prides itself at a time when our soldiers are making these kinds of sacrifice, at a time that this administration will stand in the way of the concurrent receipts bill, and forcing our veterans to have to choose if they get injured or they get a wound in the battlefield, and they have to retire from the service, they have to choose between their retirement pay and their disability pay.

This administration is standing in the way of correcting that, and at the same time will ask for tax cuts for the top 1 percent of the most wealthy people in this country, on the backs of not treating our veterans right, on the backs of not increasing the military widows' pay or giving the death benefits that we need or giving the military service people the raise that they need.

This is why I was just so astounded at the glee that came from the Republican administration in passing a tax cut at a time of war, of great sacrifice. Never before in this history has that occurred.

Mr. SCHIFF. If I could ask of the gentleman from Georgia, prior to the Memorial Day weekend, you shared a short anecdote about meeting one of your constituents in Iraq. Can you tell us about that because I think it so characterizes the sacrifice we are talking about.

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. This was a remarkable experience I had with the soldier in Iraq, and we had to make that choice of staying that night and putting our own selves in greater danger because, you know, going over there, you cannot fly up at night. You have to go by the roads, but we made that choice, and I am so glad because it gave me the experience of a lifetime.

As we were in Camp Victory in Baghdad and we were gathered there, and this soldier came up and was just hugging me. I was hugging him, tears falling down his eyes, tears falling down my eyes, and we were just squeezing each other. He said something to me I will never forget. He said, Congressman SCOTT, when I am hugging you, it is like hugging a piece of home. I almost get choked up every time that happens.

I am so glad that God gave me that experience. I am so glad we went there, and like other soldiers, a while later, that soldier died. That is the kind of sacrifice, and I went over there and looked in the eyes.

Let me tell you another experience. When I was in Afghanistan and I went over there to Afghanistan, at the time when you remember the debate was over that if we had had this kind of body armor, that several thousand marines that have died or got wounded or would have been saved, that story came out. The Pentagon had given that report.

□ 2315

So that was fresh on my mind when I was sitting there with this one unit. And in each one of the squads there is a sniper. There is an armor guy, an artillery guy, but each one has a sniper who the whole troop depends upon. And I started asking about the body armor and they started going around saying, yeah, we have all our armor on, but our sniper here, he will not wear the neck armor to protect himself from a head wound or a neck wound that would be almost fatal. And I asked him, I said why. He said, I won't wear that because it hurts my agility to be able to move my head to protect my troops. We have had many snipers.

That kind of valor, that kind of courage, that is the kind of sacrifice that we are talking about at a time when we have not asked others in this Nation to make that sort of sacrifice.

Mr. SCHIFF. I am sure that both my colleagues have had the experience of visiting our troops in the hospital in Ramstein, Germany, and here in Washington. Their thoughts are with their colleagues they left behind. They want to get back to their troops to make sure they are there for their buddies.

I had one soldier who was so concerned, could I do something about the fact that one of the people in his battalion really deserved recognition for what he had done, and since he wasn't there to make the report this other soldier would not get the recognition they deserved. This is what he was worried about as he lay in the hospital.

I yield to the gentleman from New York.

Mr. ISRAEL. I spent some time this evening with the gentleman and with one of our best generals, and he was telling the story of visiting with a critically wounded soldier in a military hospital and walking out with that soldier's mother. And the mother said, General, my son is not sleeping at night. And the General said, well, of course he is not sleeping at night, look what he has been through. She said, no, General, he is not sleeping because he is up all night thinking about the fact that his unit is still in Iraq and he is worried about them.

That is the sacrifice that we are talking about and the dedication and the professionalism, and we have an obligation to those men and women to protect them.

If the gentleman would allow me to make a concluding point. This front page newspaper tells the story of contrast, and the same contrast is played out on the floor of the House frequently. You have got this front, top of the newspaper that says ''Ann the Ripper Brings Campaign Against 9/11 Widows to Long Island,'' and then you have the rest of the page devoted to the possibility of front-line shortages of critical medical equipment. These guys get less so that Ann Coulter, who writes a book calling 9/11 widows witches and harpies, who will make a lot of money off the proceeds of that book, can get a bigger tax cut.

