

included news, call-in talk shows, covering various legal, health and educational topics, as well as music programs. The station became so popular that they were broadcasting 16 hours a day in three languages: Arabic, Kurdish and English.

While we take radio shows that cater to women for granted, this was a revolutionary concept in the Middle East. Women who had been oppressed for years were finally able to hear their side of the story. And Radio Al Mahaba provided a forum for women to make sure that their voices were heard.

The station received 100 calls a day from women asking questions, giving advice and voicing their opinions of how to rebuild their country. The radio station had found an audience, and they were financially in good shape as well from new sponsorships.

But last October, Radio Al Mahaba fell silent. The terrorist attack on the Palestinian Hotel in Baghdad destroyed their transmitter. And while the radio station was not the target of this attack, many leaders in Iraq were not all that upset that these women's voices were silenced once again.

But the women of Radio Al Mahaba were resilient. They found another transmitter, but it wasn't as powerful as the one they lost during the terrorist attack. The new transmitter could only reach about one-third of their listening audience. And less listeners meant less sponsorship revenue for the station.

Unfortunately, the rented transmitter died about a month ago, and they are in desperate need of funds to get back on the air. Once they receive this funding, they plan to expand listening audiences to include all of Iraq and its neighbors. They also plan on broadcasting in Persian to reach the women of Iran, who have been oppressed for nearly 30 years.

If democracy in Iraq is going to succeed, women will have to play a role, a vital role, in making sure that it goes forward. The radio station can be the place for women in Iraq and throughout the Middle East to learn about the issues that will affect their lives. It allows them place to be heard without often violent consequences for the first time in their lives.

The right to educate yourself and to be heard are cornerstones of our democracy, and these characteristics should be carried over to the new Iraq.

At this point in Iraq's history, the station is in the midst of a battle. But not just a military battle, but also in the battle for Iraqi women's rights against fundamentalists.

The station's 28 full-time and part-time staff risk their lives every day to make sure that the voices are heard. Despite this terrible risk, they are all very dedicated because, in one of the staffer's words, "they want to reach out and touch people's lives. They want to give hope and knowledge, empowerment support and the passage of freedom to Iraqi women."

Mr. Speaker, I recently had a chance to talk to President Bush about this station and he was very enthusiastic about the role it will play in democracy in Iraq. It is my hope that the passage of tomorrow's resolution honoring the radio station will raise awareness and find funding for the station so they can continue their message of hope to the women of the Middle East.

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

#### A PARODY OF CONGRESS

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, something odd has happened. There are a lot of odd things that happen around here, but the Republican Web site, the one that they use for scheduling the weekly activities of Congress, has been hacked by writers for the John Stewart Show, and they don't seem to mind. So we are going to be a parody of Congress this week instead of a real Congress this week, despite the fact that we are borrowing \$1.4 billion a day to run the government, we are running a \$2 billion a day trade deficit, average families haven't seen their wages go up in 5 years, and we are raining tax cuts on the wealthy.

There are a few real things that we could deal with that the American people are concerned about. Maybe high gas prices. No, those things are not on the agenda. We have the faux agenda for Congress, which is designed purely for either entertainment purposes or for political purposes.

Well, what are we doing? We are taking up an amendment to ban the threat of gay marriage. Now, let's see. The Senate didn't pass it.

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That means it is not going forward. But, nonetheless, the House is going to use valuable time to vote on banning the threat of gay marriage even though we know that the constitutional amendment cannot move forward because the Senate has already disapproved this venture.

But it is good for the ratings, entertainment value. The John Stewart writers thought it would be fun to bring that up in the House. So we are going to bring it up. Then we are going to do another thing here called "court stripping." We are going to say there are only two and a half branches of Congress, or maybe one and a half, the President and half a Congress, and the judiciary only if they are pets of the President and the Congress.

That is, no judge will be allowed to hear a case challenging the Pledge of

Allegiance. Now, no judge has found the Pledge of Allegiance unconstitutional. Quite the opposite, they have found that the use of the words "under God" is diminimus in the Pledge and have upheld its use.

But the Republicans, they do not even want judges to hear those cases any more and reject those claims any more, because they think that this might provide entertainment value or excite some strange people in the Republican base. So we will spend a day on court stripping instead of dealing with high-energy prices.

Then we are going to take up two phony bills on a serious issue, stem cell research, could have tremendous benefits for the American people. The President is opposed to stem cells, the Republicans are opposed to stem cell research. The United States is falling behind the whole rest of the world.

Americans will have to go overseas to get procedures that have been developed by stem cell research that could cure Parkinson's or other debilitating diseases, because the Republican right wing does not want research on using stem cells, but the American public does want that research.

So we are going to take up two fake bills, two pretend bills. We are going to ban a practice that is not happening called fetal farming, and everybody will probably vote for that, and then we are going to authorize them to do what they can already on the President's lame program that is not working and is having America fall behind on stem cell research. So you see, we are really for stem cell research.

Well, not really, because the lines they are using are all corrupted and it is not going anywhere. And then the real bill, the real compromise bill that passed the House, it passed the United States House of Representatives, is going to probably pass the Senate this week. It will go to the President and he will veto it.

So in order to give them political cover or to provide entertainment value, they will vote on two fake stem cell bills, and then vote to support the President in vetoing the real stem cell bill that could provide tremendous advances in research for the American people.

So this is a sort of play Congress week. Maybe it was not the Stewart writers, maybe it was Colbert who was going through interviewing Members of Congress, and he might have gotten some of the data there.

But in any case, instead of dealing with very real problems that are confronting Americans, instead of dealing with world crises, instead of dealing with high energy prices, growing debt, stagnant wages, you know, access to better education for our kids, health care, high-cost pharmaceuticals, adequately funding veterans benefits, none of that is on the schedule this week.

This week we do not have time for those things because we are playing