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House of Representatives

The House met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. COSTA).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
May 15, 2007.

I hereby appoint the Honorable JIM COSTA to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2007, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 25 minutes, and each Member, except the majority leader, the minority leader, or the minority whip, limited to not to exceed 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate extend beyond 9:50 a.m.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN) for 5 minutes.

TAKING THE FOOD STAMP CHALLENGE

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, this week, I am joined by three of my esteemed colleagues, Congresswoman JO ANN EMERSON from Missouri, Congressman TIM RYAN from Ohio and Congresswoman JAN SCHAKOWSKY from Illinois, in taking the Food Stamp Challenge.

The Food Stamp Challenge is an initiative begun by nonprofit and religious community groups. Public officials agree to live on a food stamp budget for 1 week in order to raise awareness of the food stamp program and the inadequacy of the current benefit. Under the Food Stamp Challenge, we will only be allowed to eat food totaling $21 for the week, $3 a day, or $1 per meal, which is the national average food stamp benefit. In other words, no lattes at Starbucks, no organic chicken at home and no wine or shrimp at receptions this week.

Yesterday, Congresswoman EMERSON and I went grocery shopping at the Capitol Hill Safeway for the week. However, she was a more efficient shopper than I was. While she made it through the checkout line in 30 minutes, it took me almost an hour and a half to find food that fit my budget, and that was even with the much-appreciated assistance of Ms. Toinette Wilson, a DC food stamp recipient, who assisted my wife Lisa and me with our shopping.

Oregon Governor Ted Kulongoski successfully took the challenge with his wife a few weeks ago, and Utah Governor John Huntsman, Jr., is currently living on a food stamp budget with his household of eight. In New York City, where over 1 million people depend on food stamps each month, New York City Councilman Eric Gioia is participating in the Food Stamp Challenge.

This diverse group of public leaders who all feel compelled to take on this challenge demonstrates the importance of the food stamp program for all Americans: from California to Massachusetts, Michigan to Texas, Republican and Democrat, urban and rural, the food stamp program represents the moral values of America: compassion, thoughtfulness and community spirit.

Mr. Speaker, I am taking this Food Stamp Challenge as a way of saying that as Americans, we need to do more to eliminate hunger and poverty in this country. One in nine U.S. households, nearly 36 million Americans, does not consistently have enough food to feed themselves or their families according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. There is no excuse for this.

In the wealthiest country on earth, it is not about finding the resources. It is about mustering the political will.

Established in 1939, the food stamp program helps families in need buy food so that they do not have to make difficult choices, such as choosing between paying a utility bill, addressing health care needs or buying food. It truly is the safety net for America's hungry.

Despite what some critics like to say, the food stamp program is not a government handout, but it is a true safety net program that provides access to food for people who cannot afford to choose between rent, medicine, child care and transportation. Gone are the days of the inefficient program ravaged by fraud, waste and abuse. In fact, National Journal recently named the food stamp program as one of the government's top successes. And the GAO has repeatedly reported on the successes of this important program.

Mr. Speaker, let me take a moment to share with you who benefits from the food stamp program. According to USDA, over 26 million people benefited from the food stamp program last year, including 452,000 individuals from my State of Massachusetts. Over 80 percent of food stamp benefits go to families with children. One in five food stamp households has an elderly family member, and one in four has a disabled member. Increasingly, working families must rely on food stamps to supplement their wages in low-paying jobs.

Some may question the motives of elected officials taking this 1-week challenge. These critics, Mr. Speaker, are missing the point. It's time for a much greater public debate to take place around this issue. It is time to end hunger in America, and we can do

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so starting by focusing on the food stamp program.

The food stamp program is our government's first line of defense against hunger and malnutrition and it should be better equipped to accomplish that task. Merely 60 percent of those who are eligible to receive food stamps currently do, and in Massachusetts that participation rate is only 49 percent. The participation rate is particularly low for immigrants and the elderly.

Last week, Congresswoman EMERSON and I introduced H.R. 2129, the Feeding America's Families Act, which would greatly improve the food stamp program as well as other Federal hunger and nutrition programs scheduled for reauthorization in the farm bill. We encourage each of our colleagues to consider cosponsoring this important piece of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, although some judge the health of our Nation by how the wealthiest are faring, others, including myself, believe we must measure the morality and prosperity of our society by the status and mobility of those at the bottom of the economic ladder. Through this challenge, I hope my constituents, the American people and my colleagues in Washington, DC, will learn more about the vital role the food stamp program plays in the lives of low-income people.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 10 a.m. today.

Accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 8 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until 10 a.m.

□ 1000

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. SOLIS) at 10 a.m.

PRAYER

The Reverend Don Green, Christian Associates of Southwest Pennsylvania, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, offered the following prayer:

Sovereign of the nations, who has created the human family with rich diversity and who wills that all peoples be reconciled and live in peace and wholeness with dignity and justice, we call upon You to bestow Your wisdom and compassion upon these representatives of the American people.

Grant them humility and openness to listen to their opponents and adversaries before condemning their positions or denigrating their person. Give them courage to seek reconciliation with our enemies, encouraging negotiation and diplomacy instead of violence as the means to lasting peace in our conflicted world.

Open their eyes to a vision of a more just society where all may enjoy the benefits of wellness and health, adequate shelter, food in abundance, lifelong learning, and security in their communities.

Hear us now, O God, as we pray for the preservation of this legislative institution and the prospering of our Nation, for we trust in You and entrust our whole being to Your providential care. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House her approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. BILIRAKIS led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed without amendment a concurrent resolution of the House of the following title:

H. Con. Res. 71. Concurrent resolution commemorating the 85th Anniversary of the founding of the American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association (AHEPA), a leading association for the Nation's 1.3 million American citizens of Greek ancestry, and Philhellenes.

WELCOMING THE REVEREND DON GREEN

(Mr. ALTMIRE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. ALTMIRE. Madam Speaker, it is my privilege to rise today to introduce Pastor Donald Green as today's Guest Chaplain. I have known Pastor Green for many years through our involvement in the McCandless Rotary Club, which is just one of the many service organizations to which Pastor Green lends his time in western Pennsylvania. He is truly an extraordinary man, and it is an honor to present him to you today.

Pastor Green has led a number of trips abroad to assist in various relief efforts. His travels have taken him to Kenya and Zambia to visit projects funded by the Lutheran World Relief and Lutheran World Federation. In 1997 he visited missions in India, and in 1999 he took a group of volunteers to Puerto Rico to assist in hurricane relief. He also led a group of volunteers to Madagascar to lay the foundation for a youth center, which now bears his name, the Pastor Don Green Youth Center. These are but a few examples of Pastor Green's commitment to his community and commitment to service above self.

Pastor Green now serves as the Executive Director of Christian Associates of Southwestern Pennsylvania. He and Kathy, his wife of 36 years, are the proud parents of three children and one grandson.

On behalf of my colleagues in the House, Pastor Green, welcome and thank you for your many years of service.

TIME FOR A NEW COURSE IN IRAQ

(Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Madam Speaker, it seems that President Bush and many of his allies still don't understand how things have changed on the ground in Iraq.

A few days ago the Republican leader, when asked about the President's new escalation plan, said that if it doesn't work, the President pretty soon is going to have to present to Congress and the American people what plan B is.

Well, there are very few people that don't realize by now that we are not on plan B anymore; we are on plan Z. And we have got to start asking ourselves why plan A and plan B all the way through plan Z still haven't worked. It is because a military plan, without diplomatic and political reinforcements behind it, cannot work on the ground in Iraq. That is what the Democrats in Congress have realized. That is what the Iraq Study Group realized. That is what legions of retired generals have realized.

Madam Speaker, it is time the President and his allies join that hegemony of opinion and join us in setting a new course in Iraq.

NATIONAL SECURITY, DEMOCRAT STYLE

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

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam Speaker, later this week the liberal left in the House will take up the Defense Authorization Act, legislation that is supposed to make our Nation more secure and help our troops in winning the war on terror.

But you will have to excuse the American people if they don't understand the leadership's real agenda here, because you actually have to read through 452 pages of the National Defense Authorization Act to find it. Subtitle F, section 951 reveals all you really need to know: a significant diversion of national security resources to indulge the liberal fascination with global climate change.

The language paints an unwelcomed portrait of the liberal left's agenda on

national security: Wax philosophical about the so-called impact of global warming first and, only after that, talk about the real issue of the war on terror. This is the second time in as many weeks that the left plans to force this body to vote on a bill that would fund special interest priorities at the expense of our national security. It is unconscionable. It is unfair. It is not right. It is an abusive use of Federal funds.

Welcome to national security, Democrat style.

URGING SUPPORT FOR RESPONSIBILITY TO IRAQI REFUGEE ACT

(Mr. BLUMENAUER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, Iraq is the scene of the world's fastest growing humanitarian crisis: 4 million people displaced, half of whom have fled the country altogether, with another 50,000 or more added to the rolls every month.

What are we doing to help, especially the tens of thousands who are in danger because they helped the United States, like serving as interpreters? Last month the United States allowed exactly one Iraqi refugee to enter the United States.

No matter what your position is on the war in Iraq or its future, I urge my colleagues to cosponsor H.R. 2265, the Responsibility to Iraqi Refugee Act, comprehensive legislation that would put somebody in charge, set modest levels for refugees entitled to come to our country, and authorize programs to help them. It is the least we can do for people whose lives are at risk because they helped Americans.

PAT PEDRAJA AND DRIVING FOR DONORS

(Mr. BILIRAKIS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor a very brave and ambitious young man from my district, Pat Pedraja.

Pat, who is 12 years old, was diagnosed with leukemia in March of 2006. Like many inflicted with this disease, Pat may need a bone marrow transplant to save his life. Unfortunately, there is currently a shortage of donors.

When Pat discovered this shortage, he decided to do something about it. He and his family organized ''Driving for Donors'' to help add 5,000 new donors to the National Marrow Registry Program this year. They began traveling the country last month in a ''Donormobile,'' working to host successful donor drives in over 30 major cities. Tomorrow they will be in Washington.

I encourage my colleagues to take the time out of your busy schedules to help save a life. It only takes a small donation of saliva, taken by a cheek swab, and completion of a donor consent form. Please contact my office for additional details.

THE PRESIDENT'S ENERGY PROPOSAL

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

Ms. SCHWARTZ. Madam Speaker, last year U.S. foreign oil imports climbed to a record level of 66 percent. American families are paying a record $3.09 a gallon on average for regular gasoline, more than double the cost of gasoline when President Bush took office.

For 6 years now, the President has failed to address these costs or our Nation's energy needs.

Yesterday, under pressure to finally do something, President Bush announced an executive order to develop regulations to lower vehicle emissions before he leaves office in 2009.

This is too little, too late. The administration has had 6 years to act, and they have failed. They failed to address the energy concerns of our Nation while giving big tax breaks to the oil and gas industry.

Fortunately, we have a new Democratic Congress that is going to lead our Nation towards energy independence. We are determined to find ways to be more energy efficient, to bring new, safer, less expensive, homegrown sources of energy to American families and American businesses, and we will start now by bringing a comprehensive energy bill to the House floor in July that will drive down costs and meet our Nation's future energy needs.

COMPREHENSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM MUST BEGIN WITH AFFIRMATION OF THE RULE OF LAW

(Mr. PENCE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PENCE. Madam Speaker, on immigration reform the halls of Congress are abuzz with rumors of a ''grand compromise'' on the issue of illegal immigration. There is talk of a proposal that would allow millions of illegal immigrants to remain in this country by merely paying a fine.

Let me say emphatically, Madam Speaker, amnesty is no bargain for the American people. Any effort at comprehensive immigration reform must begin by rejecting amnesty, will put border security first, and not implement any type of temporary worker program until border security measures have been undertaken and completed. And once a temporary worker program begins, we must require that every person who has come into this country illegally leave the United States and apply outside of our country for the legal right to live and work here. And if they come under the color of the law, we must require temporary workers to learn the language of the American people.

In addition, serious fines and an electronic verification system must ensure a full partnership between American business and the American government in enforcing our immigration laws.

The real grand bargain for the American people is comprehensive immigration reform that begins with an affirmation of the rule of law.

□ 1015

SUPPORTING COPS REAUTHORIZATION ACT

(Mr. LARSEN of Washington asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. LARSEN of Washington. Madam Speaker, I am pleased today that the House will vote to reauthorize the successful COPS program, and I commend our leadership for bringing H.R. 1700 to the floor.

The Community Oriented Policing Services program has allowed our law enforcement agencies to hire over 100,000 police officers nationwide. This has led to significantly reduced crime rates between 1995 and 2005. Unfortunately, the hiring component of this grant program has not been funded in recent years and the program overall has taken severe cuts.

Post-9/11, we have asked our State and local law enforcement agencies to protect not only our communities from crime, but to protect our homeland as well. We cannot continue to put unfunded mandates on our local police forces and expect them to also provide protection from terrorism if we are not willing to provide the Federal aid for them to do so. If Congress fails to fund the hiring of additional peace officers, we risk losing the progress we have made in crime reduction. We must keep pressure up on crime.

By helping to hire local police officers, the COPS program helps our State and local law enforcement bust drug-trafficking rings, take down domestic meth labs, and keep our communities safe.

I encourage my colleagues to vote for H.R. 1700, the COPS Reauthorization Act of 2007.

PARTIAL-BIRTH ABORTION BAN

(Mr. MCHENRY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MCHENRY. Madam Speaker, I rise to join with millions across this Nation who applaud the Supreme Court's recent decision to uphold the ban on partial-birth abortion.

Partial-birth abortion is unrivaled in its gruesome brutality. There is no question it has caused the vicious destruction of viable human life, babies, whose only crime is inconvenience.

The Court's decision is a victory in the quest to restore basic human dignity and human life. No longer will the

most vulnerable and innocent among us be subject to such cruelty.

It also is a victory for the Constitution, which liberal activist judges have demeaned for far too long. It is encouraging to see the Court's decision move toward our Founders' vision and intent to not only respect opinions and the vision for our country, but also to protect human life.

Let us never forget our responsibility to uphold the basic sanctity of human life granted by our Maker.

DEMOCRATS WORK TO MAKE AMERICAN STREETS SAFER BY PASSING COPS IMPROVEMENT ACT

(Mr. SIRES asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SIRES. Madam Speaker, our most important job as lawmakers is to ensure the safety of the American people.

Our local law enforcement officers serve communities across this Nation as the first line of defense against crime. The number of police on our streets matters for the security of every city in this Nation, and we have a responsibility to ensure that these officers are in place. That is why Congress worked with President Clinton in the 1990s to create the COPS program.

Through this program, more than 100,000 cops were hired, putting police in every neighborhood in our Nation. But when President Bush came to office, he eliminated the COPS program, with no objections from the old Republican rubber-stamp Congress. As a result, crime substantially increased over the last decade.

Madam Speaker, today this Congress has an opportunity to reverse these troubling trends by passing the COPS Improvement Act. This legislation would allow communities to hire 50,000 police officers over the next 6 years so we can better protect our communities.

DEMOCRATS' ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS WHEN IT COMES TO SUPPORTING OUR TROOPS

(Mr. AKIN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. AKIN. Recently, congressional Democrats cut funding that was planned for modernization of our military. And while we've heard statements that the Democrats are supporting our troops, their actions speak louder than words.