How is that fair in America today? How is that just? How does that do justice to these people? It doesn't. We can do better. The Democrats will do better. We understand the need to fight and to use hard power around the world to fight totalitarianism and to fight terrorism, but if you are going to take on the fight, you got to take it on with the right supplies. And that is what we are about.

Mr. SCHIFF. I want to thank both my colleagues for joining me this evening and helping to further elucidate the Democratic plan for the way forward in Iraq, for talking about the sacrifice our troops are making, for being there for our troops, and also raising the call that this be a shared sacrifice in the war on terror; that we not force those who have borne the battle to look out for themselves and to pay off our national debt when they get back; that we heed the injunction of Lincoln that we ''look after him who has borne the battle and his widow and his orphan.''

I want to thank you again for all your leadership.

LONG-TERM CONSEQUENCES OF NAFTA

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 wish to especially thank Congressman CARTER for allowing me this special privilege of appearing before he does this evening.

Mr. Speaker, the wonderful time about speaking at this time of day is we get to cover subjects that may not be on the agendas of any committee but are of importance to the American people. Tonight, I want to talk about the long-term consequences of a trade agreement called NAFTA that passed over a decade ago.

We were promised, as the American people, that NAFTA would result in more jobs, trade balances with Mexico and with Canada, and a higher standard of living in all of our countries. Indeed, exactly the opposite has happened. This country has now shipped out over 880,000 jobs, nearly a million jobs and still counting, to Mexico and to Canada, and we have not amassed any trade surpluses but, indeed, have fallen into deep deficit with both countries.

I have a couple of charts here that talk about this. Trade accounts with Mexico prior to NAFTA signing were positive. Every single year since NAFTA's signing, we have gone into deeper and deeper and deeper deficit, now over $50 billion a year, the largest ever, with each billion dollars representing a loss of 20,000 more jobs in this country.

With Canada, the other country with which we were supposed to experience a trade surplus, we have also fallen into deficit. In fact, we have doubled the deficit that we had with Canada. And what is amazing about this is that every year it gets worse. The American people inherently know this because it is happening to them directly.

At the same time in this country we have increasing illegal immigration,

much of it from south of our border. What is interesting, most of the debate about immigration doesn't even touch on NAFTA. Yet if you look at what NAFTA has caused inside of Mexico, over 2 million peasant farmers have been displaced and another 500,000 more are coming each year. And why is that? Because the very small farmsteads of Mexico, in the Sinaloa Valley all the way down to Xcalas and Oaxaca are being destroyed.

The agricultural provisions I tried to get into NAFTA back in 1993 were never allowed to be considered on this floor. If we had done that, we would have been able to address the tragedy that is occurring in Mexico, which is the complete elimination of their small holders and their farmers. I call it a continental sacrilege, the heartlessness that is embedded in NAFTA that is costing jobs in our country, costing jobs in Canada, costing the loss of life as people flee to try to feed themselves, as their whole way of life is being totally destroyed in Mexico.

This week something very important happened. In the city of Ottawa, Canada, the capital city of our sister state up north, a major meeting was held between parliamentarians of the United States, Canada, and Mexico to begin to push back a continental effort to reform NAFTA. Both legislators, like myself, and representatives of those two governments, along with civil society groups met in Ottawa to halt NAFTA-plus, the expansion of NAFTA, something being called the Security and Prosperity Partnership.

Instead, at a press conference in Ottawa on Monday, we announced that networks from across Canada, the United States, and Mexico are going to unveil a plan to bring an end to the kind of deep damage that NAFTA is causing in all three countries and replace it with a people-centered trade model. As I said in my remarks in Canada, trade agreements in North America must ensure rising standards of living and increase jobs in all of our countries.

We met this week in Ottawa, and that meeting followed one we held last year in this city of Washington, D.C. This was our second forum. We will have a third in Ottawa a year from now, and likely a meeting in Mexico City in August.

As one of our parliamentarians said, NAFTA has aggravated poverty across our continent. And the new Democratic Party Parliamentarian, Peter Julian of Canada said, ''There is no doubt that under NAFTA, most Canadians are poorer. We have been fighting to make adjustments,'' he said, ''and now it is clear that NAFTA has to be replaced.'' It is not working for the vast majority of the inhabitants of North America. It has failed on the bottom line.

