

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for that information. We understand it has to be tentative, and we understand that the leader cannot anticipate exactly what will and will not pass within certain time frames. We appreciate sort of the ballpark estimate of what would be available for time if we need it.

You have not noted, but there has been a lot of talk about tax-related legislation and speculation as to whether or not we will consider any tax or trade-related legislation, for example, the tax extenders, prior to leaving for the elections. It is not on your schedule. Do you have any expectation that we would be considering prior to the election, not after the election but prior to, any tax legislation, extenders or otherwise?

Mr. BOEHNER. I do not.

Mr. HOYER. You do not. Thank you.

There is noted on the calendar a bill which is the Child Interstate Abortion Notification Act. Would it be your expectation there would be any other legislation prior to the election dealing with that subject, abortion?

Mr. BOEHNER. I am not sure that there is any definitive answer on that. We do have this interstate notification bill up next week. There was some consideration to the unborn child pain bill that some Members have been hoping to get up. At this point I do not expect to have it on the floor next week. But at this point that is as much information as I have.

Mr. HOYER. I thank you for that.

You mentioned we are going to have, and you are going to try to pass a rule, I suppose, to give you suspension authority all of next week. Are there any other bills that you are contemplating bringing up under suspension? You noted the three that we discussed. Are there any others?

I yield to my friend.

Mr. BOEHNER. Which of the several hundred bills that Members have asked me to bring to the floor next week would you like to know about?

Mr. HOYER. It is a challenge, isn't it, Mr. Leader?

Mr. BOEHNER. If the gentleman would yield, we are working with Members on both sides of the aisle who have issues that have been through committee or are almost through committee that they would like to bring to the floor. As typically happens, I and my staff will work closely with you and your staff to schedule those so everyone has fair notice and we have gone through the usual scrubbing process.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman. I understand there are a lot of bills that are possible, and we appreciate that fact and appreciate his working with us to try to accommodate Members on both sides.

Two last things. Mr. GOODLATTE and Mr. PETERSON have been very concerned, as you know, about the drought and the stress that many of our farmers in rural areas of our country have

been experiencing. There has been a lot of discussion about assistance that we could give. Is there any contemplation that next week we might be able to consider an emergency disaster assistance bill, H.R. 5099, that will help our farmers and ranchers who have been badly hurt by floods, droughts and other natural disasters?

Mr. BOEHNER. I am not familiar with the bill, but I will be happy to take a look at it.

Mr. HOYER. I appreciate that.

The last question will not come as a surprise to you, I know. We still have yet to pass one appropriation bill.

Mr. BOEHNER. That's right. We are still talking about it.

Mr. HOYER. We have passed the others, but it is still out there. It is a large bill that deals with the education of our children, the health of our people, and the ability of our working people to succeed. I know that there is great attention being given to that bill. We are hopeful that it will come to the floor, and we are hopeful when it comes to the floor, there will be an opportunity to vote up or down on increasing the minimum wage over a period of time. Is there any hope or expectation that that bill might come to the floor?

Mr. BOEHNER. The gentleman is aware there are some problems with the bill. We have been having conversations about trying to solve those problems. I don't expect it to be on the floor next week.

With regard to raising the minimum wage, the House did, in fact, vote on that in late July. We sent it to the Senate where it remains under consideration.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman. Reclaiming my time, we would hope that you would continue to consider that.

ADJOURNMENT TO MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2006

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 12:30 p.m. on Monday next for morning hour debate.

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

There was no objection.

DISPENSING WITH CALENDAR WEDNESDAY BUSINESS ON WEDNESDAY NEXT

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the business in order under the Calendar Wednesday rule be dispensed with on Wednesday next.

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

There was no objection.

WIRETAPPING SURVEILLANCE PROGRAM

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

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the President's initiative to surveil known and suspected terrorists who call from outside the United States into their calls within our borders. Simply put, this initiative has saved lives by gathering valuable intelligence our law enforcement has used to prevent and foil terrorist attacks that have and continue to be planned, as I speak.

It simply escapes me how anyone, especially the Democrats, could be against such a vital program in the global war on terror.

Maybe my colleagues are confused about the purpose and parameters of this program. This is not a program to listen in on American citizens' conversations. To the contrary, it is a narrowly tailored program that is used only in the case of international calls coming into the United States from known or suspected terrorists.

As a Nation, we are facing a new kind of war and an enemy using new and unconventional means of warfare. Many have characterized this war as a clash of civilizations. It is time we face the realization that we can use all of the tools available to win this war, or we can ignore the threat and pay heavy consequences through American lives.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. 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.