In a strict party-line vote, Democrats slashed the Army modernization program with a 25 percent cut, casting a cloud over the first major modernization program in four decades. Future combat systems are designed to create a real-time battlefield information system. It promises increased safety and efficiency for our troops. This is nothing new. In the 1970s, the Democrats slashed military spending, and our servicemen and -women were forced to apply for food stamps just to survive. Again, in the 1990s, the Democrat Congress caused our Nation's forces to lose their technological edge. From future combat systems to missile defense, Democrats demonstrate a shortsightedness that will cost our sons and daughters the tools they need for a safe mission. My children and our children will pay the price.

SUPPORTING COPS REAUTHORIZATION ACT

(Mr. PASCRELL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PASCRELL. Madam Speaker, today we will vote on H.R. 1700, which calls for putting 50,000 additional police officers on the street over the next 6 years, authorizing $600 million a year for the COPS program, and it also authorizes $350 million a year for the COPS technology grants, and $200 million a year for hiring community prosecutors.

It is fitting today because today is the 26th annual National Peace Officers Memorial Service. Of all the cuts to needed domestic programs the Bush administration has devised over the years, the decimation of funds to our law enforcement personnel has to be among the most ill-considered and reckless. How he could ever stand next to any cop and do what he has done in the last 5 years is reprehensible.

The COPS program is a proven winner, cutting crime and making neighborhoods safer across the Nation. More police on the streets means less violent crimes and greater vigilance. It just makes sense. According to the GAO study, between 1998 and 2000, the COPS grants are responsible for reducing crimes by 225,000.

IS IT TOO COLD OR TOO HOT?

(Mr. POE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. POE. Madam Speaker, there is alarming news from Newsweek magazine. I read the article in part: ''There are ominous signs the Earth's weather patterns have begun to change dramatically and that these changes may cause a drastic decline in food production. The evidence in support of these predictions has now begun to accumulate so fast that meteorologists are hard-pressed to keep up with it . . . The central fact is that after three quarters of a century of extraordinarily mild conditions, the Earth's climate seems to be cooling down . . . If the climate change is as profound as some of the pessimists fear, the resulting famines could be catastrophic . . . The present decline has taken our planet about a sixth of the way toward the Ice Age average.''

Madam Speaker, this article was written in Newsweek in April 1975. Those doomsayers said we were all going to freeze in the dark. Now these are the same people who say we're going to roast because of global warming. Were they correct in 1975 or are they correct today? Before we panic, we need to separate science from junk science and get the facts about global warming.

And that's just the way it is.

DEMOCRATS WORK TO RESTORE COPS PROGRAM SO THAT WE CAN CUT DOWN ON VIOLENCE

(Mr. CARNAHAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CARNAHAN. Madam Speaker, in the war to fight crime in this country we need more than just rhetoric. We need results.

During the 1990s, thanks to the initiatives of the Clinton administration and the Democratic Congress, we significantly reduced crime nationwide after enactment of the COPS program. We put 100,000 new cops on our streets, and crime rates fell. But over the past decade, Republicans have cut the program. As a result, crime rates have increased nationwide.

The Police Executive Research Forum recently released a report that found violent crime rates have risen by double-digit percentages over the last 2 years. Among the cities surveyed, 71 percent had an increase in homicides, and 80 percent saw robberies rise.

Today, this House has an opportunity to show it is serious about protecting our neighborhoods by passing the COPS Improvement Act. This legislation will restore the strong anti-crime measures we enacted in the 1990s by providing funding to hire 50,000 new police over the next 6 years.

Madam Speaker, the new Democratic majority isn't just talking about keeping our Nation secure; we are producing real results.

SUPPORTING COPS IMPROVEMENT ACT

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

Mrs. CAPPS. Madam Speaker, I rise also in strong suspects of the COPS Improvement Act.

Since the COPS program began in 1994, it has provided for the hiring of 404 police officers in my congressional district. It has directed billions of dollars in grants to law enforcement agencies, including more than $20 million to benefit my constituents on the central coast of California.

COPS deserves much of the credit for the major drop in crime across our country during the 1990s, but the Bush administration has repeatedly targeted the COPS hiring program for elimination. So I'm glad the new Democratic majority in Congress realizes the

importance of putting cops on the beat. The COPS Improvement Act continues the good work we started in the 1990s. It will help law enforcement agencies in my district to hire another 173 police officers. That's 173 men and women to patrol the streets and keep their hardworking neighbors safe.

Madam Speaker, I urge this House to pass this much-needed legislation today.

COPS

(Mr. STUPAK asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. STUPAK. Madam Speaker, in 1994 President Clinton, with the help of congressional Democrats, established the COPS program. The COPS program changed the way we fight crime in this country by giving local jurisdictions the support they needed to put over 100,000 new police officers on the street. The results were clear: a nationwide drop in crime and safer streets in our communities.

Having been a police officer for 12 years, I proudly support the continuation of the COPS program. Unfortunately, the President and the Republicans have cut and gut the COPS program.

The COPS program is needed now more than ever. The threat of terrorism has put new burdens on our first responders, and recent news reports show violent crime in our cities is again on the rise. As a result, the Democrats will seek to put $1.5 billion forth in the budget to hire more police officers where they can do the most good, on the streets in our communities.

The COPS program is a proven concept that has the full support of the law enforcement community. The Democrats will make the program even better.

Let us work together to put cops back on the streets and give them the tools they need to keep us and America safe.

COPS

(Mr. EMANUEL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. EMANUEL. Madam Speaker, like my colleagues, I too, rise in support of the full funding for the 100,000 community police officers. It has been a linchpin to a very successful anti-crime strategy.

In the 1990s, we pursued a single strategy of putting more cops on the beat and getting gangs, guns and drugs off the street. It led to the longest and largest decline of violent crime in American history.

After the elimination of the COPS program, community police officers, we saw a steady increase in violent crime. Cops doing community policing, an old strategy, door by door, knowing their neighbors, knowing their community, led to a dramatic drop in violent crime. Reducing those 100,000 extra police on the streets led to an increase in violent crime.

Democrats came here to change Washington, to bring a new direction to our policy. Seeing an increase in violent crime in America, we went back to a basic fundamental strategy that has proven year after year to be successful, adding 100,000 cops, doing community policing, knowing their neighbors, knowing the kids that go to school, knowing where the problems are, hitting the problems before they start, leading to the most successful anti-violent crime strategy in American history.

I am proud that we have brought this change to Washington.

FOLLOW THE LAW FOR ENERGY EFFICIENCY

(Mr. INSLEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. INSLEE. Madam Speaker, we have had the right to be disappointed in the President's abject refusal to do anything to give us auto efficiency and clean autos for years. And now we still have the right to be disappointed even though he has been ordered to do so by the United States Supreme Court. We sort of heard this sort of semi ''maybe I'll think about it'' approach the other day.

We need some bold action when it comes to new technology, including in our automobile sector; and we know we can get that. We know we can have efficient automobiles, and we know we can deal with global warming.

I've got to tell you, I just cannot understand why some folks here want to embrace ignorance on global warming. They point out that we didn't know about global warming in 1970. We didn't know about the Internet either, but I don't know why you shouldn't use it.

We've learned some things from 1970. We've learned that the planet is warming. We've learned that CO_2 is responsible. We've learned that it's coming from our industries. And we've learned that if we have the Federal law followed, we will have energy efficiency and a clean energy economy in the future of this country.

□ 1030

PASS THE COPS PROGRAM

(Mr. COHEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. COHEN. Madam Speaker, I join my colleagues in asking that we pass the COPS Program. I started my career after law school as the attorney for the Memphis Police Department, and I learned then that patrol was the major deterrent to crime.

When I campaigned this year in the City of Memphis and met with the Afro-American Police Association, they came to me and the thing they asked me to do was to get more COPS dollars, saying that community policing was an effective tool in the fight against crime; that it wasn't just arresting, but it was knowing people in the community and encouraging them to find ways to interrelate to the police and have a better attitude.

By working with my colleagues on the other side of the aisle and Ranking Member SMITH, we came up with an amendment that will be part of the bill that will give Iraqi and Afghanistan veterans priority in the COPS Program so that when we bring our troops home we can have them effectively police our neighborhoods, just as they have been policing the neighborhoods in Baghdad.

We need policemen and cops on the streets in our hometowns, in Memphis, Tennessee, to fight crime. We need them home today in our towns, and not in Baghdad. The COPS Program will help.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later today.

AMERICAN VETERANS DISABLED FOR LIFE COMMEMORATIVE COIN ACT

Mr. MOORE of Kansas. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 634) to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of veterans who become disabled for life while serving in the Armed Forces of the United States, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 634

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''American Veterans Disabled for Life Commemorative Coin Act''.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

The Congress finds as follows:

(1) The Armed Forces of the United States have answered the call and served with distinction around the world—from hitting the beaches in World War II in the Pacific and Europe, to the cold and difficult terrain in Korea, the steamy jungles of Vietnam, and the desert sands of the Middle East.

(2) All Americans should commemorate those who come home having survived the ordeal of war, and solemnly honor those who made the ultimate sacrifice in giving their lives for their country.

(3) All Americans should honor the millions of living disabled veterans who carry

the scars of war every day, and who have made enormous personal sacrifices defending the principles of our democracy.

(4) In 2000, Congress authorized the construction of the American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial.

(5) The United States should pay tribute to the Nation's living disabled veterans by minting and issuing a commemorative silver dollar coin.

(6) The surcharge proceeds from the sale of a commemorative coin would raise valuable funding for the construction of the American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial.

SEC. 3. COIN SPECIFICATIONS.

(a) $1 SILVER COINS.—The Secretary of the Treasury (hereafter in this Act referred to as the ''Secretary'') shall mint and issue not more than 350,000 $1 coins in commemoration of disabled American veterans, each of which shall—

(1) weigh 26.73 grams;

(2) have a diameter of 1.500 inches; and

(3) contain 90 percent silver and 10 percent copper.

(b) LEGAL TENDER.—The coins minted under this Act shall be legal tender, as provided in section 5103 of title 31, United States Code.

(c) NUMISMATIC ITEMS.—For purposes of sections 5134 and 5136 of title 31, United States Code, all coins minted under this Act shall be considered to be numismatic items.

SEC. 4. DESIGN OF COINS.

(a) DESIGN REQUIREMENTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The design of the coins minted under this Act shall be emblematic of the design selected by the Disabled Veterans' LIFE Memorial Foundation for the American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial.

(2) DESIGNATION AND INSCRIPTIONS.—On each coin minted under this Act, there shall be—

(A) a designation of the value of the coin;

(B) an inscription of the year ''2010''; and

(C) inscriptions of the words ''Liberty'', ''In God We Trust'', ''United States of America'', and ''E Pluribus Unum''.

(b) SELECTION.—The design for the coins minted under this Act shall be—

(1) selected by the Secretary, after consultation with the Disabled Veterans' LIFE Memorial Foundation and the Commission of Fine Arts; and

(2) reviewed by the Citizens Coinage Advisory Committee.

SEC. 5. ISSUANCE OF COINS.

(a) QUALITY OF COINS.—Coins minted under this Act shall be issued in uncirculated and proof qualities.

(b) MINT FACILITY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Only 1 facility of the United States Mint may be used to strike any particular quality of the coins minted under this Act.

(2) USE OF THE UNITED STATES MINT AT WEST POINT, NEW YORK.—It is the sense of the Congress that the coins minted under this Act should be struck at the United States Mint at West Point, New York, to the greatest extent possible.

(c) PERIOD FOR ISSUANCE.—The Secretary may issue coins under this Act only during the calendar year beginning on January 1, 2010.

SEC. 6. SALE OF COINS.

(a) SALE PRICE.—The coins issued under this Act shall be sold by the Secretary at a price equal to the sum of—

(1) the face value of the coins;

(2) the surcharge provided in section 7 with respect to such coins; and

(3) the cost of designing and issuing the coins (including labor, materials, dies, use of machinery, overhead expenses, marketing, and shipping).

(b) BULK SALES.—The Secretary shall make bulk sales of the coins issued under this Act at a reasonable discount.

(c) PREPAID ORDERS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall accept prepaid orders for the coins minted under this Act before the issuance of such coins.

(2) DISCOUNT.—Sale prices with respect to prepaid orders under paragraph (1) shall be at a reasonable discount.

SEC. 7. SURCHARGES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—All sales of coins issued under this Act shall include a surcharge of $10 per coin.

(b) DISTRIBUTION.—Subject to section 5134(f) of title 31, United States Code, all surcharges received by the Secretary from the sale of coins issued under this Act shall be paid to the Disabled Veterans' LIFE Memorial Foundation for the purpose of establishing an endowment to support the construction of American Veterans' Disabled for Life Memorial in Washington, D.C.

(c) AUDITS.—The Comptroller General of the United States shall have the right to examine such books, records, documents, and other data of the Disabled Veterans' LIFE Memorial Foundation as may be related to the expenditures of amounts paid under subsection (b).

(d) LIMITATION.—Notwithstanding subsection (a), no surcharge may be included with respect to the issuance under this Act of any coin during a calendar year if, as of the time of such issuance, the issuance of such coin would result in the number of commemorative coin programs issued during such year to exceed the annual 2 commemorative coin program issuance limitation under section 5112(m)(1) of title 31, United States Code (as in effect on the date of the enactment of this Act). The Secretary of the Treasury may issue guidance to carry out this subsection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MOORE) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. ROSKAM) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Kansas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MOORE of Kansas. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on this legislation and to insert any other material.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. MOORE of Kansas. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, this legislation that we are considering today is a simple, straightforward bill that would take a small but important step to recognize and honor the more than 3 million American veterans currently living with disabilities as a result of their sacrifice and service in our United States Armed Forces. In fact, of 26 million American veterans today, nearly one in 10 embody the physical cost of their service in permanent disability.

While there are many other steps that Congress should take to improve the lives of disabled veterans, by passing this bipartisan legislation today, which I have introduced with my friend and colleague, Mr. KIRK of Illinois, we hope to honor and show our gratitude for their sacrifice and the toll this has taken on their lives. Specifically, Madam Speaker, this legislation provides for the design, manufacture and sale of special commemorative silver coins and authorizes special surcharges on these coins to be contributed toward the construction of a memorial to disabled veterans.

The American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial will occupy an impressive 2-acre site located just southwest of the Rayburn House Office Building adjacent to the National Mall within full view of the United States Capitol. The memorial will embody America's lasting gratitude for the men and women whose lives are forever changed in their service to our country. It will also serve as an important reminder to Members of Congress of the human cost of war and the need to support our veterans. We must never forget the sacrifices these American heroes made and continue to make in order to promote a better world for our fellow citizens.

Building this long overdue memorial is something we need to do and should do as Americans.

Madam Speaker, I include the following letter exchange for the RECORD:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS,
Washington, DC, May 2, 2007.

Hon. BARNEY FRANK,
Chairman, Financial Services Committee, Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR BARNEY: I am writing regarding H.R. 634, the American Veterans Disabled for Life Commemorative Coin Act.

As you know, the Committee on Ways and Means maintains jurisdiction over bills that raise revenue. H.R. 634 contains a provision that establishes a surcharge for the sale of commemorative coins that are minted under the bill, and thus falls within the jurisdiction of the Committee on Ways and Means.

