr. SHIMKUS.
H.R. 4736: Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California, Mr. PAYNE, Mrs. LOWEY, Mr. HONDA, Mrs. MCCARTHY, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. ISRAEL, Mr. ROTHMAN, Ms. MATSUI, and Mr. WEXLER.
H.R. 4740: Ms. BEAN, Mr. JINDAL, Mr. LYNCH, Mrs. MUSGRAVE, and Mrs. NORTHUP.
H.R. 4746: Mr. SANDERS.
H.R. 4751: Mr. BOEHLERT and Mr. EMANUEL.
H.R. 4755: Mr. DENT, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. WU, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. PORTER, Ms. WATSON, Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. GIBBONS, Mr. LANTOS, Mrs. CHRISTENSEN, Mr. LYNCH, Mr. BACA, and Mr. INSLEE.
H.R. 4761: Mr. SIMPSON, Mr. BOREN, and Mr. PRICE of Georgia.
H.R. 4790: Mr. FRANKS of Arizona and Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania.
H.R. 4798: Mr. CALVERT.
H.R. 4799: Mr. SANDERS and Mr. SCHWARZ of Michigan.
H.R. 4824: Mr. SHADEGG, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, and Ms. HERSETH.
H.R. 4843: Mr. KOLBE.
H.R. 4844: Mr. FEENEY.
H.R. 4865: Mr. ORTIZ.
H.R. 4873: Ms. HERSETH.
H.R. 4890: Mr. HOEKSTRA and Mr. DEAL of Georgia.
H.R. 4898: Mrs. CHRISTENSEN, Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin, and Mrs. MALONEY.
H.R. 4903: Mrs. MCCARTHY.
H.R. 4917: Mr. LEWIS of Georgia.
H.R. 4922: Mr. FOLEY, Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas, and Mr. GALLEGLY.
H.R. 4924: Mr. CANTOR.
H.R. 4949: Mr. UDALL of New Mexico, Mr. SERRANO, Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota, Mr. MCNULTY, Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island, Mr. MCDERMOTT, Mr. LANGEVIN, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. UDALL of Colorado, Mr. DOYLE, Mr. KUHL of New York, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. EMANUEL, Ms. KAPTUR, and Ms. DELAURO.
H.R. 4953: Mr. STUPAK, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. BROWN of Ohio, Mr. KIND, and Mr. LIPINSKI.
H.R. 4992: Mr. PETERSON of Minnesota and Mr. GOODE.
H.R. 5007: Mr. MICHAUD.
H.R. 5013: Mr. POE, Mrs. MILLER of Michigan, Mrs. MUSGRAVE, Mr. BOUCHER, Mr. ROGERS of Alabama, and Mr. BISHOP of Utah.
H.R. 5014: Mr. DELAHUNT.
H.R. 5017: Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi.
H.R. 5022: Mr. JEFFERSON, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. STARK, Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California, Mr. PALLONE, and Mr. DINGELL.
H.R. 5023: Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, Ms. MATSUI, Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin, and Mrs. NAPOLITANO.
H.R. 5032: Mr. BISHOP of Georgia and Mr. MCCOTTER.
H.R. 5039: Mr. CLAY.
H.R. 5043: Mr. LARSON of Connecticut.
H.R. 5063: Mr. JEFFERSON, Mr. FARR, Mr. SANDERS, and Mr. BISHOP of New York.
H.R. 5065: Mr. PALLONE and Ms. CARSON.
H. J. Res. 81: Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ.
H. Con. Res. 100: Mr. MORAN of Virginia, Mr. PICKERING, Mr. BLUMENAUER, and Mr. SNYDER.
H. Con. Res. 179: Mr. GRIJALVA.
H. Con. Res. 197: Mr. SMITH of Washington.
H. Con. Res. 231: Mrs. KELLY.
H. Con. Res. 235: Mr. MILLER of Florida.
H. Con. Res. 302: Mr. POE.
H. Con. Res. 306: Mr. ANDREWS.
H. Con. Res. 340: Mr. OXLEY and Mrs. DAVIS of California.
H. Con. Res. 346: Mr. FEENEY, Ms. BORDALLO, and Mr. FRANKS of Arizona.
H. Con. Res. 348: Mr. OBERSTAR.
H. Con. Res. 355: Mr. SPRATT, Mr. PAUL, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, Mr. OWENS, Mr. FORTUÑO, Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island, Mr. KUHL of New York, and Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas.
H. Con. Res. 363: Mr. ENGEL and Mr. JEFFERSON.
H. Con. Res. 365: Mr. MCCOTTER, Mr. WOLF, and Mr. RYAN of Ohio.
H. Con. Res. 366: Mr. DOYLE, Mr. INSLEE, Mr. CAPUANO, Mr. SNYDER, Mr. CARTER, Mr. MOORE of Kansas, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. GALLEGLY, Mr. MCCOTTER, Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mrs. WILSON of New Mexico, Ms. WATSON, Mr. THOMAS, Mr. BARTON of Texas, and Mr. HOLT.
H. Con. Res. 368: Mr. BROWN of Ohio and Mr. PORTER.
H. Con. Res. 370: Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. MCNULTY, and Mr. MILLER of Florida.
H. Con. Res. 371: Mr. PETERSON of Minnesota.
H. Res. 123: Mr. SIMMONS.
H. Res. 222: Mr. WOLF and Mr. POE.
H. Res. 335: Mr. ORTIZ.
H. Res. 518: Mr. GORDON, Mr. FOLEY, Mr. SOUDER, and Mr. MILLER of Florida.
H. Res. 526: Mr. FRANKS of Arizona.
H. Res. 556: Mr. COSTELLO, Miss MCMORRIS, and Mr. CALVERT.
H. Res. 600: Mr. MILLER of North Carolina, Mr. EMANUEL, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island, Mr. MCNULTY, Ms. Schwartz of Pennsylvania, Mr. BROWN of Ohio, Mr. DEFAZIO, Mr. PAYNE, and Mr. LARSEN of Washington.
H. Res. 608: Miss MCMORRIS and Mr. BISHOP of Georgia.
H. Res. 697: Mr. BURTON of Indiana, Mr. OBERSTAR, Ms. WATSON, Mr. SWEENEY, Mr. BISHOP of Utah, Mr. MCDERMOTT, Mr. CASTLE, Mr. BASS, Mr. GILCHREST, Mrs. MYRICK, Mr. SALAZAR, Mrs. MALONEY, Mr. CANNON, Mr. INSLEE, Mr. TANCREDO, Mr. CROWLEY, Mr. GIBBONS, Mr. ENGEL, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. ROTHMAN, Mr. BACHUS, Mr. BACA, Mr. POE, Mr. GALLEGLY, Mr. LAHOOD, Mr. BROWN of Ohio, Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. RAMSTAD, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, and Mr. RADANOVICH.