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

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

REPUBLICANS OUT OF TOUCH

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to speak out of turn.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from Washington is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, on November 7 the American people will go to the polls. As the New York Times reported this morning, only one in four Americans approves of the job being done by the Republican-controlled Congress. Seventy-five percent of American believes that Republicans have not governed in the best interests of the American people. That is a landslide vote of no confidence to the Republican Party, and I will include for

the RECORD the New York Times story found on page 1.

The American people have given up on the Republican Party because the Republican Party has given in to special interests. The Republican vision for America is to let the privileged few run the country. That's what the record demonstrates. As incredible as it is, the American people today are subsidizing oil companies. Democrats introduced legislation months ago to end the taxpayers' subsidy, but Republicans will not even debate it. At a time when the American people are paying \$3 a gallon for gas, they are paying even more to Big Oil in taxpayers' subsidies.

Republicans are out of touch with the American people. Their taxpayer subsidy pipeline flows your money to Big Oil.

So does the doughnut hole that the elderly are beginning to fall through because Republicans care more about drug companies than they do about the American elderly. A report released by the House Ways and Means Committee Democrats concludes that 88 percent of seniors who bought a drug plan through Medicare bought one with a big financial hole in it, dug by Republicans. We are talking about 7 million seniors. Within a month, they will have to pay their drug bill even as they continue their insurance premium to big business.

□ 1630

Under Republican rules, special interests got special treatment and the seniors fell in the hole. The Republicans have left no special interest behind. College tuition is up 57 percent at public universities since President Bush took office. What did the Republican-controlled Congress do for the middle class? They passed legislation cutting \$12 billion in student aid, and they raised the interest rates on student loans.

Republicans also passed sweetheart rules to indenture the American people to banks after personal bankruptcy. It is worth noting that the number one reason for personal bankruptcy in America today is staggering, unpaid medical expenses. What have the Republicans done? They have allowed the number of uninsured in this country to swell to almost 47 million people. They gave the rich a tax cut, called health savings accounts, out of reach for most Americans. Out of reach, out of touch. The Republican Party caters to the top 1 percent.

The Republicans gave the superrich on average \$100,000 a year in tax breaks while the average American gets 50 bucks. Then the Republicans held hostage the Democrats' proposal to raise the minimum wage for the first time in 9 years. They do not care about workers. And while Republicans talk a lot about being afraid, they fail to protect the American people by implementing the recommendations of the bipartisan 9/11 Commission. Republicans spend

more effort instilling fear in the Americans than they do in fighting the war on terror.

The President unilaterally chooses which laws he will enforce and which laws he just suspends. The President considers Syria our enemy, but his administration used flimsy Canadian intelligence to deport a Canadian citizen to Syria, where he was tortured. The man was innocent. Colin Powell, the former Republican Secretary of State for Mr. Bush, said, "The world is beginning to doubt the moral basis of our fight against terrorism."

This President answers to no one because congressional Republicans have surrendered oversight to the White House. So it should come as no surprise that the Republicans decided to erect a security fence throughout America, separating millions of Americans from their constitutional right to vote. They did it yesterday.

Some say Republicans have given America a do-nothing Congress. But the record shows that the Republicans have done one thing after another over and over again. They have sold out the American people to the special interests. And payback is coming on the 7th of November. The American people will have an opportunity to change and reach for new directions where we will take care of student loans. We will take care of health care. We will take care of security. We will take care of the things that the middle class in this country wants taken care of, not the 1 percent at the top.

[From the New York Times, Sept. 21, 2006]
ONLY 25 PERCENT IN POLL APPROVE OF THE
CONGRESS

(By Adam Nagourney and Janet Elder)

With barely seven weeks until the midterm elections, Americans have an overwhelmingly negative view of the Republican-controlled Congress, with substantial majorities saying that they disapprove of the job it is doing and that its members do not deserve re-election, according to the latest New York Times/CBS News poll.

The disdain for Congress is as intense as it has been since 1994, when Republicans captured 52 seats to end 40 years of Democratic control of the House and retook the Senate as well. It underlines the challenge the Republican Party faces in trying to hold on to power in the face of a surge in anti-incumbent sentiment.

By broad margins, respondents said that members of Congress were too tied to special interests and that they did not understand the needs and problems of average Americans. Two-thirds said Congress had accomplished less than it typically did in a two-year session; most said they could not name a single major piece of legislation that cleared this Congress. Just 25 percent said they approved of the way Congress was doing its job.

But for all the clear dissatisfaction with the 109th Congress, 39 percent of respondents said their own representative deserved re-election, compared with 48 percent who said it was time for someone new.

What is more, it seems highly unlikely Democrats will experience a sweep similar to the one Republicans experienced in 1994. Most analysts judge only about 40 House seats to be in play at the moment, compared

with over 100 seats in play at this point 12 years ago, in large part because redistricting has created more safe seats for both parties.