However, as part of our ongoing understanding regarding commemorative coin bills and in order to expedite this bill for floor consideration, the Committee will forgo action. This is being done with the understanding that it does not in any way prejudice the Committee with respect to the appointment of conferees or its jurisdictional prerogatives on this bill or similar legislation in the future.

I would appreciate your response to this letter, confirming this understanding with respect to H.R. 634, and would ask that a copy of our exchange of letters on this matter be included in the RECORD.

Sincerely,

CHARLES B. RANGEL,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES,
Washington, DC, May 2, 2007.

Hon. CHARLES B. RANGEL,
Chairman, Committee on Ways and Means, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHARLIE: I am writing in response to your letter regarding H.R. 634, the ''American Veterans Disabled for Life Commemorative Coin Act,'' which was introduced in the House and referred to the Committee on Financial Services on January 23, 2007. It is my

expectation that this bill will be scheduled for floor consideration in the near future.

I wish to confirm our mutual understanding on this bill. As you know, section 7 of the bill establishes a surcharge for the sale of commemorative coins that are minted under the bill. I acknowledge your committee's jurisdictional interest in such surcharges as revenue matters. However, I appreciate your willingness to forego committee action on H.R. 634 in order to allow the bill to come to the floor expeditiously. I agree that your decision to forego further action on this bill will not prejudice the Committee on Ways and Means with respect to its jurisdictional prerogatives on this or similar legislation. I would support your request for conferees on those provisions within your jurisdiction should this bill be the subject of a House-Senate conference.

I will include this exchange of letters in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD when this bill is considered by the House. Thank you again for your assistance.

BARNEY FRANK,
Chairman.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROSKAM. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 634, the American Veterans Disabled for Life Commemorative Coin Act introduced by Mr. MOORE and by my colleague from Illinois (Mr. KIRK).

Madam Speaker, occasionally we disagree on the floor of this great Chamber, and we heard some of those disagreements aired a couple of minutes ago, but now there can be no disagreement about the goals of this legislation, honoring the heroes who have been grievously injured in the defense of this country, in defense of liberty, in defense of democracy.

There are plenty of monuments, as well there ought to be, for those who gave their lives for those causes, but I know of no monument to those who lived, but whose lives were drastically altered, whose bodies were broken, but whose spirits are still strong. But now they will have their own monument, and it is only right, Madam Speaker.

This memorial will be for the World War II vet who came back without a hand, the Korean War vet who uses a wheelchair, the Vietnam vet who uses the white cane of the blind, and for the veterans of the conflicts in the gulf, who came back to us forever changed.

In 2000, Congress approved the building of the American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial. It will be a $65 million privately funded memorial just west of the Rayburn Building, across from the Botanic Garden and in full view of the Capitol. The Commission of Fine Arts and the National Capital Planning Commission approved the conceptual design in 2004 and reaffirmed it in 2006.

The memorial will express our Nation's gratitude to those who paid the terrible cost of defending freedom. It represents the values of duty, of courage and of sacrifice that are the lifeblood of American democracy.

I urge Members, staff and the rest of the country to look at the Web site of the memorial at avdlm.org.

About half of the money for construction already has been raised, and this legislation, through surcharges on the sale of silver one-dollar coins to be issued by the U.S. Mint in 2010, could raise another $3.5 million to be used for construction or to maintain the dramatic memorial.

Madam Speaker, I am glad to be one of more than 300 Members of Congress who have cosponsored this bill, which is supported by the VFW, the American Legion, the DAV, and thousands of veterans and veteran organizations across the Nation who have contributed to the memorial's creation.

Madam Speaker, I ask for the immediate passage of H.R. 634 and urge all Members to support it.

Mr. MOORE of Kansas. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROSKAM. Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. KIRK), the sponsor of the bill.

Mr. KIRK. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, there are over 50 million Americans who have worn our country's uniform, and over 20 million are alive today. Among them there are 3 million Americans who are disabled from wounds in battle. Thanks to advances in military medicine, soldiers who once died of their wounds are now surviving and they return from battle with broken bodies, but not broken spirits. It is that spirit of men and women that we honor today. This Moore-Kirk bill will help raise funds for a memorial to disabled American veterans.

I want to particularly thank my bipartisan partner in this effort, Representative DENNIS MOORE of Kansas. We formed a bond and a partnership to pass this bill first authored by Representative Sue Kelly of New York. Mr. MOORE and I worked many weeks to get over 290 cosponsors, Republicans and Democrats, to make sure this bill could come to the floor.

In 2000, Congress authorized the construction of the Americans Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial just south of the Rayburn Building within sight of the U.S. Capitol. Last December, President Bush signed into law a bill transferring control of the land for the memorial from the District of Columbia to the National Park Service. Now, the American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial Foundation needs to raise approximately $65 million to cover the cost of construction.

Our bill today will authorize the Secretary of the Treasury to mint commemorative silver dollars to be sold with a surcharge that will help the American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial Foundation to raise the money it needs for this memorial. Not only will these coins be collectors' items, but they will benefit this worthy cause.

Earlier this year, I had the privilege of meeting with an extraordinary young man, Sergeant Bryan Anderson of Rolling Meadows, Illinois. Bryan's story is, unfortunately, all too common for our soldiers in Iraq, but his spirit is uncommon, and his attitude sets him apart from the average person.

You see, Bryan lost both legs and an arm to a roadside bomb in Iraq. He jokes that he would have lost both arms if he hadn't been smoking when the bomb detonated. His sense of humor and determination are clearly apparent in the interview that he gave to Esquire Magazine in January. In it he said, ''This wound does not define me. It may be how I look on the outside, but it is not who I am. I guess you could remember me easily as being a triple amputee, but that's not who I am. It has nothing to do with who I am. I have always been the same person.''

Bryan is a self-described ''adrenalin junkie'' who hopes one day to become a Hollywood stuntman. Since his appearances on the cover of Esquire, he has had numerous opportunities to use his story for the gain of this legislation, often being baited to say if he has any political affiliation or asked what he thinks about the war. Each time he refuses to take the bait. He says he doesn't want to talk about politics. But he is always willing and excited to talk about the American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial.

Washington has legions of professional advocates who make a living convincing people to see issues from their point of view, but none of them compare to Bryan Anderson. With Bryan, what you see is what you get, an American veteran with an inspirational story that has dedicated a good portion of his life to seeing that this memorial be built, not just for himself, but for 3 million disabled American veterans, and for everyone to remember the sacrifices that they have made.

Bryan is a genuine man that you may one day meet. I hope passage of this legislation brings us closer to a day when Bryan returns to Capitol Hill to see the memorial that he helped to build.

With more than 3 million disabled American veterans in the United States, it is fitting that we construct a memorial in Washington, D.C., within sight of this Capitol. It is my hope that my colleagues will answer Bryan Anderson's call to action and support this legislation to make this memorial a reality.

With that, I just want to once again thank my colleague from Kansas (Mr. MOORE) for an outstanding partnership and a great bipartisan victory today.

Mr. MOORE of Kansas. Madam Speaker, I want to again thank my colleague from Illinois (Mr. KIRK) for the wonderful display of bipartisanship here. I wish we could set an example and hope we set an example for all of our colleagues here to work on other matters together.

Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. STUPAK).

Mr. STUPAK. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, let me compliment the sponsors of this bill, Mr. MOORE from Kansas and Mr. KIRK from Illinois. I am down here on another bill, but I felt compelled to say a few words, if I may, on this piece of legislation, which really honors American disabled veterans with this commemorative coin. This will help us raise the money to build this monument, which is long overdue.

Whether you are talking about my father-in-law, Ken Olsen, up in Escanaba, who was disabled in World War II, or the recent disabled members of our Armed Forces coming back from Afghanistan and Iraq, I think we can all personally relate to different stories.

Today, Derek Gagne, who spent quite a bit of time at Walter Reed Army Hospital, is coming back to the upper peninsula of Michigan, where family and friends will be waiting to greet him home. Unfortunately, as Derek has left his bed at Walter Reed for an amputation he had to have because of injuries sustained in Iraq, unfortunately, that bed is being taken by another member from my district who also was wounded in Iraq.

We talk about our disabled veterans and we honor them throughout our time, especially in the summer months through the Memorial Day and 4th of July and all the holidays we celebrate in parades and ceremonies like that, but it is time that we have the memorial here in Washington, so those of us who make decisions on war understand that it is more than just sending an army here or there, but that there is consequences of it.

□ 1045

Whether the injury is an amputation or a closed-head injury, which we are seeing so much of in the war in Iraq, each and every injury serves to remind us of the horrors of war but also that these men and women and their families and their spouses deserve our utmost respect.

So I am very pleased to see this memorial start to take on more and more life, to become a reality. And the work of Mr. MOORE and Mr. KIRK will certainly help bring forth this memorial. I am very honored to not only cosponsor H.R. 634, but also to support the American Veterans Disabled for Life Commemorative Coin Act.

Mr. ROSKAM. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MOORE of Kansas. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MOORE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 634, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. MOORE of Kansas. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

ARMY SPECIALIST JOSEPH P. MICKS FEDERAL FLAG CODE AMENDMENT ACT OF 2007

Mr. STUPAK. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 692) to amend title 4, United States Code, to authorize the Governor of a State, territory, or possession of the United States to order that the National flag be flown at half-staff in that State, territory, or possession in the event of the death of a member of the Armed Forces from that State, territory, or possession who dies while serving on active duty, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 692

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Army Specialist Joseph P. Micks Federal Flag Code Amendment Act of 2007''.

SEC. 2. FINDING.

Congress finds that members of the Armed Forces of the United States defend the freedom and security of the United States.

SEC. 3. PROCEDURE FOR NATIONAL FLAG TO BE FLOWN AT HALF-STAFF IN THE EVENT OF THE DEATH OF A MEMBER OF THE ARMED FORCES.

(a) ISSUANCE OF PROCLAMATION.—Subsection (m) of section 7 of title 4, United States Code, is amended in the sixth sentence—

(1) by inserting ''or the death of a member of the Armed Forces from any State, territory, or possession who dies while serving on active duty'' after ''present or former official of the government of any State, territory, or possession of the United States''; and

(2) by inserting before the period the following: '', and the same authority is provided to the Mayor of the District of Columbia with respect to present or former officials of the District of Columbia and members of the Armed Forces from the District of Columbia''.

(b) FEDERAL FACILITY CONSISTENCY WITH PROCLAMATION.—Such subsection is further amended by inserting after the sixth sentence the following new sentence: ''When the Governor of a State, territory, or possession, or the Mayor of the District of Columbia, issues a proclamation under the preceding sentence that the National flag be flown at half-staff in that State, territory, or possession or in the District of Columbia because of the death of a member of the Armed Forces, the National flag flown at any Federal installation or facility in the area covered by that proclamation shall be flown at half-staff consistent with that proclamation.''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. STUPAK) and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. FORBES) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. STUPAK. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials in the RECORD.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. STUPAK. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

As author of H.R. 692, the Army Specialist Joseph P. Micks Federal Flag Code Amendment Act of 2007, I urge my colleagues to support its passage.

Madam Speaker, those who make the ultimate sacrifice for our country deserve our country's utmost respect. H.R. 692 will ensure that our fallen troops and their families are provided the appropriate respect due.

The Army Specialist Joseph P. Micks Federal Flag Code Amendment Act of 2007 would require all Federal Government agencies in a State to comply with a Governor's proclamation to fly the national flag at half-staff in honor of those who lose their lives serving our country.

H.R. 692 is named after Joseph P. Micks, a soldier from Rapid River, Michigan, who was killed in Iraq last July at the age of 22. Specialist Micks was an all-American soldier and citizen. He was an altar server at church, an Eagle Scout from Troop 466 in Gladstone, Michigan, loved to collect sports memorabilia, and fixed the computers of his neighbors. He joined the Army to help others, to make a difference.

His death was not only mourned by his family and friends, but also by the citizens of the rural communities which make up and comprise Delta County, Michigan. As his funeral procession progressed through several rural communities in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, citizens were upset to note that some Federal agencies had not lowered their flags based on the Governor's proclamation in honor of Specialist Micks.

There have been several other instances in my district, unfortunately, when a Federal agency has not lowered its flag in accordance with Governor Granholm's proclamation.

When I have learned of Federal agencies, offices and buildings that have not lowered their American flags, I have contacted the agencies. I have been told that the directive to lower the flag has not come from the district office or the regional office or from Washington headquarters. It is regrettable that this legislation is even necessary. Last year I wrote the President asking him to issue an executive order to have the flags lowered. He has not responded. However, as there have been not one but multiple instances where Federal agencies have ignored the Governor's request to lower flags, it is important that Congress address this issue.

In a recent example, when Navy SEAL Joe Schwedler was killed recently in Iraq, it was the Veterans Affairs hospital that refused to lower its flag. Veterans presented officials with the article from the local newspaper, the Daily News from Iron Mountain. It says: ''Flags Lowered for Crystal Falls Hero,'' and still the Veterans Administration refused to lower the flag.

I include this article for the RECORD.

[From the Daily News, April 12, 2007]

FLAGS LOWERED FOR CRYSTAL FALLS HERO HALF-STAFF ON FRIDAY

Lansing.—Gov. Jennifer M. Granholm has ordered United States flags throughout Michigan and on Michigan waters lowered for one day on Friday, April 13, in honor of Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Joseph C. Schwedler of Crystal Falls who died April 6 while on active duty in Iraq.

Flags should return to full staff on Saturday, April 14.

Schwedler, 27, died from enemy action while conducting combat operations in Al Anbar province, Iraq. He was assigned to the East Coast Navy SEAL Team.

When flown at half-staff or half-mast, the United States flag should be hoisted first to the peak for an instant and then lowered to the half-staff or half-mast position. The flag should again be raised to the peak before it is lowered for the day.

A military funeral will be conducted at 1 p.m. Saturday, April 14, at the Forest Park High School gymnasium in Crystal Falls.

A scholarship fund will be established with the Crystal Falls Area Community Fund, Post Office Box 269, Crystal Falls, Michigan 49920.

The Jacobs-Plowe Funeral Home, Crystal Falls is in charge of arrangements.

The inconsistent patchwork display of respect is particularly hurtful to rural communities where the funeral processions of fallen troops often travel by several Federal facilities, some with flags lowered, others without.

Rural Americans disproportionately fill the ranks of our armed services and have disproportionately paid the ultimate sacrifice. Almost half of U.S. military casualties have hailed from towns fewer than 25,000 people; one in five from towns smaller than 5,000 people. It is important that when one of our own perishes serving our Nation they receive the proper respect.

I am joined today in support of this legislation by the Military Order of the Purple Heart and Society of Military Widows. In endorsing the legislation, the Society of Military Widows stated: ''We strongly feel that Federal agencies within the State should comply with this order to honor fallen native sons and daughters. As military widows, we can especially appreciate this visible show of respect.''

I would like to thank my colleagues who have cosponsored this legislation and those who have helped champion its passage, including Chairman CONYERS, Chairman NADLER, Ranking Member FRANKS, as well as Congressman PASTOR, Congressman VISCLOSKY, and Congressman LAMBORN.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. FORBES. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

H.R. 692 authorizes State Governors to fly the American flag at half-staff upon the death of a member of the Armed Forces who dies while serving on active duty.

