

force Congress and the administration to respond thoughtfully with simple changes? After 25 years, will we update the hopelessly outdated operating principles and guidelines of the Corps of Engineers? Can we eliminate the perverse budget rules that make it actually cheaper for Congress to spend billions of dollars on emergency flood relief than a few million on prevention? Can we see past the next sensational headlines so that the Federal Government can exercise its responsibility on its own land in order to prevent development from sprawling into forested areas near cities, putting more people at risk and sending the costs of fire-fighting spiraling upward exponentially? Can we avoid another example like Los Alamos, where the Federal Government incredibly put sensitive, dangerous and expensive nuclear facilities in the middle of an area that has burned repeatedly from wildfires every few years for centuries?

Will the next round of disasters prompt the Federal Government to finally show leadership on global warming, which will make all of these problems more intense? With global warming, it is not just the damage to New Orleans from hurricanes but risks to coastal communities from New York's Long Island to the Rio Grande Valley in Texas. Rising temperatures have already defrosted and eroded ever larger portions of Alaska. Will scientists at NASA and NOAA at last be able to speak freely about global warming?

These questions are not beyond our capacity. Simple, cost-effective solutions are at hand that can be understood by the public who will end up paying the bill. I think progress is possible because this is not a Red State or a Blue State issue, not liberal or conservative, not big government versus small government. Exercising common sense, bipartisan cooperation and a tiny bit of leadership will save lives and money.

I had hoped that the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina would have already spurred us toward some meaningful, comprehensive action. Instead, our response to Katrina has stalled and people are trickling back into harm's way without a real plan or a vision, and the protections against the next hurricane are not in place.

I do think there is hope. With the evidence so clear and the Katrina memories so vivid, we begin another predicted serious hurricane season. Maybe this will be the time that we learn from what has happened and finally act to make our communities safer, healthier, and more economically secure.

SECURING OUR BORDERS, SECURING OUR NATION

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

Mr. STEARNS. La Ladrillera, a brickyard in Sasabe, Mexico, is the last gathering place where coyotes deliver final words of advice before smuggling their human cargo across the border into the United States. Each illegal immigrant pays anywhere from \$1,500 to \$2,000 to these opportunists to be guided on their 3-day journey across the desert into their ideal of a promised land, the United States.

My colleagues, let us be clear on the nature of these smugglers. They are not generous humanitarians aiding their fellow man. Many of these illegal immigrants are beaten, robbed and even raped before they even reach the Mexico-U.S. border. Yet they keep paying the coyotes enough money so that these smugglers have access to sophisticated arms, weapons, GPS equipment and high quality mobile radios. Many of them have better equipment than our own Border Patrol agents.

In today's Washington Times, Gilbert Reyes, one of these smugglers, or successful local businessmen, describes the situation of these immigrants: "They want to get into the United States, and they are willing to do almost anything, even walk for mile after mile in the desert. They think they can go into America and get a pay to stay permanently. Maybe they can. Maybe they can't."

His assertion about the immigrants' belief rings true as we look at the facts on immigration. In 1986, the Immigration Reform and Control Act granted amnesty to 2.7 million illegal immigrants, and now today we have 11 to 12 million illegal immigrants seeking amnesty. Two years ago, President Bush first announced his guest worker program, and illegal immigrant numbers have risen steadily since. A survey conducted by the Border Patrol in 2004 revealed that of those illegal aliens in custody of the Border Patrol, 45 percent were influenced to come to the U.S. by the promise of amnesty. The immigration bill we passed in the House directly strengthened legal recourse against these coyotes and focused on securing our borders, increasing the number of Border Patrol agents, and enforcing the immigration laws that we currently have. These are essential steps that must be taken before any form of immigration reform has a hope of succeeding. And the American people agree. In a recent Zogby poll, 64 percent of respondents preferred the House bill's approach of enforcement first and only 30 percent preferred the Senate's approach of amnesty. Additionally, 73 percent of respondents had little or no confidence in the ability of our government to screen out terrorists or criminals if there is a mass amnesty for those 12 million illegals already in this country.

And yet the pressure is mounting in favor of this unpopular and impractical proposal. There are some journalistic groups that have even begun to object to the use of the word "illegal" when referring to these immigrants. We are

supposed to refer to these individuals as, quote, undocumented or even the other extreme proposal, to call them economic refugees. But calling breaking the law by any other name does not make it less of a crime. According to the Immigration and Nationality Act, it is illegal to enter the United States illegally. It is illegal to smuggle human beings into the United States for a price. And it is illegal to knowingly hire and aid a person you know entered our country illegally.

Another central issue with immigration reform is to ensure that those waiting and hoping to enter this country will be treated fairly. Many of them have undergone grueling ordeals to be able to enter the United States. I have heard from one couple in my district that had to undergo multiple in-depth interviews at the embassy before getting their permits. The embassy was a 3-hour commute away for them. As they had no transportation, they had to walk. But they told me they were happy to do so for the simple chance to come into the United States. Many legal immigrants have to wait 5, 10, sometimes 15 years before they get their final approval to immigrate. To allow those who bypassed all the rules and snuck into the U.S. amnesty and a path to citizenship is an egregious slap in the face to all those immigrants who sacrificed to respect our laws and enter legally.

My colleagues, we are a nation of immigrants. Immigrants have vitalized our society, brought new life to our democracy and strengthened our communities simply by their contributions. However, we are also a nation of laws, and those whose first action is to willfully break them should be held accountable, not given preferential treatment.

THE DEBT AND THE DEFICIT

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

Mr. DEFazio. Well, it is going to be a big week for America and a big week for Republicans in the House. The long-delayed budget is going to be adopted. It is estimated that if this budget is adopted, the deficit will be about \$500 billion next year. That means they are going to borrow more than \$1.4 billion a day to run the government. But don't worry, some of it is off the books. They are borrowing all of the Social Security surplus, \$193 billion, which is supposed to go to pay for future benefits in the trust fund but they are going to borrow and spend that. So they are going to really say, oh, the deficit is only \$300 billion, that's all we're borrowing from China and Japan and other foreign investors. But we are also borrowing and spending all the Social Security trust fund. So a \$500 billion, half a trillion dollar deficit, borrowing