In anticipation of a summit that will be held in Ottawa in March 2007, called the ''Three Amigos Summit,'' our group will create a North American secretariat to prepare for counter information and counterproposals and introduce simultaneous legislation in this chamber in Ottawa and in Mexico City to replace NAFTA. We will build opportunities for public engagement in civil society across this continent on the issue of proper continental integration.

Mr. Speaker, a new charter for the people of the Americas is being drafted, one that will result in more democracy, more cooperation, more development for rising standards of living, not more loss of jobs and greater trade deficits.

NEW IMMIGRATION LAWS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CARTER) is recognized for the remaining time until midnight as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. CARTER. Mr. Speaker, I thank you for allowing me to be here tonight and for allowing me to address this House on an issue that I feel is probably a life-changing issue to the United States of America. It is a life-changing issue for what is somewhere estimated to be between 11 and 15 million people who have entered and are living in this country illegally. And it is a life-changing issue, I think, for every American.

As we are in a time of concern about national security and great expenditures on homeland security, we have got a crisis on our border. I am not going to go too much in detail about this crisis, because anybody that turns on the television these days can see pictures of hundreds of people storming past our border patrols on our southern border as they leave Mexico. Most of those pictures come from Arizona.

In the last about 9 months, I have visited the Texas border on three occasions. Twice I went down to Laredo and visited with the border patrol and all those persons involved in immigration in the Laredo section of the Texas border. This past weekend, I went with the deputy whip, ERIC CANTOR, down to El Paso, and with other members of a congressional delegation, to discuss the issue of what is going on in the El Paso sector of the Texas border.

We have got an estimated 16,000 people crossing our border every night or every day coming into the United States. These are 16,000 people most of whom are not caught and most of whom are entering this country, for what purpose we know not, Mr. Speaker. We can't presume that every one of them, as has been just a moment ago described, are poor impoverished workers coming here looking for a job. Many of them are. But we don't know who these people are, and we don't know why these people are here in every instance, because we have done nothing to inquire as to their purpose or who they are or what they are coming up here for because our system has been overwhelmed.

We are now going into conference, the House and Senate, with our colleagues over in the Senate, on two versions of what we think needs to be done to address the issue that is facing this Nation right now on immigration. I want to propose to this House and to the Members of this House that we have already addressed many of the issues in 1986 in a bill, that I am aware the Speaker here tonight was involved in.

Mr. Speaker, I have looked at that. I have actually gone out and pulled up the law and looked at what we are operating under today, and I find it is very curious that there is a lot of very good enforcement procedures in this bill, the 1986 bill. There are things in that bill, if they had been done and done correctly, we would not be addressing this massive intrusion across our southern border.

But what has happened? What reason has this gone on? My whole point of this speech here tonight is to say it is time for us, I think, to slow down and address a life-changing issue in detail and see where the system has been overwhelmed in the past and make sure that we don't make the mistake that I think democracy makes a lot in the legislative process of taking something, sticking a bunch of new patches on it, and hoping it will solve the problem. Patches on an old used tire almost inevitably start to leak at some point in time, and then rupture, and the tire goes flat.

I think when it comes to immigration laws, it is time to buy a new tire, not just put in a patch tube or stick patches on the tire. We need to look at our immigration laws of this country from top to bottom and in a very businesslike and studious manner, come up with solutions for the problems that are going to face the people that I have described here tonight.

There is estimated, as I said, 11 to 15 mile people that have come into this country. The other day we were on the border in a place where there was a triple fence and a ditch at our border.

□ 2330

A very interesting aside, it was explained to us in El Paso, the construction of that fence and ditch, which has been there now quite awhile, but when that was put up, street crime in El Paso dropped so substantially that El Paso went from one of the worst street crime cities in the Nation of a population of over 500,000 and less than a million, to today, after construction of the fence, street crime in El Paso, Texas, has improved so drastically it is now the third safest city of that size in the United States. And that is clearly reflected by everyone in law enforcement in that town as a result of 17 miles of fence in the populated area of El Paso.

So the proposals for fencing that the House bill has, for instance, fencing in the populated areas, have an effect on the lives of the people that live in that