We all honor the service of the brave men and women who defend our Nation. When they make the ultimate sacrifice, Governors of the State should be allowed to recognize and pay tribute to them by lowering the flag.

I am also pleased the majority included a Republican proposal to add a simple congressional finding to this legislation that states the following: ''Congress finds that members of the Armed Forces of the United States defend the freedom and security of our Nation.'' It is fitting to include this finding to recognize not just the loss of a member of our Armed Forces, but also to honor the reasons they serve.

Madam Speaker, members of our Armed Forces deserve our deepest respect. They put their lives between us and hostile enemies around the world; they sacrifice stability with their own families so ours may sleep easier. They persevere in the most extreme conditions so we can lead ordinary lives.

The flag code is designed to honor public service. When we lower the flag to half-staff, we remind ourselves that the United States is not merely preserved by lofty ideals, but by the service and sacrifice of a great many men and women.

I support this legislation and encourage all of my colleagues to do so as well.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. STUPAK. Madam Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS).

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Michigan, BART STUPAK, for all that he has done with our committee, and with the Republicans on the subcommittee on the Judiciary Committee who worked so well on this.

I rise of course in support of H.R. 692 to honor fallen men and women who gave their lives to our Nation while on duty in the armed services.

As a veteran myself, I can appreciate this bill as much as anyone in the House. This 22-year-old soldier for whom the bill was named came from BART STUPAK's district, and gave his life on July 8, 2006. He was killed by an improvised explosive device that detonated near his vehicle during combat operations in Iraq.

This measure before us simply amends current law to add heroes like Specialist Micks to the list of persons in whose honor the flag may be flown at half-staff. It specifies that a Governor's proclamation ordering the flag to be flown at half-staff, consistent with this measure, would apply to all Federal installations and facilities in the State.

Over the last 4 years, at least 10 soldiers from Mr. STUPAK's district have given their lives in Iraq and Afghanistan, and yet the national flags on some Federal buildings were not lowered in their honor, to the dismay of the family members and friends of these brave soldiers.

So the measure ensures that our Nation's fallen military heroes who made the ultimate sacrifice in the service of our Nation are appropriately honored and acknowledged.

Mr. FORBES. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. STUPAK. Madam Speaker, I have no further speakers, so I would like to close.

I close by saying there is no more powerful way to honor the death of an American than flying our Nation's flag at half-staff. Recognizing this, Governors across this great country have issued proclamations to honor servicemembers from their States who have died in Iraq and Afghanistan.

This quiet sign of respect is a powerful message to the family that a grateful Nation and a grateful community mourns and honors the sacrifice made by their fallen hero. It is also representative of the shared loss felt by our communities who mourn a family member, a friend, a neighbor and a colleague.

The Army Specialist Joseph P. Micks Flag Code Amendment Act will ensure that each of our fallen heroes receives the ultimate honor due to Joe and his family; his wife, Romona; and parents, Ken and Amy Micks. To them we owe a great debt of gratitude. I hope this legislation passes the House today and moves to the Senate, and we can get it completed by Flag Day on June 14.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 692, which authorizes Governors of the several States to order the National Flag to be flown at half-staff in the event of the death of a member of the Armed Forces. Section 2(a) would add "or the death of a member of the Armed Forces from any State, territory, or possession who dies while serving on active duty" to the list of persons under 4 D.S.C. §7(m) for whom the Flag should be flown at half-staff for a period of ten days from the date of death.

Under section 2(b), the bill authorizes the Governor of a State, territory, or possession to issue a proclamation under section 7(m), as amended by the Act, ordering the Flag to be flown at half-staff in honor of a member of Armed Forces who dies while on active duty.

Madam Speaker, it is a privilege for me to support a bill that honors the service of our fallen members of the Armed Forces who die while serving on active duty. These brave men and women have given great contributions and have made incredible personal sacrifices so that all of us in this country might live in a safe and secure Nation and world. In my State of Texas, 287 service members have already given the last full measure of devotion in Operation Iraqi Freedom. I think everyone of these fallen heroes deserve recognition for their supreme sacrifice.

Flying the Federal Flag at half staff to honor the service of fallen members of the Armed Forces is only a small step towards repaying

the insurmountable debt that all of us owe to all veterans. For, what is the price of freedom?

As President Kennedy once said, "The price of freedom is high, but Americans have always paid it." And no one has paid a higher price than the brave men and women through the years who gave the last full measure of devotion to their country. Whether it is the ultimate sacrifice of life or the loss of limb or the loss of time with family and friends, we owe our veterans and in this case, those who have died during their service, an enormous outstanding debt of gratitude.

From Bunker Hill to Yorktown, from Washington, DC to the Battle of New Orleans, from Bull Run to Gettysburg and Antietam to Appomattox, brave Americans gave their lives so that the Nation might live. And from Alsace Lorain to Verdun, and Normandy to Berlin and Pearl Harbor to Okinawa, from Inchon and Correigidor to Vietnam, Lebanon, Grenada, Kuwait, Afghanistan, and Iraq, Americans have nobly sacrificed their lives so that the world may live in freedom.

The debt of gratitude we owe to all of the soldiers, sailors, marines, and airmen who answered their Nation's call and made the supreme sacrifice can never be repaid. But we can give these fallen service men and women the recognition and honor they deserve by flying the National Flag at half-staff.

Madam Speaker, I ask all of my colleagues to join me in honoring our fallen heroes by supporting H.R. 692.

Mr. STUPAK. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. FORBES. Madam Speaker, once again I urge passage of the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. STUPAK) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 692, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. STUPAK. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

□ 1100

JOHN R. JUSTICE PROSECUTORS AND DEFENDERS INCENTIVE ACT OF 2007

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 916) to provide for loan repayment for prosecutors and public defenders, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 916

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''John R. Justice Prosecutors and Defenders Incentive Act of 2007''.

SEC. 2. LOAN REPAYMENT FOR PROSECUTORS AND DEFENDERS.

Title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3711 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''PART JJ—LOAN REPAYMENT FOR PROSECUTORS AND PUBLIC DEFENDERS

''SEC. 3111. GRANT AUTHORIZATION.

''(a) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this section is to encourage qualified individuals to enter and continue employment as prosecutors and public defenders.

''(b) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

''(1) PROSECUTOR.—The term 'prosecutor' means a full-time employee of a State or local agency who—

''(A) is continually licensed to practice law; and

''(B) prosecutes criminal or juvenile delinquency cases (or both) at the State or local level, including an employee who supervises, educates, or trains other persons prosecuting such cases.

''(2) PUBLIC DEFENDER.—The term 'public defender' means an attorney who—

''(A) is continually licensed to practice law; and

''(B) is—

''(i) a full-time employee of a State or local agency who provides legal representation to indigent persons in criminal or juvenile delinquency cases (or both), including an attorney who supervises, educates, or trains other persons providing such representation;

''(ii) a full-time employee of a nonprofit organization operating under a contract with a State or unit of local government, who devotes substantially all of such full-time employment to providing legal representation to indigent persons in criminal or juvenile delinquency cases (or both), including an attorney who supervises, educates, or trains other persons providing such representation; or

''(iii) employed as a full-time Federal defender attorney in a defender organization established pursuant to subsection (g) of section 3006A of title 18, United States Code, that provides legal representation to indigent persons in criminal or juvenile delinquency cases (or both).

''(3) STUDENT LOAN.—The term 'student loan' means—

''(A) a loan made, insured, or guaranteed under part B of title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1071 et seq.);

''(B) a loan made under part D or E of title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1087a et seq. and 1087aa et seq.); and

''(C) a loan made under section 428C or 455(g) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1078–3 and 1087e(g)) to the extent that such loan was used to repay a Federal Direct Stafford Loan, a Federal Direct Unsubsidized Stafford Loan, or a loan made under section 428 or 428H of such Act.

''(c) PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.—The Attorney General shall, subject to the availability of appropriations, establish a program by which the Department of Justice shall assume the obligation to repay a student loan, by direct payments on behalf of a borrower to the holder of such loan, in accordance with subsection (d), for any borrower who—

''(1) is employed as a prosecutor or public defender; and

''(2) is not in default on a loan for which the borrower seeks forgiveness.

''(d) TERMS OF LOAN REPAYMENT.—

''(1) BORROWER AGREEMENT.—To be eligible to receive repayment benefits under subsection (c), a borrower shall enter into a written agreement with the Attorney General that specifies that—

''(A) the borrower will remain employed as a prosecutor or public defender for a required period of service of not less than 3 years, unless involuntarily separated from that employment;

''(B) if the borrower is involuntarily separated from employment on account of misconduct, or voluntarily separates from employment, before the end of the period specified in the agreement, the borrower will repay the Attorney General the amount of any benefits received by such employee under this section; and

''(C) if the borrower is required to repay an amount to the Attorney General under subparagraph (B) and fails to repay such amount, a sum equal to that amount shall be recoverable by the Federal Government from the employee (or such employee's estate, if applicable) by such methods as are provided by law for the recovery of amounts owed to the Federal Government.

''(2) REPAYMENT BY BORROWER.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Any amount repaid by, or recovered from, an individual or the estate of an individual under this subsection shall be credited to the appropriation account from which the amount involved was originally paid.

''(B) MERGER.—Any amount credited under subparagraph (A) shall be merged with other sums in such account and shall be available for the same purposes and period, and subject to the same limitations, if any, as the sums with which the amount was merged.

''(C) WAIVER.—The Attorney General may waive, in whole or in part, a right of recovery under this subsection if it is shown that recovery would be against equity and good conscience or against the public interest.

''(3) LIMITATIONS.—

''(A) STUDENT LOAN PAYMENT AMOUNT.—Student loan repayments made by the Attorney General under this section shall be made subject to the availability of appropriations, and subject to such terms, limitations, or conditions as may be mutually agreed upon by the borrower and the Attorney General in an agreement under paragraph (1), except that the amount paid by the Attorney General under this section shall not exceed—

''(i) $10,000 for any borrower in any calendar year; or

''(ii) an aggregate total of $60,000 in the case of any borrower.

''(B) BEGINNING OF PAYMENTS.—Nothing in this section shall authorize the Attorney General to pay any amount to reimburse a borrower for any repayments made by such borrower prior to the date on which the Attorney General entered into an agreement with the borrower under this subsection.

''(e) ADDITIONAL AGREEMENTS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—On completion of the required period of service under an agreement under subsection (d), the borrower and the Attorney General may, subject to paragraph (2), enter into an additional agreement in accordance with subsection (d).

''(2) TERM.—An agreement entered into under paragraph (1) may require the borrower to remain employed as a prosecutor or public defender for less than 3 years.

''(f) AWARD BASIS; PRIORITY.—

''(1) AWARD BASIS.—The Attorney General shall provide repayment benefits under this section—

''(A) subject to the availability of appropriations; and

''(B) in accordance with paragraph (2), except that the Attorney General shall determine a fair allocation of repayment benefits among prosecutors and defenders, and among employing entities nationwide.

''(2) PRIORITY.—In providing repayment benefits under this section in any fiscal year, the Attorney General shall give priority to borrowers—

''(A) who, when compared to other eligible borrowers, have the least ability to repay their student loans (considering whether the borrower is the beneficiary of any other student loan repayment program), as determined by the Attorney General; or

''(B) who—

''(i) received repayment benefits under this section during the preceding fiscal year; and

''(ii) have completed less than 3 years of the first required period of service specified for the

borrower in an agreement entered into under subsection (d).

''(g) REGULATIONS.—The Attorney General is authorized to issue such regulations as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this section.

''(h) REPORT BY INSPECTOR GENERAL.—Not later than 3 years after the date of the enactment of this section, the Inspector General of the Department of Justice shall submit to Congress a report on—

''(1) the cost of the program authorized under this section; and

''(2) the impact of such program on the hiring and retention of prosecutors and public defenders.

''(i) GAO STUDY.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this section, the Comptroller General shall conduct a study of, and report to Congress on, the impact that law school accreditation requirements and other factors have on the costs of law school and student access to law school, including the impact of such requirements on racial and ethnic minorities.

''(j) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section $25,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2008 through 2013.''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. FORBES) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

I am proud to join with the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. FORBES) and rise in strong support of H.R. 916 because our Nation's criminal justice system depends on the hard work and commitment of the men and women who serve as prosecutors and defenders; yet the ability of the public sector to attract qualified individuals and to retain experienced attorneys is increasingly becoming more compromised.

As many of us know, recent law school graduates are often burdened with overwhelming student education loans. The amount of their debt can effectively preclude a young attorney from choosing to practice in the public sector, and with the median salary for an associate in private practice now many times the median salary of a State prosecutor, public-spirited attorneys who owe extensive student loans have a very hard time deciding that they can afford to work in our criminal justice system.

In Wayne County, Michigan, our county prosecutor Ms. Kym Worthy, a veteran trial lawyer before she assumed the position, has come to me repeatedly asking for help in this area.

So this measure addresses the critical problem by directing the Attorney General to establish a loan repayment assistance program for an individual who agrees to remain employed for at least 3 years as either a State or local criminal prosecutor or as a State, local or Federal public defender for criminal cases.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. FORBES. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

H.R. 916, the John R. Justice Prosecutors and Defenders Incentive Act of 2007, establishes a loan forgiveness program within the Department of Justice for State and local prosecutors and for Federal, State and local public defenders. However, the bill, as introduced, raised several concerns regarding the breadth and cost of the loan forgiveness program.

I am pleased that the majority listened to our concerns, and at the Judiciary Committee markup we were able to reach a bipartisan compromise that ensures fiscal responsibility while encouraging young attorneys to join the criminal justice system and preventing attrition.

Many law school graduates carry a large amount of student loan debt, on average between $50,000 and $80,000. More than 80 percent of law students borrow to pay for their law degree, and the amount borrowed by many students exceeds $100,000.

At the same time, the median entry level salary for State prosecuting attorneys is $46,000, and the median entry level salary for public defenders is $43,000.

Several States and prosecuting agencies currently offer loan repayment programs. Yet, H.R. 916, as introduced, made no provisions for whether participation in existing State and local loan repayment programs would offset repayment from this program.

This substitute amends the bill to direct the Department of Justice to consider applicants' participation in other loan repayment programs when determining their ability to pay their loans.

The bill, as introduced, would have resulted in a very costly program. Although the bill caps repayment at $60,000 per applicant, as few as 25,000 applicants would have cost $1.5 billion over the life of the program, even with the cap in place.

The bill also authorized the program at $25 million for the first year and such sums as are necessary for each additional year. The bipartisan compromise authorizes $25 million a year for 6 years. This fiscally responsible limit on the authorization provides Congress the opportunity to review the cost effectiveness of the program.

The bipartisan compromise directs the Inspector General of the Department of Justice to review the costs of the program and determine whether the program positively impacts the hiring and retention of prosecutors and public defenders.

The compromise also directs the Department of Justice to administer this program subject only to the availability of appropriations, ensuring that the Department's criminal justice responsibilities remain a priority.

H.R. 916, as amended, directs the Attorney General to give priority to those applicants with the least ability to repay their loans. This provision guarantees that funds will be made available under this program to those prosecutors or public defenders suffering the greatest burden.

