

and refugees, regardless of immigration status. Arnoldo and the National Network bases their efforts in the principles of equality and justice, and seek the enfranchisement of all immigrant and refugee communities in the United States through organizing and advocating for their full labor, environmental, civil and human rights. Arnoldo recognizes the unparalleled change in global, political and economic structures which has exacerbated regional, national and international patterns of migration, and emphasizes the need to build international support and cooperation to strengthen the rights, welfare and safety of migrants and refugees.

Mr. Speaker, Individuals in my district are the motivating force behind the remarkable organizations that promote civic engagement among Latinos in the 9th Congressional District. Leaders like Marta Higuera, a Berkeley Organizing Congregations for Action field representative, helps BOCA fulfill its mission of creating a coalition of interfaith congregations throughout the city of Berkeley. Marta's leadership has been instrumental in having BOCA meet the needs of the Latino community. She persuaded the Berkeley High School English Language Learners program to translate forms and documents into Spanish for parents. In addition, Marta has organized immigration town halls and fundraisers to support our community members who are in most need.

Mr. Speaker, as we honor the achievements of outstanding Hispanic Americans—like Jovita Solis, Arnoldo Garcia, and Marta Higuera—we know that celebrating the Hispanic community for just one month not enough. All Latinos deserve a real opportunity to achieve the American Dream, whether they have been here for generations or just arrived to our shores. Hispanic dreams and values are undoubtedly American dreams and values.

REGARDING THE "ACCOMPLISHMENTS" OF THE 109TH CONGRESS

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 29, 2006

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I am so glad my colleagues on the other side of aisle feel that they can look the American people in the eye and say "we have done enough for you this session in Congress, we have earned a vacation. It is high time for us to adjourn."

Now, Mr. Speaker, let me translate what the Republicans are actually saying: "We choose rather to go on vacation then to attend to the needs of the American people."

It seems the Grand Old Party's leadership had a grand old time this year, deciding to recess after having spent the fewest number of days in session in our lifetime.

Pitifully, in comparison to the typical American worker who spends approximately 247 days a year laboring, Congressional members will have worked less than 100.

Mr. Speaker this is not simply a "do nothing Congress" as so many of my colleagues have said before me. This is just as much a "do nothing right Congress."

And the American people understand this reality all too well. Remarkably, a recent CBS

News/New York Times poll found 75 percent of voters can't name one thing Congress has accomplished this session.

Well my friends, I can't really either. Republican priorities rolled out this session were strictly those that helped them advance politically. They chose to fritter away scarce time debating frivolous proposed constitutional amendments banning flag burning and gay marriage instead of real issues Americans at home are concerned with.

As we end this session, Republican leadership has only passed 2 of the 11 required spending bills—quite a feat when you consider that both chambers of Congress are of the same party.

If this Congress were a school, students here would certainly receive an "F."

The list of their failures reads like a laundry list almost too long for me to recount right now:

In a gross display of negligence, Congress has failed to enact an annual budget this year.

Even though for nearly a decade the federal minimum wage has remained stagnant, Congress this year has again failed to negotiate a pay raise for working class Americans. And Congress also failed to negotiate deals on vital tax breaks for college tuition costs or research and development tax credits for businesses.

In response to the profusion of the Republican culture of corruption this year, Republicans have decided to do . . . zilch. Add Congressional failure to enact lobbying reform this year to the list.

Congress has failed to achieve health insurance reform and failed to finalize nuclear negotiations with India.

In response to sky high gas prices, increased signs of global warming and even President Bush's admission that America is far too reliant on foreign oil, Congress has failed to produce a real energy plan this session. Congress packs its bags to go, refusing to mandate higher levels of fuel efficiency standards or propose incentives for consumers or product makers to utilize alternative energy sources.

Congress leaves while nearly 12 million undocumented workers are hiding in the shadows of our society. After all the hype and rhetoric of passing an immigration bill, no true immigration reform has been realized this Congress.

Is the list of things left undone too lengthy, too repetitive, and too tiresome? Am I boring this Congress? There are still many more demonstrations of what little progress this Congress has made.

And what little has been done has been done badly! Important bills are being rushed through to secure a Republican majority in the next Congress. The latest example being the tyrannical anti-terror law, allowing Congress to reinterpret international law to authorize torture. A law that despite its name, nonetheless makes our troops less safe, leaves our Nation unprotected, and successfully damages our international credibility.

Of all the bills that have actually passed this Congress, how many of them have actually improved the lives of Americans?

What do have to show our constituents back home in our districts? An unstable economy, ridiculously high health care costs and gas prices, a loss in life abroad and a loss of our basic freedoms here at home.

More than 5 years after 9/11, numerous reports have shown that the war on Iraq is hurting our Nation in the war against terrorism. Our borders still remain exposed and our first responders still lack adequate resources to respond to either another 9/11 or another Katrina.

While we spend approximately \$2 billion a week on defense, Osama bin Laden is still alive and well, and Al Qaeda is resurging in Afghanistan stronger than ever before. Iraq is engulfed in sectarian violence and civil war and has become the breeding ground for a new generation of terrorists.

The war in Iraq has stretched our resources and troops thin, leaving us exposed to potential global terrorists and nuclear threats from nations such as Iran and North Korea.

Americans, I insist that you ask this question to yourself before you go to the ballot box this November:

What has the Republican Congress done for me these last 2 years? If you can not think of a single thing, you are not alone. Please think of a new Congress that would attend to your priorities here and overseas before you select your next elected official.

THE SECURE FENCE ACT OF 2006

HON. BETTY MCCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 29, 2006

Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to H.R. 6061. This bill will not improve U.S. national security and will clearly not provide for meaningful immigration reform.

I voted against the construction of a fence spanning our entire southern border in December, when the House unfortunately passed H.R. 4437, the Border Security Act of 2005. It is disappointing that the Republican leadership has chosen to spend the time debating a provision that has already passed the House, rather than go to conference and pass comprehensive immigration reform that will protect American workers and secure our borders. This House should be addressing issues like raising the minimum wage, providing health care and quality education to every child in America, and ensuring that our State and local law enforcement agencies have the resources they need to keep our streets safe. Not rehashing a border fence provision that has already been voted on in the last 12 months.

Once again, I strongly believe that Congress needs to work to secure our borders and ensure the safety of our citizens. However, this bill is inadequate and clearly will not begin to address the complicated issues regarding immigration reform. Even the small effort authorized in this bill—a 700-mile fence along our southern border with Mexico—is not fully funded. Nor does this legislation contain the resources necessary to increase the number of border security agents. This is nothing other than an election year ploy to use a serious issue that affects workers, immigrants, and our communities as a scare tactic.

America deserves immigration reform that will work. The Republicans have had months to appoint a conference committee and work out the differences between the President's approach and the bills put forward by the