suing the Border Patrol for $5 million for violating his civil rights. He is not an American citizen. He is a criminal.

Although it is clear that the agents fired shots in self-defense, Ramos and Compean were convicted mainly on the testimony of a habitual drug smuggler who claimed he was unarmed. Despite my repeated requests for an investigation of this case and a request by more than 50 Members of Congress for the President to pardon these agents, this administration has ignored the concerns of countless citizens who have cried out against this injustice.

Mr. Speaker, the indifference of this White House will long be remembered by the American people and by those of us in Congress who tried to come to the aid of these two heroes.

WHERE DEMOCRATS REALLY STAND ON THE ISSUES

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, the gentleman from North Carolina who preceded me in the well was saying, ''Those Democrats, they just want to raise taxes and spend.'' I would look at the legislation we passed today with 124 Republican votes as an example of where Democrats really stand on the issues.

Just about 1 year ago today, almost exactly a year ago today, the Republican Party passed legislation called reconciliation that actually raised the cost of student financial aid, dramatically raised the cost of student financial aid. It also did one other thing to ''save money'' or ''create revenue,'' which is it cut medical care for needy Americans.

Now, we have got to be fiscally responsible, but what they did with this money was cut taxes for wealthy investors, extend tax cuts for wealthy investors that were going to expire in the year 2008, not exactly an immediate problem, to 2010. They paid for that by raising the cost of student financial aid; i.e., taxing students and cutting medical care for poor Americans; i.e., taxing poor people or taking away needed health care. That is his model. He says we are the ''tax and spend'' folks.

Well, look at what we did today in legislation that passed with 124 Republican votes. We said it was wrong for the Republicans to jack up the cost of student financial aid. The cost of a higher education is beyond reach of too many Americans and we think people should have a chance at the ladder of success. Key to that is education, and we want to make education more affordable and more accessible. Today was the first step, and only the first step in our plan to help make higher education more affordable.

So I guess he would say we are taxing the banks; i.e., we are asking the banks to pay part of the cost here to lower the interest rate on student financial aid.

Now, these bank private loans are losers for the taxpayers. We have in fact a government study that says if we converted the whole loan program in this country to national direct student loans administered by the universities and overseen by the government, we would make money, even with the defaults. But in order to continue the subsidized bank program which he was up here defending, we are getting back 84 cents on the dollar.

The American taxpayers are subsidizing banks to offer loans on which they make a pile of money, and now he is aggrieved that we have asked the banks to lower the interest rate over 5 years. I would like to lower them tomorrow, and they shouldn't have been raised. The Republicans shouldn't have raised the cost of student financial aid to fund tax cuts for wealthy people.

Now, if they want to have more tax cuts for wealthy people, then they ought to find a way to responsibly finance that. Personally, I don't think wealthy people need more tax cuts. In fact, I think they have gotten way too many.

And he did not talk about the fact that we are borrowing money to finance tax cuts for the wealthy, that we are dinging people who need medical assistance to finance tax cuts for the wealthy, that we are heaping the costs onto students to finance tax cuts for the wealthy. If that is what he calls tax and spend, then that is what I am.

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

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

AMNESTY NEEDED FOR BORDER PATROL AGENTS RAMOS AND COMPEAN

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

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, the Federal Government, this body, the body down the hallway, for some time has been talking about amnesty, amnesty for anywhere between 12 million and almost 20 million illegal people in the United States.

Well, I would like to talk about amnesty, but not for people who are illegally in the country, because I am opposed to that. But I would like to talk about amnesty for Americans, citizens, and I only want to talk about amnesty for two of those citizens. They are border agents who have been convicted of so-called civil rights violations of an illegal drug smuggler bringing drugs to the United States.

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Two border agents, Compean and Ramos, today went to the penitentiary for 11 and 12 years for doing this. They work on the Texas-Mexico border, a volatile war zone. The border is the second front, and while on duty patrolling the sovereignty of our country, they come across a drug dealer driving a van full of about 780 pounds of marijuana. That does not mean anything, but it is worth a million dollars. That does mean something, something we can relate to.

A confrontation occurs, drug dealer abandons the van, tries to flee back to Mexico, has an altercation with the border agents, shots are fired, he runs to Mexico.

The next thing we find out, our Federal Government chooses to go to Mexico, find this drug dealer, learns that he has been shot, bring him back to America, treat his wounds at American expense, give him a deal, a backroom deal, to testify against the border agents because they did not follow some policy of reporting shots being fired. So they go to court, give the drug dealer amnesty, give the drug dealer immunity.

While waiting to testify, the old drug dealer goes back to Mexico and picks up another load of dope, almost 1,000 pounds of drugs, gets caught by different border agents. Once again, not prosecuted by the Federal Government because the Federal Government is so determined to prosecute border agents, not drug dealers; and after the trial, the border agents were convicted, and now they went to the penitentiary.

Our Federal Government had a choice to make in this case, whether or not to stand on the side of the lawless drug dealer or stand with our border agents who try to enforce the rule of law. Our government chose poorly. They sided with the enemy. They sided with the outlaws. They sided with illegal drug dealers and prosecuted our border agents. I ask the question, why?

If the border agents violated some policy or rule, suspend them, give them days off, demote them, but send them to the penitentiary for 12 years when the drug dealer goes free? This does not pass the smell test or, as we say in Texas, that dog just don't hunt, Mr. Speaker.

So we are asking a very simple thing, some of us from Congress, about 55. We are asking the President to grant amnesty to these two border agents. The administration, Federal Government, talks about amnesty. We just want it for two folks, and the President has the constitutional power to pardon and parole. The President exercised that power, that is his right under the Constitution, almost 100 times in the last 6 years. We are simply asking that the administration exercise the pardon power and pardon these two border agents and send the message to the Border Patrol and all these sheriffs who work on the border, trying to enforce the law, that we will stand beside