I thank Chairman CONYERS and Crime Subcommittee Chairman SCOTT for their cooperation on this legislation, and I urge my colleagues to support the bill.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I yield myself 1 minute to congratulate the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. FORBES), the floor manager of this bill, and to thank him for the helpful compromises that he led in working out the bipartisan support of this bill. I thank you.

Madam Speaker, I yield 6 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. SCOTT), the author of the bill.

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I thank very much Chairman CONYERS. This is indeed a great moment. It is a great time, and I appreciate the leadership that you provide as chairman of the committee and all of our colleagues.

This is definitely a bipartisan effort to really deal with one of the most pressing issues facing our country today, Madam Speaker. I cannot think of a more significant thing we can do to make the essence of this country a reality for all. For at the cornerstone of America are these words: wisdom and justice and fairness and moderation. That is what makes this country great.

And at the cornerstone of that is to be able to have, when you come before the bar of justice, that justice is indeed blind and that everyone will be able to receive justice in a fair way. Regardless of whether or not you are a wealthy person or if you are a poor person, one thing is important: you are an American citizen and you deserve to make sure that you have fairness and justice and integrity when you come before the criminal justice system.

Unfortunately, now, Madam Speaker, that is not the case. For in all too many cases, when it comes down to public defenders and prosecutors, that is not the case because of the strains and the interplay of our economic system and the pressures that the marketplace has on that.

But what I am talking about is this, that right now the cost of living has gone up 28 percent, but the costs of tuition for 3 years in law school has gone up 167 percent. So that the average cost now per year for a student to go to law school is $50,000 a year. For 3 years, that's $150,000.

So, Madam Speaker, what I am saying is when that individual gets out of

school he has to go into a marketplace where the private economy is willing to pay him an average now of $110,000, and in some markets in this country, such as New York or California and even in my home State of Georgia in Atlanta, beginning law school students going into the private sector can earn as much as $160,000 a year. But if you're a public defender, if you're a prosecutor, the average starting salary is just $43,000.

That is the crux of the problem, and that's why we have this bill, Madam Speaker, so that we can bring some equity to the playing field; so that we will be able to provide law students with the opportunity to help them with their loan repayment; so that we can have a partial loan forgiveness, not total.

This package that we're offering would give an individual up to $10,000 from the Federal Government to help offset his loans, and he must serve in the public sector for 3 years. But there's also contingent in our bill that with agreement with the employer if he wants to extend that after priority has been given to those that come in at 3 years first, that he will be able to extend it for 3 more years. So the maximum they can get is $60,000.

No, this will not solve the problem, Madam Speaker, but this is a very complex problem. But there are young people that understand the virtues and the need of this country to serve in the public arena, and we need those bright and talented individuals to be able to come into this arena, and this is a small incentive package for which we give.

As my colleague pointed out, this amounts to $25 million a year up to 6 years. It is a small gesture, but it is a meaningful investment because otherwise what we have is today where many innocent people are languishing in jails because we are not addressing this issue and many who are criminals are going free.

And that's why for the last 2 years, Madam Speaker, I have been pushing and working on this bill because, at the crux of it all, as I said, America is great because of many things, but paramount is justice, it is wisdom and it is moderation. That's in our flag, that's in our motto, and that's what is in this bill.

This bill is a companion bill. We have the Senate who has already moved on this in a bipartisan way under the leadership of Senator RICHARD DURBIN of Illinois, their distinguished majority whip, and we're very proud.

So I am very proud for this moment at this time in this House of Representatives for us to move forthright and to be able to bring some help to our college law students and especially into the private sector and to those individuals who cannot afford a high-priced attorney but have to rely on a public defender.

Madam Speaker, don't these individuals deserve to be able to have the best legal representation? Yes, they do, and that's why this bill is important and that's why I commend this to the full House of Representatives, and I am sure we will have a strong bipartisan vote for it.

I thank the chairman and thank my colleagues, and I urge your passage of this bill.

Mr. FORBES. Madam Speaker, I yield as much time as he may consume to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE), an individual who knows firsthand the importance of good prosecutors and public defenders having served as a district court trial judge.

Mr. POE. Madam Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Virginia for yielding some time.

Madam Speaker, I was a former prosecutor for 8 years and a judge in Texas for 22. I spent all my life basically in the criminal justice system as a prosecutor or as a trial judge, and I can attest to the high workload, long hours and low pay attributed to our Nation's prosecutors and to public defenders.

I have found over the years that most of them do what they do because they are committed to serving the public, either as a prosecutor or a public defender. They certainly don't do it for the money.

According to the Law Schools Admission Council, however, the average law school debt for an individual who borrows Federal or private loans is anywhere from $90,000 up. The starting salary for local and State prosecutors and public defenders starts anywhere at $25,000 and sometimes it reaches $50,000. It is not nearly enough to cover the expenses and keep up with the high loan repayments every month that these lawyers have to deal with.

This leaves many qualified and dedicated lawyers leaving the district attorney's office and the public defender's office for work in the private sector where they can make more money. What happens is these lawyers get trial experience at taxpayers' expense, then leave for the big law firms because of their low government salary and their high law school debt.

When I served in the criminal courts as a judge for 22 years, I saw many good prosecutors and public defenders just leave public service because of this problem.

The people of our Nation and the victims of crime need to have the best trial lawyers we can find to prosecute criminal cases. Defendants, likewise, need conpetent public defenders to represent the rights of the citizen accused.

I am honored to be a cosponsor of H.R. 916, the John R. Justice Prosecutors and Defenders Incentive Act of 2007. Prosecutors and public defenders can have up to $30,000 of law school debt erased if they serve 3 years in their current position in public service.

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Of course, this is a renewable debt forgiveness. If the trial lawyer is willing to work another 3 years as a prosecutor or public defender, then a total of $60,000 of law school debt can be forgiven. Most of the time, this will still not cover the majority of their law school debt.

Of course, local and State courts will benefit because they will be able to keep qualified and competent trial lawyers. We need the best trial lawyers in our legal profession to try criminal cases for the State and the defense.

Madam Speaker, we basically have two types of lawyers—trial lawyers. We have civil lawyers, and there are a lot of wonderful trial lawyers who are civil lawyers.

But, basically, civil lawyers argue in the courtroom over money. Nothing wrong with that, but that's what they are arguing over.

But in the criminal courts, we are arguing over something much more important than money, and it's the liberty of the person on trial. It is very serious business, and that's why you need the best prosecutor and the best public defender that we can find to represent both sides because the stakes are so high.

I urge my colleagues to support passage of H.R. 916.

I want to thank the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. SCOTT) for introducing this important piece of legislation.

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I yield myself 1 minute and that is to describe the wide spectrum of legal support for this measure: the National District Attorneys Association, the American Bar Association, the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, the National Legal Aid & Defender Association, and many others.

Madam Speaker, I am now pleased to introduce a gentleman from South Carolina, the chairman of the Budget Committee, as much time as he may consume, Mr. JOHN SPRATT.

(Mr. SPRATT asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much for this opportunity to say something on behalf of my constituent, John Reid Justice of South Carolina, my good friend, my constituent, my trusted counselor, whenever we had or I had any questions or any issues about criminal justice, because he was the expert.

Madam Speaker, John Justice was almost elected to Congress himself. But in the middle of his campaign, he did what duty called him to do. He was in the National Guard, he took 2 weeks out for summer camp, and never quite caught up. But for that, he might have been here sponsoring legislation like the very bill before us which is named after him.

But providence had a better role for John Justice. He became a prosecutor. We call them solicitors in South Carolina, not district attorneys. He became a solicitor for nearly 30 years, and he became a model solicitor. Others looked to him, admired him, and followed his example. The better part of

his professional life, he was the prosecutor in the Sixth Judicial Circuit of South Carolina. He was, as I said, a model prosecutor, so much so that the National District Attorneys Association elected him, from Chester, South Carolina, as president not long ago, just before he died.

In addition, he was a model prosecutor. If you could have seen his funeral, you would understand when I say the entire law enforcement community in South Carolina turned out to pay honor to this splendid fellow. He would have been proud to know that this bill bears his name, particularly because of its substance, not just because of the honor, but because of the substance of the bill. He would be proud to know that he was having some part in helping young lawyers afford the crushing burden of student loans.

So on behalf of the friends of John Justice, who knew him well and practiced with him, on behalf of his family, on behalf of all those who worked with him, I want to thank the committee for naming this bill after him and for honoring him in this very special way.

I urge support for the bill.

Mr. FORBES. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY).

Mr. GINGREY. I appreciate the gentleman yielding. I didn't know he was going to yield so quickly. I am still out of breath from running over here.

Madam Speaker, I wanted to come and lend my support to my good friend, Congressman DAVID SCOTT, my colleague from Georgia, and the John R. Justice Prosecutors and Defenders Incentive Act.

Congressman SCOTT and I both served in the Georgia senate, he for a while longer than I did, and with more power in the leadership there, but we had passed similar legislation in Georgia, this commonsense provision, to help give some relief to these young, brilliant attorneys who are willing to go into work to serve either as a prosecutor or a public defender.

The reason I feel so impassioned by it, my daughter, Phyllis Collins, has been practicing in the Cobb County judicial system now for about 3 years. She came out of law school at Michigan State after graduating from undergraduate school with a microbiology degree from Georgia Tech. I thought she would become a doctor, but she became a darn good lawyer instead.

She came out of that school with about $100,000 in debt, just as this bill indicates in the language we have read. That's just a typical situation that my daughter, Phyllis, is in. She took that job for about $60,000 a year, I believe. She served a year and a half as a prosecutor. Now she is a public defender.

It's people like Phyllis Collins that we need to encourage to do this kind of important work on behalf of people, the public defenders, the prosecutors. They are bringing justice to people that otherwise could not afford justice.

I think that I want to say once again to Congressman SCOTT and all the others on our side of the aisle as well, my good friend from Virginia, RANDY FORBES, who have brought this bill forward, I thank you for the time. I support it tremendously, and I congratulate you for doing this.

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

I would bring to the attention of our membership a communication from the National Conference of Chief Justices at the State level in support of Federal legislation to create incentives to law students to participate in public service occupations after graduations.

The 109th Congress considered legislation designed to encourage qualified individuals to enter in and continue employment for at least 3 years as criminal prosecutors and public defenders by means of providing the United States Government payment of a portion of that individual student loan for each year of such employment.

Whereas the 110th Congress is also likely to consider legislation to assist the repayment of student loans of qualified individuals who commit to employment as prosecutors and public defenders, therefore, the Association of American Law Schools, Equal Justice Works, the National Legal Aid & Defender Association, and the American Bar Association have expressed support for the above-described legislation, and the lawyers to engage in civil and legal services to enhance access by justice, by low-income persons rendered valuable public service that is comparable to that provided by criminal prosecutors and public defenders.

Therefore, be it resolved that the Conference of Chief Justices hereby urges the Congress to adopt legislation to give financial incentives to law school graduates to commit to sustained public service as prosecutors and public defenders.

Therefore, the conference additionally encourages Congress to develop and adopt separate legislation providing similar relief for qualified individuals who engage in employment as civil, legal aid attorneys, adopted as proposed by the Government Affairs Committee and the Professionalism and Competence Committee of the Conference of Chief Justices on February 7 in the year 2007.

Madam Speaker, I would be happy to recognize former judge Louie Gohmert of the Judiciary Committee for 1 minute.

Mr. GOHMERT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do applaud the chairman and the ranking member for the work on this bill.

Madam Speaker, having started out as an assistant district attorney, and then my years as a judge, I constantly saw how difficult it was in our Smith County District Attorney's Office to hire good lawyers, even to hire any lawyers. Thank you for your efforts on this behalf. I think it's a great bill and the right way to do things, providing incentives to do good things. I appreciate it.

Mr. CONYERS. I thank the gentleman from Texas for his contribution.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. FORBES. Madam Speaker, we just request and urge the passage of the bill.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 916, the John R. Justice Prosecutors and Defenders Incentive Act of 2007. I thank the Chairman and the Ranking Member for their effort and time in holding this very important markup hearing.

Madam Speaker, I support H.R. 916 because it amends the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to direct the Attorney General to assume the obligation to repay student loans for borrowers who agree to remain employed, for at least three years, as: (1) State or local criminal prosecutors; or (2) State, local, or Federal public defenders in criminal cases. H.R. 916 also will allow a borrower and the Attorney General to enter into an additional loan repayment agreement, after the required three-year period, for a successive period of service which may be less than three years. The bill also limits the amount paid under such program on behalf of any borrower to $10,000 per calendar year and $60,000 total.

Madam Speaker, this bipartisan legislation will benefit our criminal justice system and our communities by creating a student loan repayment program for law school graduates who agree to serve for at least 3 years as criminal prosecutors or public defenders.

Madam Speaker, over recent years we have witnessed the difficulty prosecutor and public defender offices across the country have had attracting and retaining qualified attorneys. We have also seen that our communities suffer when the criminal justice system fails to obtain and retain a sufficient supply of experienced prosecutors and defenders. Under those trying circumstances, the resulting effect is that criminal caseloads become unmanageable, cases can be delayed or mishandled, serious crimes may go unprosecuted, and innocent defendants may be sent to jail. H.R. 916 will improve the administration of the criminal justice system to recruit and retain talented attorneys and help that system function more effectively.

Although I support H.R. 916, it needs to go a step further in ensuring that bright lawyers will lend their services to civil public service legal careers that include legal aid to this country's most disadvantaged and vulnerable populations. That is why during the markup of H.R. 916 I strongly supported the Nadler Amendment, which included civil legal aid attorneys in the category of lawyers eligible for loan forgiveness. Indeed, the Nadler Amendment is comparable to more extensive legislation that I plan to introduce.

Including civil legal aid attorneys in the group who may qualify for loan forgiveness when committing to work in public service will help to recruit and retain legal aid lawyers so that low-income Americans receive the legal assistance they need. Specifically, the Amendment would provide a loan repayment program for new law graduates who work for legal aid.

Providing loan relief for legal aid attorneys is crucial. Legal Aid attorneys protect the safety, security, and health of low-income citizens nationwide. Support for such programs not only provides relief for prospective legal aid attorneys but also for the most vulnerable members of our population. Such programs are available for Federal prosecutors and other Federal employees. But, for the legal aid attorneys—who have the lowest incomes—there currently is not enough access to loan repayment programs. We must ensure that legal aid attorneys receive the financial incentives they need to commit to a career in legal aid.

Without such incentive as loan relief, the legal aid field will continue to fall far short of the mark to meet the needs and demands of requests for legal assistance. Despite the importance of the services legal aid lawyers provide, almost half of the eligible people seeking assistance from Legal Aid are being turned away because of a lack of resources. As law school tuition has skyrocketed, so has a young lawyer's debt. A recent survey found that with median law school debt at $70,000 with an additional $16,000 in undergraduate debt, over 65 percent of new law school graduates were prevented from even considering a public service career.

Given the financial realities, individuals who take positions with legal aid often leave after two or three years. One Midwestern program cited a turnover rate of 60 percent over a two year period, with an average tenure for new attorneys of 17 months. Many of these young attorneys leave at a time when they have just develop necessary experience, creating a revolving door of inexperienced lawyers. This turnover dramatically decreases the efficiency of the program and the vital services it provides. Such a bill would allow young lawyers to choose a career in public service without having to bear the heavy burden of law school debt on their own.

