

an election just by entering the signal space of a voting machine. Since no action has been taken by the Federal Government to prevent any of these abuses, we can expect more of the same.

And speaking of voting machines, the allocation of those machines is also done to manipulate the outcome. Who wants to wait 5 hours in line in the rain to vote? Thousands of voters in Ohio had to do that and it just so happened that they were black. Scholars and researchers have done the math. Voting machines were allocated not by the number of registered voters by precinct, but by some other calculation. How could majority black precincts in Columbus, OH have 3, 4, or 5 machines and have over 1,000 voters in their precincts, and mostly Republican precincts in say, Dublin, OH had the same number of machines for one third the number of voters?

This pattern of devaluing and marginalizing the black vote was seen again in the recent Mayoral election in New Orleans. Here it was not Republicans, but a conservative Democratic Governor who blocked efforts to provide electronic polling stations to enable hundreds of thousands of mostly Black Katrina survivors the chance to vote. It was among the largest instance of African-American voter disfranchisement since the enactment of the Voting Rights Act in 1965.

Since no action has been taken by the Federal Government to prevent any of these abuses, we can expect more of the same. In addition, in the coming Fall election we will see the introduction of electronic poll-books, which are untested and non-transparent. Governor Ehrlich of Maryland, a Republican, has deemed this new addition to the voting experience to be unreliable.

So, Mr. Speaker, who cares? We care. And that is why we need a Voting Rights Act. Not to tarry in the days of the past, but to protect us from encroachments on the right to vote that occur today and that might be tried tomorrow.

□ 2300

RESTORING ACCOUNTABILITY

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

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the 37-Member strong, fiscally conservative, Democratic Blue Dog Coalition, I rise this evening to talk about a very important principle, and that is restoring accountability within our government.

Under the United States Constitution, Congress has an obligation to provide congressional oversight of the executive branch. Congressional oversight prevents waste and fraud, ensures executive compliance with the law, and evaluates executive performance. However, under the current leadership, Congress has abandoned this responsibility by failing to conduct meaningful investigations of allegations of serious waste, fraud, abuse and mismanagement of taxpayer dollars.

By failing to serve as a check and balance for overspending, waste, fraud and financial abuse within the executive branch, this Republican-led Congress has failed the American taxpayer.

This President, this administration, and this Republican-led Congress must be held accountable for our massive Federal debt. American taxpayers deserve to know how their money is being spent.

In 2004, \$25 billion of Federal Government spending went absolutely unaccounted for, according to the Treasury Department. The Bush administration was unable to determine where the money had gone, how it was spent, or what the American people got for their tax money. Even worse, the Republican-controlled Congress failed to hold the executive branch accountable for this omission.

Then, in 2005, the Government Accountability Office reported that 19 of 24 Federal agencies were not in compliance with all Federal accounting audit standards and could not fully explain how they had spent taxpayer money appropriated by this Republican-led Congress. Yet, Republican leaders in Congress did not force these agencies to fully account for how the money was being spent before doling out billions more of taxpayer dollars to the same programs.

FEMA continues to store over 9,000 mobile homes, as you can see here, in a pasture in Hope, Arkansas, while victims of Hurricane Katrina remain homeless. FEMA's response has been, well, we will make sure the manufactured homes do not sink; we will spend \$4 million laying gravel in this pasture. It is time FEMA was held accountable. It is time FEMA got these brand new, fully furnished, 14-foot-wide, 60-foot-long mobile homes to the victims of Hurricane Katrina.

American taxpayers deserve answers as to why their children and grandchildren have to foot the bill for the fiscal mismanagement of this administration. The time has come that this administration is held accountable for its reckless behavior. Congress must act now to renew its constitutional responsibility to serve as a check and balance for overspending, waste, fraud and financial abuse within the executive branch.

That is why the Blue Dog Coalition is sponsoring legislation that would require Congress to renew its duty to conduct hearings on spending and hold the administration officials accountable.

One of the founders of the Blue Dog Coalition, Mr. TANNER of Tennessee, has introduced H. Res. 841. Among other things, it would require congressional hearings within 60 days of Inspector General reports that identify waste, fraud, abuse or mismanagement of more than \$1 million.

It would require congressional hearings when the Government Accountability Office names an agency "high risk" for mismanagement.

It would require congressional hearings when an agency's auditors issue disclaimers or corrections, indicating accounting information is inaccurate or incomplete.

It would require congressional hearings at least twice a year to review the Office of Management and Budget's performance-based review program.

Mr. Speaker, wasteful government spending must stop, and that is why it is time to restore some commonsense and fiscal discipline to our Nation's government. It is time to restore accountability to our Nation's government.

OUR UNITY

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

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, in 2 weeks, we will be observing the 230th anniversary of our Declaration of Independence, and I think it was on June 21, in 1788, that the State of New Hampshire was actually the ninth State to ratify the Constitution of the United States.

When the United States was founded, there was a search for a national motto, and the first motto of our country, *e pluribus unum*, Latin, translates to, out of many, we are one.

The very words, United States, speaks to the unity, not just of colonies and then States, but really speaks to a deeper meaning of human unity. Out of many, we are one. It is not simply unity in this country. It is the unity of people all over the world.

This year, in our 230th year since we declared our independence, we find ourselves gripped by a type of thinking which separates us from the rest of humanity, which causes the United States to be locked into dichotomized thinking of us versus them, whoever they are.

With that comes a very heavy price. It comes a separation which has led us to war. It comes a separation that has separated us from the ambitions of people all over the world who are hoping for a rising standard of living through having guarantees for workers rights, human rights, environmental quality principles, which they had hoped that the United States would stand for.

We separate ourselves from human unity by not participating in a wide range of international agreements, and yet we are the United States. Our very name speaks to unity.

How then can we find ourselves again as a Nation? How can we come to reconnect with the deeper meaning of who we are? How can we step away from this experience which since 9/11 has taken us into a blind alley?

If there was ever a time when this country needed a period of truth and reconciliation, this is it. We find so many of our fellow countrymen and women still believe that Iraq had something to do with 9/11. It did not. But at