The poll also found that President Bush had not improved his own or his party's standing through his intense campaign of speeches and events surrounding the fifth anniversary of the 9/11 attacks. The speeches were at the heart of a Republican strategy to thrust national security to the forefront in the fall elections.

Mr. Bush's job approval rating was 37 percent in the poll, virtually unchanged from the last Times/CBS News poll, in August. On the issue that has been a bulwark for Mr. Bush, 54 percent said they approved of the way he was managing the effort to combat terrorists, again unchanged from last month, though up from this spring.

Republicans continued to hold a slight edge over Democrats on which party was better at dealing with terrorism, though that edge did not grow since last month despite Mr. Bush's flurry of speeches on national security, including one from the Oval Office on the night of Sept. 11.

But the Times/CBS News poll found a slight increase in the percentage of Americans who said they approved of the way Mr. Bush had handled the war in Iraq, to 36 percent from 30 percent. The results also suggest that after bottoming out this spring, Mr. Bush's approval ratings on the economy and foreign policy have returned to their levels of about a year ago, both at 37 percent. The number of people who called terrorism the most important issue facing the country doubled to 14 percent, from 7 percent in July; 22 percent named the war in Iraq as their top concern, little changed from July.

Across the board, the poll found marked disenchantment with Congress, highlighting the opportunity Democrats see to make the argument for a change in leadership and to make the election a national referendum on the performance of a Republican-controlled Congress and Mr. Bush's tenure.

In one striking finding, 77 percent of respondents—including 65 percent of Republicans—said most members of Congress had not done a good enough job to deserve re-election and that it was time to give new people a chance. That is the highest number of voters saying it is "time for new people" since the fall of 1994.

"You get some people in there, and they're in there forever," said Jan Weaver, of Aberdeen, S.D., who described herself as a Republican voter, in a follow-up interview. "They're so out of touch with reality."

In the poll, 50 percent said they would support a Democrat in the fall Congressional elections, compared with 35 percent who said they would support a Republican. But the poll found that Democrats continued to struggle to offer a strong case for turning government control over to them; only 38 percent said the Democrats had a clear plan for how they would run the country, compared with 45 percent who said the Republicans had offered a clear plan.

Overall discontent with Congress or Washington does not necessarily signify how people will vote when they see the familiar name of their member of Congress on the ballot, however.

Democrats face substantial institutional obstacles in trying to repeat what Republicans accomplished in 1994, including a Republican financial advantage and the fact that far fewer seats are in play.

Thus, while 61 percent of respondents said they disapproved of the way Congress was handling its job, just 29 percent said they disapproved of the way their own "representative is handling his or her job."

The New York Times/CBS News poll began last Friday, four days after the commemoration of the fifth anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, and two weeks after the White House

began its offensive on security issues. A USA Today-Gallup Poll published Tuesday reported that Mr. Bush's job approval rating had jumped to 44 percent from 39 percent. The questioning in that poll went through Sunday; The Times and CBS completed questioning Tuesday night. Presidential addresses often produce shifts in public opinion that tend to be transitory.

The nationwide poll was conducted by telephone Friday through Tuesday. It included 1,131 adults, of whom 1,007 said they were registered to vote, and had a margin of sampling error of plus or minus three percentage points.

As part of the Republican effort to gain advantage on the war in Iraq, Republicans have accused Democrats who want to set a timetable for leaving Iraq of wanting to "cut and run." But 52 percent of respondents said they would not think the United States had lost the war if it withdrew its troops from Iraq today.

The poll also found indications that voters were unusually intrigued by this midterm election: 43 percent said they were more enthusiastic than usual about voting. However, with turnout promising to be a critical factor in many of the closer Senate and House races, there was no sign that either party had an edge in terms of voter enthusiasm.

Evidence of the antipathy toward Congress in particular—and Washington in general—was abundant: 71 percent said they did not trust the government to do what is right.

"If they had new blood, then the people that influence them—the lobbyists—would maybe not be so influential," said Norma Scranton, a Republican from Thedford, Neb., in a follow-up interview after the poll. "They don't have our interest at heart because they're influenced by these lobbyists. If they were new, maybe they would try to please their constituents a little better."

Lois Thurber, a Republican from Axtell, Neb., said in a follow-up interview: "There's so much bickering, so much disagreement—they just can't get together on certain issues."

"They're kind of more worried about themselves than they are about the country."

Incumbents and challengers nationwide are trying to accommodate this sour mood. Democrats are presenting themselves as a fresh start—"Isn't it time for a change?" asked an advertisement by the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee directed against Senator Jim Talent, Republican of Missouri.