Madam Speaker, whether legal aid attorneys, prosecutors or public defenders, public service attorneys must be given some comparable incentive to choose a career in public service instead of a career in the higher-paying private sector arena. One of the primary reasons for the recruiting difficulty of the administration of the criminal justice system is that huge amounts of student debt have pulled students in the opposite direction of public service careers such as those of prosecutors and defenders. Why? We all know that no one is going to get rich going into service careers such as teachers, social workers, and prosecutors and public defenders especially when they are starting out with enormous student loan obligations. That is why we must give those who wish to serve in public service careers incentive such as loan forgiveness so that they will not forgo service careers simply because they are buried in mounds of student loans.

H.R. 916, which authorizes $25 million in appropriations for FY08, establishes a program of student loan repayment for borrowers who agree to remain employed, for at least 3 years, as State or local criminal prosecutors or as State, local or Federal public defenders in criminal cases (note that Federal prosecutors are already eligible for loan relief through existing Federal programs). The 3 year period is comparable to other loan forgiveness programs.

Other important aspects of the bill include: allowing eligible attorneys to receive student loan debt repayments of up to $10,000 per year, with a maximum aggregate over time of $60,000; covering student loans made, insured or guaranteed under the Higher Education Act of 1965, including consolidation loans; providing that repayments benefits be made available to eligible attorneys on a first-come, first served basis, subject to the availability of appropriations; and permitting attorneys to enter into additional loan repayment agreements, after the required 3-year period, for additional periods of service. The bill also sets safeguards to ensure loan forgiveness participants satisfy their commitments by requiring attorneys to repay the Government if they do not complete their required period of service.

Madam Speaker, this bill has bipartisan support as well as wide support in the legal community. H.R. 916 is supported by the American Bar Association, the National District Attorneys Association, the National Association of Prosecutor Coordinators, the National Legal Aid and Defender Association and the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers.

Madam Speaker, I strongly support this bill and urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. FORBES. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 916, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

RECOGNIZING NATIONAL FOSTER CARE MONTH

Mr. MCDERMOTT. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 263) recognizing National Foster Care Month as an opportunity for Congress to improve the foster care system throughout the United States, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 263

Whereas National Foster Care Month provides an opportunity to recognize the important role that the foster care system plays in the lives of the more than 500,000 children currently in foster care programs throughout the United States;

Whereas National Foster Care Month also provides an opportunity to explore the difficulties faced by children in the foster care system and to reaffirm the Nation's commitment to improving the lives of these children by improving foster care programs;

Whereas many children in the foster care system have spent multiple years in foster care programs and have experienced an unstable home life due to frequent moves from one foster home to another;

Whereas approximately 50 percent of foster care children have been placed in foster care programs for longer than 1 year;

Whereas 25 percent of foster care children have been placed in foster care programs for at least 3 years;

Whereas children in foster care programs for longer periods of time often experience worse outcomes than children in foster care programs for shorter periods of time;

Whereas children in foster care programs are more likely than the general population to become teen parents, to rely on public assistance as adults, to become homeless, and to experience mental health disorders at a higher rate;

Whereas repeated studies have shown that a child's very early years are critical for brain development, meaning that it is extremely important to find suitable permanent homes for children during this critical period;

Whereas there are 119,000 children eligible for adoption every year and less than half of the children in foster care programs actually get adopted;

Whereas a stable home is critical to a child's development; and

Whereas every child deserves to be raised by a loving family: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That in recognition of National Foster Care Month and in order to improve the foster care system throughout the United States, it is the sense of the House of Representatives that Congress should ensure that improving the foster care system remains a top priority for both Congress and the Nation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. MCDERMOTT) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Washington.

Mr. MCDERMOTT. Madam Speaker, the month of May marks National Foster Care Month. The foster care system provides a safe sanctuary for children who are unable to live safely in their homes.

Its primary goal is to ensure their safety and well-being by providing them with critical services and working to find a safe and loving and permanent home. Over 500,000 American children are in the foster care system on any given day with over 100,000 of these children waiting to be adopted. They need our help, and I believe this is one place where every Member of the House can come together as one, committed to protecting these innocent children.

This morning, we, Mr. WELLER and I, had a hearing in the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Income Security and Family Support to review the changes and the challenges that child welfare agencies encounter in achieving positive outcomes for children and families under their service.

The hearing identified a number of areas that need to be improved to strengthen children and families, which I am committed to addressing. The hearing also highlighted the commitment of some of our most selfless Americans on behalf of some of our most vulnerable children. Millions of Americans serve as foster parents, and,

in doing so, have unselfishly opened their homes and their lives to children in need. These families are to be commended for working cooperatively with human service agencies and biological parents to strengthen the lives of these foster children.

We should also recognize the work of dedicated case workers, juvenile court justices, physicians and the advocates who have committed their lives to ensuring the safety and well-being of our most vulnerable children. These tireless workers should be commended for their work on behalf of children and families in crisis.

I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing May 2007 as National Foster Care Month and commending the dedication of foster parents, case workers, judges, service providers and advocates for their commitment to our Nation's most vulnerable children.

□ 1130

Madam Speaker, I would now ask unanimous consent to allow Representative CARDOZA of California, who is the author of this resolution and a staunch advocate for improving the well-being of children in foster care, and actually an adoptive parent of a couple of kids from foster care, so he's done it at every level, to control the balance of my time.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. CARDOZA. Madam Speaker, I'd like to allow Mr. WELLER to speak next.

Mr. WELLER of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 263, as amended, recognizing National Foster Care Month.

We're here today to discuss foster care, starting with recognizing the thousands of foster parents who step in to care for so many vulnerable young people across America. It is right to celebrate the efforts of foster parents who step in to keep children safe.

In addition to these individuals, thousands of local organizations, with both public and private sector employees and volunteers, are also active in foster care.

In the congressional district that I represent, one good example of a trusted foster care organization is Baby Fold, and Baby Fold is a multi-service family support agency that has served the Bloomington-Normal region in central Illinois for over a century.

Today the Baby Fold specializes in residential, educational, therapeutic, adoption, foster care, pregnancy counseling and family support prevention services for children and their families.

Many similar groups provide similar services in every congressional district in America. These organizations and dedicated individuals, supported by private donations and over $23 billion in taxpayer funds each year, help children and families lead safe and productive lives. Today we thank each of them and all of them for their efforts and dedication.

Yet, despite such dedicated efforts, we also know a lot more work is needed to ensure that all children are adequately protected from abuse and neglect.

I have a longstanding interest in training of child welfare workers. Today I am reintroducing legislation I have authored in prior Congresses designed to address a glaring flaw in current rules by ensuring all child care workers, whether they work for a public agency or a private agency, have access to the same training needed to protect children.

Take Will County Catholic Charities, which helps protect over 300 children in foster care in the congressional district I represent. There's simply no reason why a caseworker with Will County Catholic Charities should have less access to training than an equally dedicated caseworker who happens to be a public employee. Yet, that is what current Federal rules promote, and we should fix this.

We also need to do more to ensure that each and every child involved with the child welfare system is safe. Too often that is not the case. The Subcommittee on Income Security and Family Support, on which I serve as ranking member, held a hearing on these challenges earlier today. We focused on areas like Clark County, Nevada, which is home to Las Vegas. A series of child deaths in Clark County has proven the risks for children when foster care and child protection systems fail to protect them.

As an August 5, 2006 article in the Las Vegas Review Journal put it, ''Since 2002, at least 79 children have died of abuse or neglect at the hands of their parents, foster parents or other caregivers while under the watch of the Clark County Department of Family Services.''

As troubling as that is, the response of local officials has only made matters worse. ''For years, the county child welfare system has continuously avoided scrutiny by hiding behind a veil of confidentiality meant to protect children and families, but which the county has used to shield itself from oversight and criticism.''

This sad trail of facts was supported by testimony we received today from Ed Cotton, who has broad experience in child welfare programs in my home State of Illinois, as well as New Jersey and Nevada. Most recently Mr. Cotton conducted a top-to-bottom review of Clark County, Nevada's child welfare program in the wake of tragedies there. And the evidence shows that Clark County is a case study of what happens when there's no oversight from those administering the program, and clearly is a national embarrassment and a disgrace because Federal funds were involved.

As Mr. Cotton testified, in Clark County and too many other places, this system has a very long way to go to ensure that all children are adequately protected.

Madam Speaker, in contrast with the Clark County tragedies, some areas have shown progress, but they're all too rare. Recent positive examples include my home State of Illinois.

Starting under the leadership of former Governor Jim Edgar in the late 1990s, the entire child welfare system in Illinois has undergone remarkable changes, resulting in there being 16,272 children today in foster care, or in January of 2007 that number, down from 28,202 children in September of 2001.

New York City, under the leadership of Mayor Rudy Giuliani, also made changes that were positive, dramatically reducing the number of children who need foster care.

Many experts think we should build on this success and do better when it comes to targeting efforts to prevent abuse and neglect from occurring in the first place. That would result in fewer children needing foster care, tracking the Illinois and New York City experiences, and that would free more resources to ensure the safety, permanency and well-being of those children who do not need to be placed in foster care. Both goals are critical, better prevention and better oversight.

In 2006, Congress took some modest steps in the right direction by targeting more funds for child abuse prevention and holding States more accountable for results. So there is increasing recognition of the steps needed to turn this program around.

In the meantime, we will certainly need the continuing involvement and support of tens of thousands of foster parents. We owe them, and especially the children they protect each and every day, our continued full support.

I urge bipartisan support for this resolution.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CARDOZA. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of House Resolution 263, a resolution recognizing May, this month, as the National Foster Care Month.

I want to begin my statement today by thanking subcommittee chairman, Mr. MCDERMOTT from Washington, for his outstanding support and work with us to bring this resolution to the floor. Chairman MCDERMOTT has dedicated virtually his entire life to the work of helping children that have been disadvantaged, and he deserves great praise and thanks for the hard work he continues to do in this Congress.

I also want to recognize Mr. WELLER for cooperating with us today in bringing this resolution to the floor, and also for his thoughtful comments that he just prepared.

However, this resolution has a long and tortuous path to reaching the floor today. My staff's been working tirelessly with both the majority and the minority staffs of the Ways and Means

and Judiciary Committees. Before this bill was able to reach the floor under suspension, I was forced to make substantive changes which severely, in my opinion, gut the force of this resolution.

Specifically, my original resolution, drawing upon the recommendations of the respected Pew Charitable Trust, made clear that we need more funds for the CASA Program, that we need more funds to better ensure that we have trained personnel working with foster children, and that we provide more resources to State agencies that deal with foster children.

In the interest of comity, I was forced to withdraw all these recommendations. Unfortunately, while of course I still support the thrust of the current resolution, without sufficient resources we will never fully tackle this problem.

I'd also like to just point out, and it's important history for us all to remember, that in the previous majority in the last Congress, we took, in my mind, unconscionable measures to reduce the funding to foster children.

On February 8, 2006, President Bush signed the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005. The CBO estimates that this measure cut funds of $1.3 billion over 10 years to foster care and $2.1 billion over 10 years to Medicaid that would affect these children.

I stood up on the House floor on that day in December when it was being debated in this institution and fought against those cuts. I, at that time, called it ''Scroogenomics,'' because we were cutting the money for foster kids right before the Christmas holiday. And those concerns went for nought. The bill was passed anyway and signed into law, and foster kids continue to suffer because of that act.

I won't belabor the point too much at this point because I really want to focus on the needs today. But, Madam Speaker, I speak passionately about foster children because I have a very personal interest in this issue. Seven years ago I adopted two foster children. In fact, Madam Speaker, as an aside, I'm doing this resolution because they asked me to do it today.

Since then, I have advocated on their behalf and on the behalf of the adoption of foster children in the California State Assembly and now here in Congress.

The need is tremendous and the statistics are sobering. It is estimated that there are 800,000 children in foster care at some point during any given year. Moreover, children of color are disproportionately represented in foster care. African American children make up about 16 percent of the Nation's children, but make up 35 percent of the children in foster care. These children enter foster care at higher rates and remain in care longer, for longer periods than white children.

Too many children in foster care sit waiting for permanent families. There are about 118,000 children in foster care waiting to be adopted, and numerous barriers keep them in limbo. Children often bounce from one system to another, from child welfare to juvenile justice to mental health as their needs intensify.

Each year, about 20,000 children age out of the foster care system without ever being adopted, placed with grandparents or any other supportive adult. Oftentimes, these children have no connection whatsoever to any adult.

Several studies released in 2005 documented the special challenges facing these youths, especially in the area of mental health, education and employment. They are especially poorly prepared to be self-sufficient young adults.

These children are waiting. Speaking from personal experience, there is no greater joy in life than helping a child. My wife and I can attest to this every day.

Every child, no matter what their situation that they may be born to, deserves a chance to be raised in a stable and loving home. Innocent children should not be forced to bear the mistakes of their parents. We have a moral obligation to ensure that these children, no matter what background they come from, have a shot that is equal to the shot that every American has to the American dream.

This is a big problem that will require bold solutions. In order to save the next generation of children, we must rededicate ourselves to their welfare and to pledge to do whatever is necessary to nurture and protect them.

This resolution, by highlighting attention to their problems, is a necessary first step. But, Madam Speaker, other dramatic actions need to be taken. That is why I have introduced legislation to expand Medicaid coverage to children who age out of the foster care system, and I'm considering legislation to ensure that every foster child has a CASA representative, a court-appointed special advocate, the same type of court-appointed special advocate that saved my children.

These are urgent problems. They require bold solutions. I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WELLER of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on the subject of the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. WELLER of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of our time.

Mr. CARDOZA. Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague, Mr. WELLER. I know he cares passionately about these children, and while we sometimes disagree on the specifics, I know that all Members in this institution care passionately about foster children.

But the time to act is now. We need to do more to work on behalf of these children to eliminate the barriers that prohibit them from leading positive lives in society.

We must extend health care coverage to these young people until the age of 21. It's currently a voluntary program. Thirty-three States in this country do not offer health care all the way to the age of majority. We must, in fact, do more. And it is imperative. And frankly, if we can keep these young people out of a life of crime, out of falling into trouble, assisting them into becoming productive citizens, instead of the current situation where nearly 50 percent of children who age out of the foster care system end up homeless after 1 year, we can do better for our citizens and we can, frankly, probably save money to the taxpayers of the United States.

So, Madam Speaker, I urge adoption of this resolution. I urge my colleagues here today within earshot of my voice to redouble their efforts in helping this population of our citizenry that has become disadvantaged.

Mr. STARK. Madam Speaker, I rise today in recognition of National Foster Care Month. Our child welfare system faces severe challenges and this month provides Congress with the opportunity to make needed reforms.

Our society has an obligation to ensure that all children are raised in safe and loving environments. For the 500,000 children in foster care, the State is responsible for providing a stable home, through reunification with their families, permanent placements, or adoption. Tragically, we are not doing a very good job. Half of all foster children have been in care for more than a year. A quarter have been in the system for more than 3 years. For foster children that remain in the system and ''age out'' with no family supports, the future is not very bright. For those children, the odds are that they will end up in jail, homeless, or reliant on public assistance.

The problems that plague our child welfare system are largely the result of poor Federal and State policy decisions. Luckily, we have the power to reform those policies and directly affect the lives of the hundreds of thousands of children who are counting on us to do the right thing.

