

you when you try and enforce the law; and also send the message to drug dealers that we are not going to work with you, we are not giving you a deal, we do not work backroom deals with drug dealers; we support our Border Patrol on the Texas-Mexico border.

So, Mr. Speaker, we hope that we get a response from the Federal Government on this pardon. So far, we have not received anything. I think the Federal Government is blissfully indifferent to the plight of these two border agents, and so we would hope that this gets some attention from folks across the country. Over 200,000 people have signed petitions asking that the President pardon both of these border agents; and we hope that that does occur because justice in this case did not occur, because our government chose to be on the wrong side of the border.

And that's just the way it is, Mr. Speaker.

BRING OUR TROOPS HOME AND SOVEREIGNTY OF IRAQ RESTORATION ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CARDOZA). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, earlier today, I joined with my good friends, distinguished colleagues and fellow Californians, Congresswoman BARBARA LEE and Congresswoman MAXINE WATERS, in introducing landmark legislation that would bring our troops home from Iraq within a 6-month time frame.

The Bring Our Troops Home and Sovereignty of Iraq Restoration Act is the first comprehensive legislative proposal to end the military occupation and provide a framework to help bring stability back to Iraq.

One week ago, when he addressed the Nation, President Bush demonstrated to the world that he continues to remain blind to the realities on the ground in Iraq. Instead of putting forth a plan that will withdraw our troops, the President is increasing our military presence, escalating the number of troops by over 20,000. What President Bush fails to grasp is that our military presence is only fueling the insurgency, plunging Iraq further into chaos and civil war.

Mr. Speaker, the November elections showed just exactly how fed up Americans are with the President's failed Iraq policy. It is time now to honor that mandate. It is now up to the Congress to catch up with the will of the people.

During his weekly radio address on Saturday, President Bush challenged those of us who disagree with him to offer a plan of our own. Today, we have taken up his challenge.

The Congress has already appropriated funding that will support our troops and keep this occupation going for at least another 6 months, possibly

longer. That funding, instead, should be used to finance an aggressive withdrawal plan that brings our troops home to their families; and our bill would do exactly that.

Our plan will also withdraw all U.S. troops and military contractors from Iraq within 6 months from date of enactment.

It will prohibit any further funding to deploy or continue to deploy U.S. troops in Iraq. The bill does, however, allow for funding to be used as needed to ensure safe withdrawal of all U.S. military personnel and contractors. Funding may also be used for the increased training and equipping of Iraqi and international security forces.

Thirdly, it accelerates during the 6-month transition training of a permanent Iraqi security force.

And fourth, it authorizes, if requested by the Iraqi government, U.S. support for an international stabilization force. Such a force could be funded for no longer than 2 years and be combined with economic and humanitarian assistance.

It guarantees full health care funding, including mental health for U.S. veterans and military operations in Iraq and other conflicts.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, the bill would rescind the 2002 congressional authorization for the war in Iraq, prohibit the construction of permanent U.S. military bases in the country, and finally, ensure that the U.S. has no long-term control over Iraqi oil.

We believe that the oil in Iraq belongs to the Iraqi people, and we believe that when this oil goes into the world marketplace, the international marketplace, the U.S. will certainly have access to our share.

Mr. Speaker, excluding the veterans' benefits, our plan will cost the American people pennies on the dollar compared to continuing the occupation of 2 more years in Iraq. It will save lives, bodies and minds, and it will give Iraq back to the Iraqis.

The Bring Our Troops Home and Sovereignty of Iraq Act is an important step in regaining our country's credibility in the region and throughout the world, and it provides the President and Congress with a comprehensive strategy for responding to the majority of Americans who want our troops to come home.

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

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

HONORING THE LIFE OF BENNY PARSONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate a true inspiration whose perseverance showed the very best of the human spirit. Yesterday, Benny Parsons, a NASCAR legend, passed away after a difficult battle with lung cancer.

Parsons grew up in the foothills of North Carolina in Wilkes County, and his dedication and drive lifted him from poverty to national recognition. He became an inspiration to countless fans and individuals. He was a beloved character who brought passion to the sport. Today, we mourn and also celebrate the life of this beloved man in the 5th District of North Carolina.

The chairman of NASCAR, Brian France, said of Benny Parsons, who was affectionately referred to as BP, that "Benny Parsons was a true champion, both on the race track and in life. Benny loved our sport and the people that make it up and those people loved him. He will be remembered as being a great ambassador for the sport." Words such as these convey the deep admiration, respect and love of Benny and the effect he had on those with whom he connected.

After leaving Wilkes County, Benny first took a job as a cab driver in Detroit, Michigan, before he progressed to become a NASCAR champion. While faced with fame and admiration, Benny never forgot his roots and the importance of where he came from. He was often referred to as "The Professor" after he retired from racing in 1988 and began broadcasting and commenting on NASCAR races for NBC, ESPN and TNT. He had an uncanny ability to deliver information in a relaxed and informative way for the last 6 years, even when he was going through the rigorous treatment for cancer.

Michael Waltrip, who recently tested his car at the Daytona track, said of Benny, "When you talked to him, he brought out the human element. The cars are nuts and bolts, but he talked through that. He was able to deliver to people. He just tried to be passionate about what he believed, and he did a great job of explaining what people were seeing." To show his admiration of Benny, Waltrip painted on the side of his car, "We love you, BP."

Respect, admiration and inspiration among colleagues, fans and the public made Benny Parsons the amazing and inspirational figure that he was, but it was his personality that espoused all of these qualities so many came to admire. It was his passion and commitment to NASCAR and his love of the sport that made Benny such a lovable person and such a great inspiration. Even at his sickest moments, he had set up a Web blog for his fans, continually sharing his optimism that he would recover and that the will to fight is so important.

Besides the inspirational spirit and the continual drive to fight any obstacle in front of him, Benny Parsons was quite the accomplished NASCAR driver. He was a member of NASCAR's 50