And Republican incumbents are seeking to distance themselves from fellow Republicans in Washington. "I've gone against the president and the Republican leadership when I think they are wrong," Representative Christopher Shays, a Connecticut Republican locked in a tough reelection battle, said in a television advertisement broadcast this week.

The Republicans continue to be seen as the better party to deal with terrorism, but by nowhere near the margin they once enjoyed: it is now 42 percent to 37 percent. When asked which party took the threat of terrorism more seriously, 69 percent said they both did; 22 percent named Republicans, compared with 6 percent who said Democrats.

Voters said Democrats were more likely to tell the truth than Republicans when discussing the war in Iraq and about the actual threat of terrorism. And 59 percent of respondents said Mr. Bush was hiding something when he talked about how things were going in Iraq; an additional 25 percent said he was mostly lying when talking about the war.

Not that Democrats should draw any solace from that: 71 percent of respondents said

Democrats in Congress were hiding something when they talked about how well things were going in Iraq, while 13 percent said they were mostly lying.

Robert Allen, a Democrat from Ventura, Calif., said: "We're in a stalemate right now. They're not getting hardly anything done." He added, "It's time to elect a whole new bunch so they can do something."

APPRECIATION FOR U.S. BORDER PATROL AGENTS

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. Mr. Speaker, I am on the floor today to express appreciation for the more than 12,000 U.S. Border Patrol agents who perform an invaluable service to our Nation.

Though support for the U.S. Border Patrol and other law enforcement officers often goes unspoken, the American people and Members of Congress owe our sincere appreciation for these courageous men and women for their dedication to keeping our Nation safe by protecting our borders.

While protecting the United States from an influx of illegal immigration, drugs, counterfeit goods, and terrorists, U.S. Border Patrol agents face high-risk situations and dangerous environments while working on our borders. Often working alone in some of the most remote and dangerous areas of the country, these agents routinely encounter heavily armed human and drug traffickers.

Despite these dangerous conditions, the men and women of the U.S. Border Patrol work tirelessly to protect our Nation's borders, and they deserve the utmost praise for their dedication and bravery.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, two U.S. Border Patrol agents who deserve our appreciation have instead become victims of a grave injustice.

Agents Ramos and Compean were found guilty in a Federal court for wounding a drug smuggler who brought 743 pounds of marijuana across our southern border into Texas. These agents now face up to 20 years in Federal prison.

Agent Ramos served the Border Patrol for 9 years and was a former nominee for Border Patrol Agent of the Year. Agent Compean had 5 years of experience as a Border Patrol agent.

These agents never should have been prosecuted for their actions last year. By attempting to apprehend a Mexican drug smuggler, these agents were simply doing their job to protect the American people. These agents should have been commended for their actions, but instead the U.S. Attorney's Office prosecuted the agents and granted full immunity to the drug smuggler for his testimony against our agents.

The drug smuggler received full medical care in El Paso, Texas, was permitted to return to Mexico, and is now suing the Border Patrol for \$5 million

for violating his civil rights. He is not an American citizen. He is a criminal.

Mr. Speaker, I have spoken to numerous people inside Texas and outside of Texas regarding this outrage, including the attorney for one of these agents. I have written to the President of the United States, asking him to please look into this matter. I have written two letters to Attorney General Gonzales, asking him to reopen this case for a fuller investigation before these men are sentenced in October of this year. I hope that the American people will agree that this prosecution is an outrageous injustice and that the situation must be investigated.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will close by asking my colleagues on both sides of the political aisle to please join us in this and find out why these two agents were prosecuted and will be sent to a Federal prison on October 19.

Mr. Speaker, I ask God to please bless our men and women in uniform and their families.

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.)

U.S. CONGRESS MUST LEAD ON PEACE

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to speak out of order.

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

There was no objection.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, today, September 21, 2006, the world celebrates International Peace Day. Unfortunately, as we look around the world, we see more unrest and more people living in poverty, and certainly not more genuine peace.

This administration has chosen the road of conflict and war, leaving diplomacy and discussion on the side of the road. The President's cowboy swagger and use of "You're either with us or you're against us" gets us absolutely nowhere.

Mr. Speaker, today, International Peace Day, is the appropriate time for a new direction for our foreign policy and for our country. That is why on Tuesday of next week I will be hosting a third congressional forum on the occupation of Iraq. I am doing this because until the Congress begins real oversight into the tragedies of our occupation in Iraq, forums like these serve as one of the only ways, the only ways to examine our actions.

I am organizing this forum on the cost of our actions in Iraq because President Bush's Iraq policy has been an absolute failure and our Nation will suffer. Our Nation will suffer its effects for years to come. Besides making us