There are very concrete steps we can take to improve the foster care system. Congress should reform the financing system to make sure that we provide support for every foster child. Currently, the Federal Government supports less than 50 percent of children in care. We can also take steps to improve the child welfare workforce and reduce the number of cases those workers have to handle. A Federal ceiling for the number of cases a worker can handle should be established so that children get the attention needed to keep them safe. In addition, we have to provide better services to the estimated 25,000 children who leave care each year when they turn 18. All of these children should maintain Medicaid eligibility until they are 21 and we should invest further in training, education, and housing assistance for these children.

The resolution before us (H. Res. 263) can serve as a stepping stone for real action to protect our children and help them flourish. I am proud to support it.

□ 1145

Mr. CARDOZA. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Washington (Mr. McDERMOTT) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 263, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

COPS IMPROVEMENTS ACT OF 2007

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1700) to amend the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to enhance the COPS ON THE BEAT grant program, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1700

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''COPS Improvements Act of 2007''.

SEC. 2. COPS GRANT IMPROVEMENTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1701 of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3796dd) is amended—

(1) by amending subsection (a) to read as follows:

''(a) GRANT AUTHORIZATION.—The Attorney General shall carry out grant programs under which the Attorney General makes grants to States, units of local government, Indian tribal governments, other public and private entities, multi-jurisdictional or regional consortia, and individuals for the purposes described in subsections (b), (c), (d), and (e).'';

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) by striking the subsection heading text and inserting ''COMMUNITY POLICING AND CRIME PREVENTION GRANTS'';

(B) in paragraph (3), by striking '', to increase the number of officers deployed in community-oriented policing'';

(C) by amending paragraph (4) to read as follows:

''(4) award grants to pay for or train officers hired to perform intelligence, anti-terror, or homeland security duties;'';

(D) by inserting after paragraph (4) the following:

''(5) award grants to hire school resource officers and to establish school-based partnerships between local law enforcement agencies and local school systems to combat crime, gangs, drug activities, and other problems in and around elementary and secondary schools;'';

(E) by striking paragraph (9);

(F) by redesignating paragraphs (10) through (12) as paragraphs (9) through (11), respectively;

(G) by striking paragraph (13);

(H) by redesignating paragraphs (14) through (17) as paragraphs (12) through (15), respectively;

(I) in paragraph (14), as so redesignated, by striking ''and'' at the end;

(J) in paragraph (15), as so redesignated, by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon; and

(K) by adding at the end the following:

''(16) establish and implement innovative programs to reduce and prevent illegal drug manufacturing, distribution, and use, including the manufacturing, distribution, and use of methamphetamine;

''(17) establish criminal gang enforcement task forces, consisting of members of Federal, State, and local law enforcement authorities (including Federal, State, and local prosecutors), for the coordinated investigation, disruption, apprehension, and prosecution of criminal gangs and offenders involved in local or multi-jurisdictional gang activities; and

''(18) award enhancing community policing and crime prevention grants that meet emerging law enforcement needs, as warranted.'';

(3) by striking subsection (c);

(4) by striking subsections (h) and (i);

(5) by redesignating subsections (d) through (g) as subsections (f) through (i), respectively;

(6) by inserting after subsection (b) the following:

''(c) TROOPS-TO-COPS PROGRAMS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Grants made under subsection (a) may be used to hire former members of the Armed Forces to serve as career law enforcement officers for deployment in community-oriented policing, particularly in communities that are adversely affected by a recent military base closing.

''(2) DEFINITION.—In this subsection, 'former member of the Armed Forces' means a member of the Armed Forces of the United States who has been honorably discharged from the Armed Forces of the United States.

''(d) COMMUNITY PROSECUTORS PROGRAM.—The Attorney General may make grants under subsection (a) to pay for additional community prosecuting programs, including programs that assign prosecutors to—

''(1) handle cases from specific geographic areas; and

''(2) address counter-terrorism problems, specific violent crime problems (including intensive illegal gang, gun, and drug enforcement and quality of life initiatives), and localized violent and other crime problems based on needs identified by local law enforcement agencies, community organizations, and others.

''(e) TECHNOLOGY GRANTS.—The Attorney General may make grants under subsection (a) to develop and use new technologies (including interoperable communications technologies, modernized criminal record technology, and forensic technology) to assist State and local law enforcement agencies in reorienting the emphasis of their activities from reacting to crime to preventing crime and to train law enforcement officers to use such technologies.'';

(7) in subsection (f), as so redesignated—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking ''to States, units of local government, Indian tribal governments, and to other public and private entities,'';

(B) in paragraph (2), by striking ''define for State and local governments, and other public and private entities,'' and inserting ''establish'';

(C) in the first sentence of paragraph (3), by inserting ''(including regional community policing institutes)'' after ''training centers or facilities''; and

(D) by adding at the end the following:

''(4) EXCLUSIVITY.—The Office of Community Oriented Policing Services shall be the exclusive component of the Department of Justice to perform the functions and activities specified in this paragraph.'';

(8) in subsection (g), as so redesignated, by striking ''may utilize any component'', and all that follows and inserting ''shall use the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services of the Department of Justice in carrying out this part.'';

(9) in subsection (h), as so redesignated—

(A) by striking ''subsection (a)'' the first place that term appears and inserting ''paragraphs (1) and (2) of subsection (b)''; and

(B) by striking ''in each fiscal year pursuant to subsection (a)'' and inserting ''in each fiscal year for purposes described in paragraph (1) and (2) of subsection (b)'';

(10) in subsection (i), as so redesignated—

(A) by striking ''the Federal share shall decrease from year to year for up to 5 years'' and inserting ''unless the Attorney General waives the non-Federal contribution requirement as described in the preceding sentence, the non-Federal share of the costs of hiring or rehiring such officers may be less than 25 percent of such costs for any year during the grant period, provided that the non-Federal share of such costs shall not be less than 25 percent in the aggregate for the entire grant period, but the State or local government should make an effort to increase the non-Federal share of such costs during the grant period''; and

(B) by adding at the end the following new sentence: ''The preceding sentences shall not apply with respect to any program, project, or activity provided by a grant made pursuant to subsection (b)(4).''; and

(11) by adding at the end the following:

''(j) RETENTION OF ADDITIONAL OFFICER POSITIONS.—For any grant under paragraph (1) or (2) of subsection (b) for hiring or rehiring career law enforcement officers, a grant recipient shall retain each additional law enforcement officer position created under that grant for not less than 12 months after the end of the period of that grant, unless the Attorney General waives, wholly or in part, the retention requirement of a program, project, or activity.''.

(b) APPLICATIONS.—Section 1702 of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3796dd–1) is amended—

(1) in subsection (c)—

(A) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by inserting '', unless waived by the Attorney General'' after ''under this part shall''; and

(B) in paragraph (8), by striking ''share of the cost'' and all that follows and inserting ''share of the costs during the grant period, how the applicant will maintain the increased hiring level of the law enforcement officers, and how the applicant will eventually assume responsibility for all of the costs for such officers;''; and

(2) by striking subsection (d).

(c) RENEWAL OF GRANTS.—Section 1703 of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3796dd–2) is amended to read as follows:

''SEC. 1703. RENEWAL OF GRANTS.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subsection (b), a grant made under this part may be renewed, without limitations on the duration of such renewal, to provide additional funds if the Attorney General determines that the funds made available to the recipient were used in a manner required under an approved application and if the recipient can demonstrate significant progress in achieving the objectives of the initial application.

''(b) GRANTS FOR HIRING.—Grants made under this part for hiring or rehiring additional career law enforcement officers may be renewed for up to 5 years, except that the Attorney General may waive such 5-year limitation for good cause.

''(c) NO COST EXTENSIONS.—Notwithstanding subsections (a) and (b), the Attorney General may extend a grant period, without limitations as to the duration of such extension, to provide additional time to complete the objectives of the initial grant award.''.

(d) LIMITATION ON USE OF FUNDS.—Section 1704 of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3796dd–3) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) by striking ''that would, in the absence of Federal funds received under this part, be made available from State or local sources'' and inserting ''that the Attorney General determines would, in the absence of Federal funds received

under this part, be made available for the purpose of the grant under this part from State or local sources''; and

(B) by adding at the end the following new sentence: ''The preceding sentence shall not apply with respect to funds made available under this part by a grant made pursuant to subsection (a) for the purposes described in subsection (b)(4).''; and

(2) by striking subsection (c).

(e) STUDY OF PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS.—Section 1705 of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3796dd–4) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(d) STUDY OF PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Attorney General shall provide for a scientific study of the effectiveness of the programs, projects, and activities funded under this part in reducing crime.

''(2) STUDY.—The Attorney General shall select one or more institutions of higher education, including historically Black colleges and universities, to conduct the study described in paragraph (1).

''(3) REPORTS.—Not later than 4 years after the date of the enactment of the COPS Improvements Act of 2007, the institution or institutions selected under paragraph (2) shall report the findings of the study described in paragraph (1) to the Attorney General. Not later than 30 days after the receipt of such report, the Attorney General shall report such findings to the appropriate committees of Congress, along with any recommendations the Attorney General may have relating to the effectiveness of the programs, projects, and activities funded under this part in reducing crime.''.

(f) ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS.—Section 1706 of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3796dd–5) is amended—

*(1) in the section heading, by striking ''**REVOCATION OR SUSPENSION OF FUNDING**'' and inserting ''**ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS**''; and*

(2) by striking ''revoke or suspend'' and all that follows and inserting ''take any enforcement action available to the Department of Justice.''.

(g) DEFINITIONS.—Section 1709(1) of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3796dd–8(1)) is amended by inserting ''who is a sworn law enforcement officer'' after ''permanent basis''.

(h) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Section 1001(a)(11) of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3793(a)(11)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (A), by striking ''1,047,119,000 for each of fiscal years 2006 through 2009'' and inserting ''1,150,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2008 through 2013''; and

(2) in subparagraph (B)—

(A) in the first sentence, by striking ''3 percent may be used for technical assistance under section 1701(d)'' and inserting ''5 percent may be used for technical assistance under section 1701(f)''; and

(B) by striking the second sentence and inserting the following: ''Of the funds available for grants under part Q, not less than $600,000,000 shall be used for grants for the purposes specified in section 1701(b), not more than $200,000,000 shall be used for grants under section 1701(d), and not more than $350,000,000 shall be used for grants under section 1701(e).''.

(i) PURPOSES.—Section 10002 of the Public Safety Partnership and Community Policing Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C. 3796dd note) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (4), by striking ''development'' and inserting ''use''; and

(2) in the matter following paragraph (4), by striking ''for a period of 6 years''.

(j) COPS PROGRAM IMPROVEMENTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 109(b) of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3712h(b)) is amended—

(A) by striking paragraph (1);

(B) by redesignating paragraphs (2) and (3) as paragraphs (1) and (2), respectively; and

(C) in paragraph (2), as so redesignated, by inserting '', except for the program under part Q of this title'' before the period.

(2) LAW ENFORCEMENT COMPUTER SYSTEMS.—Section 107 of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3712f) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(c) EXCEPTION.—This section shall not apply to any grant made under part Q of this title.''.

SEC. 3. REPORT BY INSPECTOR GENERAL REQUIRED.

(a) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Inspector General of the Department of Justice shall submit to Congress a report on the Public Safety and Community Policing (''COPS ON THE BEAT'') grant program authorized by part Q of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3796dd et seq.), including the elements described in subsection (b).

(b) ELEMENTS OF REPORT.—The report submitted under subsection (a) shall include information on the following, with respect to the grant program described in such subsection:

(1) The effect of the program on the rate of violent crime, drug offenses, and other crimes.

(2) The degree to which State and local governments awarded a grant under the program contribute State and local funds, respectively, for law enforcement programs and activities.

(3) Any waste, fraud, or abuse within the program.

(c) RANDOM SAMPLING REQUIRED.—For purposes of subsection (a), the Inspector General of the Department of Justice shall audit and review a random sampling of State and local law enforcement agencies. Such sampling shall include—

(1) law enforcement agencies of various sizes;

(2) law enforcement agencies that serve various populations; and

(3) law enforcement agencies that serve areas of various crime rates.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. FORBES) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I am pleased to join 102 cosponsors, including a dozen members of the House Judiciary Committee, in supporting this legislation.

During the 1990s, the crime rate for all categories of crime and in all parts of the United States fell dramatically. For example, homicide rates in 2001 plunged 43 percent from their peak in 1991, reaching their lowest level in 35 years.

Now, there are many potential explanations offered regarding the dramatic and unexpected drop in the rate of violent crime during the 1990s. One popular explanation is the Nation's sustained economic growth during the days of the Clinton administration.

But researchers often point to one other explanation: the creation of the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services in 1994, the COPS bill; and the subsequent infusion of more than $7.6 billion in grants into State and local law enforcement communities to hire police officers and promote community policing as an effective strategy to prevent crime. The bill before us reinvigorates the COPS crime fighting program in several important respects.

First, it establishes hiring grants for community policing officers, anti-terror officers, and school resource officers. It also reauthorizes ''Troops-to-COPS'' grants to hire former members of the Armed Forces in particular as career law enforcement officers. And it also authorizes a ''Community Prosecutors Program'' to pay for community prosecuting programs, including those that assign prosecutors to handle cases from specific geographic areas or to address counter-terrorism and related problems.

Finally, it authorizes ''Technology Grants'' to State and local law enforcement agencies to help them refocus some of their activities from reacting to crime to preventing it. Crime prevention has now come back into vogue.

So this legislation, because of its long and successful prior experience, has been endorsed by key law enforcement groups: the National Sheriffs Association, the Fraternal Order of Police, the National Association of Police Organizations, and the National League of Cities.

I am proud to indicate their strong support for this measure, and I urge my colleagues to lend their support to a bill whose restoration is more than deserved.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. FORBES. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, America's State and local law enforcement agencies are on the front lines combating and preventing crime every day. In the last decade, their dedication and service and innovative policing programs have led to a 34 percent decrease in violent crime.

It is unclear, however, whether the $11 billion in COPS grants awarded since 1994 can receive the same credit. Studies have reached inconsistent findings as to the effectiveness of the COPS program in reducing the Nation's rising crime rates.

The COPS program awards grants to State, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies to hire or rehire police officers or procure new crime-fighting technology. It is intended to provide short-term Federal assistance to State and local law enforcement agencies. It is not intended to assume the funding of State and local police, a duty that lies first and foremost with the States.

The COPS program specifically directs that grant money not be used to supplant State or local funds but, rather, increase the amount of funds for

community policing. In reality, this has proven not to always be the case. Studies show that spending on the COPS program has not led to an increase in the overall spending by local law enforcement but often supplants State and local funds.

The actual number of officers put on the street under this program is also in dispute. Estimates vary from 118,000 to as few as 82,000 additional police officers. The answer to addressing crime in the 21st century is not simply more cops on the street. It is innovative programs, such as multi-jurisdictional task forces designed to target specific types of crimes and neighborhoods plagued by gangs and drugs.

We should look to cities like New York and Los Angeles, who continue to enjoy reduced violent crime rates thanks to smart, effective policing.

To put to rest once and for all conflicting findings about the effectiveness of the COPS program, the committee adopted an amendment directing the Inspector General of the Department of Justice to conduct an audit of the COPS program to review three areas: first, the effect of the program on the rate of violent crime; second, the degree to which COPS funding recipients contribute State or local funding to law enforcement programs and activities; and, third, any waste, fraud, or abuse within the COPS program.