H. Res. 699: Mr. BOYD.

H. Res. 703: Mr. MCNULTY.

H. Res. 721: Mr. SHADEGG, Mr. SANDERS, and Ms. WOOLSEY.

H. Res. 723: Mr. MCDERMOTT, Mr. ANDREWS, Ms. PELOSI, Mr. SOUDER, and Mr. CLEAVER.

H. Res. 729: Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky.

H. Res. 730: Mr. GOHMERT, Mr. SESSIONS, and Mr. RUPPERSBERGER.

H. Res. 731: Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. MILLER of Florida, Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mr. KUHL of New York, and Mr. GALLEGLY.

H. Res. 737: Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. PAYNE, Mrs. MALONEY, Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. COOPER, Mr. Davis of Kentucky, Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota, Mr. LAHOOD, Mr. KIRK, Mr. WICKER, Mr. NEUGEBAUER, Ms. SCHWARTZ of Pennsylvania, Mr. DAVIS of Alabama, Mr. MILLER of North Carolina, Mr. SHIMKUS, and Mr. GERLACH.

H. Res. 744: Mr. ENGEL.

H. Res. 750: Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California.

H. Res. 752: Mr. DAVIS of Illinois.

AMENDMENTS

Under clause 8 of rule XVIII, proposed amendments were submitted as follows:

H. CON. RES. 376

OFFERED BY: MR. FILNER

AMENDMENT NO. 1: Paragraph (2) of section 101 (the appropriate levels of new budget authority) is amended by increasing new budget authority for fiscal year 2007 by $1,300,000,000.

Paragraph (3) of section 101 (the appropriate levels of total budget outlays) is amended by increasing total budget outlays for fiscal year 2007 by $1,300,000,000.

Paragraph (4) of section 101 (deficits (on-budget)) is amended by increasing the deficit for fiscal year 2007 by $1,300,000,000.

Paragraph (15) of section 102 (Veterans Benefits and Services (700)) is amended by increasing new budget authority and outlays for fiscal year 2007 by $1,300,000,000.