As introduced, H.R. 1700 reduced the likelihood that community policing would, in fact, some day be funded by America's communities. The bill stripped several provisions from current law that encourage State and local governments to assume a larger share of COPS grants. This is directly contrary to the purpose of the COPS program and would only exacerbate the use of Federal funds to supplant State and local funds.

H.R. 1700 also stripped from current law limits on the duration of COPS grants and instead allowed unlimited grant renewal. This too is directly contrary to the original intent of the COPS program to provide short-term assistance to State, local, and tribal governments to hire additional police officers.

I am pleased that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle listened to our concerns and supported our changes to preserve the partnership between the Federal Government, State, local, and tribal governments. I thank Judiciary Committee Chairman CONYERS, Crime Subcommittee Chairman SCOTT, and Congressman WEINER for their cooperation.

I urge my colleagues to support the bill.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1½ minutes to the distinguished gentlewoman from Los Angeles, California, DIANE WATSON.

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 1700, the COPS Improvements Act of 2007. As a daughter of a police officer, I believe this bill is essential to keep our citizens safe and help communities combat crime.

Improving the COPS program is very important to the constituents I represent in California's 33rd Congressional District. If this bill passes, my district alone will get at least 25 new police officers, an additional school resource officer, along with more funding to be used for technology in Los Angeles' law enforcement agencies.

Mr. Speaker, today our children are killing one another in my district at an appalling rate. The Los Angeles Police Department recorded 7,714 gang crimes in 2006, a 14 percent jump over the previous year. I believe we need to take a comprehensive approach to combating gang violence and ensure that our youth have safe, quality schools that give them an alternative to the streets.

But there is one action we can take right now that will immediately reduce the level of violence and protect our kids, and that is to put more police on the streets.

We have the bill here today that does just that, the COPS Improvements Act, and I urge colleagues to support this measure.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT).

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I want to thank him and the folks on the other side of the aisle for their leadership in this area.

I rise in support of H.R. 1700, the COPS Improvements Act of 2007.

The COPS grant program represents a true partnership between the Federal Government and State, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies to fight crime. This partnership has enabled more police officers to be hired and rehired and facilitated the use of the most advanced crime-fighting technology to ensure that officers are effectively deployed into our communities all across the country.

As a result of our joint efforts, the number of violent offenses reported in our country is down from the more than 1.8 million reported back in 1994 to 1.3 million reported in 2005. But we cannot become complacent. We must ensure that State, local, and tribal law enforcement officials have the resources they need to keep law enforcement on the streets.

H.R. 1700 accomplishes this by increasing the funds available for the COPS program from $1 billion to $1.15 billion and by creating a number of new grant programs that will assist communities, such as community policing, crime prevention programs, and programs to address illegal drug manufacturing.

Most importantly, the bill that we are considering today stays true to the COPS grant program's original purpose, that the Federal Government support State, local, and tribal law enforcement efforts, not supplant them, as the ranking member indicated. That would be the last thing that we should do. H.R. 1700, in its current form, requires that States, local, and tribal law enforcement demonstrate their commitment to the partnership by making a good-faith effort to match the funds provided by the Federal Government. Yet at the same time, the bill allows the Federal Government to play a primary role in those circumstances in which a grant recipient cannot meet their financial obligation for reasons beyond their control, thus ensuring that our communities remain safe and that crime does not prevail.

H.R. 1700 is an important and necessary tool for law enforcement, and I encourage my colleagues to support it.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased now to yield such time as he may consume to the author of this measure, Mr. WEINER of New York, whose confidence I have so much of this afternoon, notwithstanding that there are eight other speakers, because of his persevering commitment to reinstituting this community policing bill.

Mr. WEINER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for both his confidence and his leadership of our committee, and I also want to thank BOBBY SCOTT, the chairman of the Crime Subcommittee.

We are really here for three reasons. We are here because the COPS program has been a singular success. It has been a success because we identified in the 1990s that crime was not a program that only localities could get a handle on, that we had a Federal role. It is a success because it was a singularly democratic, with a small ''d,'' program.

□ 1200

And small towns and big cities throughout all 50 States wound up benefiting from the over 118,000 police officers that were put on the street because of this program. We know, for example, that 82 percent of the grants went to cities with 50,000 people or less. And while cities like mine did very well because there were more police on the beat, we know that there were a large number of very small towns that benefited.

We know, as you can see, that the COPS program provides resources to all 50 States. This wasn't a political program. If you were a police department and you showed a way to get more cops on the street, the Federal Government wasn't going to sit back; they were going to be actively involved. And we know that it was successful. We know it because the Government Accountability Office looked at the connection between police officers and the reduction in crime and found a correlation. We know the University of Nebraska looked at a very similar thing and said, with all the varying elements that go into reducing crime, was the fact that there are over 110,000 new police officers on the street

funded by the COPS program a correlative effect? And the answer was yes.

We are also here for another reason. We are here because crime has started to creep back up. We are starting to see index crimes in cities around the country start to rise again. After years of decline, we are seeing it go up. And we are also here because there is even more law enforcement burden being put on localities and States than arguably any time in American history. Tom Ridge once famously said that homeland security starts in our hometown. And when we were talking about the cuts that were being made to homeland security, we were reminded that actually it is the localities that we are asking to do more and more of these things.

So we are here in acknowledgement that localities need the help. Localities now have to do more than they ever had to do before, and that's why in this program for the first time we are funding T–COPS, cops that are going to be hired to do antiterrorism work.

But particularly the reason that we're here is a third reason, that my colleagues on that side of the aisle eliminated the hiring component. President Bush eliminated the hiring component. This is a visual about how many police officers were hired under the COPS program from 1995 to 2005. This is what has happened under President Bush and under our Republican leadership. This many police officers. Zero. Zero. Zero in Virginia. Zero in South Dakota. Zero in California. The program was eliminated under my Republican friends. And as they stand up here today, and you're going to see them vote in large numbers for this program, they're going to wrap themselves around the idea that they support the COPS program when in fact overwhelmingly it was quite the opposite.

Let me show you the abandonment that's going on in the COPS program. This is the number of cops that were hired in 1998. Look at the decline. Look at how many were hired in 2005 and 2006. So the third reason we are here is we are taking up the gauntlet that was, frankly, laid down, put in a box and sealed away by my Republican friends. They said, you know what? Law enforcement is not a local job, it's a national job, we heard in committee. We heard, oh, the program hasn't worked the way it was intended. The fact of the matter is, had it not been for the Democrats taking over this body, had it not been for the chairmanship of Mr. CONYERS, this program would be zeroed out this year, too. You know how I know? Because we've had many years where those of us have stood up trying to change this where we were rebuffed again and again.

Now, I can't say all of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle. We've got many, including the gentleman from Florida (Mr. KELLER) who is an original sponsor of this. But it is stunning to me that anyone can stand up and say that they support this program after supporting this.

In conclusion, I want to thank the chairman and my colleagues for passing this. We're going to ask for a recorded vote, and we're going to watch the large number of folks who helped write bills to zero out the COPS program suddenly embrace the idea that we have to put cops on the street. And I welcome my friends on the other side of the aisle to the cause of providing help for local law enforcement.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today at long last.

Under new Democratic leadership, the Congress will take up my bill, H.R. 1700, to bring the COPS program back from the scrap heap, back from a point where the program's hiring component has been zeroed out, and restore it to be what it proved to be during the Clinton administration: one of the most successful law enforcement programs in the history of the United States.

We are facing a rise in crime in the United States. In a survey of cities large and small, released last month, the Police Executive Research Board found that 71 percent of cities had seen an increase in homicides, 80 percent had seen an increase in robberies, and 67 percent had seen an increase in assaults with guns. Moreover the FBI recently reported that nationwide figures showed that last year, homicides, assaults and other violent offenses grew by 4 percent, and robberies, which are often interpreted as a precursor to more serious crime, jumped by 10 percent.

Democrats faced a similar challenge in 1993 when asked about the rise in drug-fueled street crime.

Then, Democrats, led by Bill Clinton, answered with the most far reaching and innovative Federal anti-crime initiative ever—the COPS program. It did the most intuitive thing—it hired more than 100,000 beat cops. It worked. It put police in every neighborhood, town and city. Sure, big cities like Chicago and L.A. hired officers with Federal help. But so did small towns like Marengo, IL, and Plano, TX.

Now, as crime rises and we work to combat the new challenges our country faces in the wake of 9/11 the COPS program is again the solution.

The background is this. The COPS program works. A study by the nonpartisan Government Accountability Office recently stated, "COPS-funded increases in sworn officers per capita were associated with declines in rates of total index crimes, violent crimes, and property crime." According to the study, between 1998 and 2000, COPS hiring grants were responsible for reducing crimes by about 200,000 to 225,000 crimes—one third of which were violent. Studies done by the Brookings Institution, the University of Nebraska, Yale and Georgetown Universities, the University of Maryland, and the Urban Institute—among others—found similarly that COPS works.

When John Ashcroft spoke about this during his confirmation hearings for Attorney General, he said, "Let me just say, I think the COPS program has been successful. The purpose of the COPS program was to demonstrate to local police departments that if you put additional police, feet on the street, that crime would be affected and people would be safer and more secure. We believe the COPS program demonstrated that conclusively." That is John Ashcroft.

When Tom Ridge was sworn in as the Secretary of Homeland Security, he said homeland security starts in our home towns.

Over the course of the last 5 years, local law enforcement has become deeply involved in homeland security. Big cities have been forced to upgrade not only their equipment and training but also the type of personnel they hire. Some cities have hired officers exclusively to focus on homeland security—police who work to gather intelligence, analyze terror threats, and monitor our most vulnerable targets.

And how have Republicans in Washington responded since coming to office? They have eliminated the program police departments big and small had grown to depend on: COPS Funded at over $1 billion a year at the end of the Clinton administration, President Bush has zeroed out the hiring component of what some believe to have been the most successful law enforcement program in the Nation's history.

The bill we are considering today would restore the COPS program and update to the challenges local law enforcement agencies face in the post 9/11 world.

This bill breathes new life into the COPS program by authorizing $600 million per year for hiring grants, which could fund up to 50,000 new cops on the beat over the next 6 years. And in an effort to make sure that police departments around the country can use this funding as they need—as terrorism becomes a greater burden on their limited budgets—this bill explicitly enables COPS to provide funding for officers who perform "intelligence, anti-terror, or homeland security duties."

The bill also authorizes $350 million per year for COPS technology grants. These grants will allow police agencies to purchase things like laptop computers for patrol cars, crime mapping software, and interoperable communications equipment.

And the bill explicitly enables COPS to use funding for "Troops to Cops" programs that help returning veterans find employment as law enforcement officers.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, Mr. CONYERS, the chairman of the Crime Subcommittee, Mr. SCOTT, and the Democratic leadership for bring this bill expeditiously to the floor for passage.

I also want to thank Joshua Fay-Hurvitz, Bobby Vassar, Greg Barnes, Mike Volkov, Caroline Lynch, Karas Pattison, Molly Lothamer, and other members of the Democratic, Republican, and Legislative Counsel staffs who have worked so hard to make this day possible.

I urge passage of the COPS Improvement Act.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Over and over again we hear on the floor, we hear outside this body the importance of coming together in a bipartisan manner and what we can do to resolve issues for the American people. The unfortunate thing is when we try to do that, as we have done in this bill and we bring this bill in a bipartisan manner, sometimes my friends on the other side of the aisle simply can't take yes for an answer. And when we hear presentations like we just have, Mr. Speaker, I feel it is incumbent

upon me to stand up and just correct some of those facts.

The first thing is that the COPS program has been authorized in the 2005 Department of Justice authorization bill through 2009 for $1.047 billion. All this authorization will do is increase that to $1.15 billion through 2013.

In addition, when you see these lines that drop off with the number of cops that are being hired, one of the things that we have heard from the testimony that we've had is twofold. One of the reasons that we had declines in the crime rate was not just because of the numbers of police officers, but more importantly, not just because we sent money, but because throughout the 1990s we had a lot of policies from Republican legislators across the States that did things like abolish parole, that did things like mandatory sentences, that did things like truth-in-sentencing that took criminals off the streets and out of our communities. And it doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out if we do that, we reduce violent crime.

The other thing that we heard testimony on is that in New Orleans, when we went to do hearings there, the number of police officers increased and the crime increased. And in New York, the number of police officers decreased and the crime decreased. By the rationale we just heard, one would argue we should have less police officers.

But the testimony was, Mr. Speaker, we do need police officers on the streets. That's why we brought this bill in a bipartisan manner. But it is important that we have smart policing, that we have comprehensive programs. Because if we just dump money at the problem and we don't do that, we're not going to solve the problems that are before us.

Mr. Speaker, fortunately there were members from the Judiciary Committee that worked in a bipartisan manner to bring this bill to the floor. I hope we will pass it.

Mr. CONYERS. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. FORBES. I yield to the gentleman from Michigan.

Mr. CONYERS. I would like to play good cop in this because I want to commend those Republicans who are going to vote for this measure for joining us. Look, it doesn't matter when you come on board. It's that your thoughtfulness in helping us craft a bipartisan bill was exceedingly important, and I personally am indebted to you for that.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Chairman, we certainly thank you for your cooperativeness and support in reaching what we think is a much better bill by the time that it reached the floor than when it started.

Mr. CONYERS. Thank you.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, I now yield 2½ minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. KELLER).

Mr. KELLER of Florida. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to be the lead Republican original cosponsor of this legislation which will reauthorize the COPS program and put 50,000 more cops on our streets.

The COPS program is responsible for putting nearly 120,000 cops on the streets nationwide, including 774 cops in central Florida.

Violent crime is on the rise, and we need this legislation now more than ever. For example, in my hometown of Orlando, Florida, the murder rate is up 122 percent. I recently met with all of central Florida's chiefs of police and sheriffs, and 100 percent of them support the COPS program. This legislation is also endorsed by the National Sheriffs Association and the International Association of Chiefs of Police.

Is the COPS program successful? Absolutely. Former Attorney General John Ashcroft described the COPS program as a ''miraculous sort of success.'' A 2005 GAO study concluded that the COPS program successfully played a role in the decline in violent crime in the 1990s. And more than 95 percent of law enforcement officers hired by a COPS grant are still on the street today.

Now, some might say that putting cops on the street is not a priority worth funding with Federal dollars. Well, I would rather put cops on the street than build bridges to nowhere or give subsidies to spinach growers. Let's be practical. There are children in Orlando, Florida, growing up in neighborhoods where 49 people were killed last year. Those kids want to be able to walk home from school safely and play in their neighborhoods without fear. These kids don't care if the cops' salary is paid for with purely local funds or a mixture of local and Federal funds. They just want to feel safe.

This legislation is a step in the right direction. I want to thank the cosponsor of this legislation, Congressman ANTHONY WEINER, for his leadership and strong support of the COPS program. He and I worked together earlier to get $70 million added in the supplemental.

Some have said that some Republicans are new to this. I can assure you that I've been an original cosponsor of this bill ever since I got here to Congress. If I can quote L.L. Cool Jay, the rapper: ''Don't call it a comeback; I've been here for years.''

This COPS legislation was approved by the Judiciary Committee by a full voice vote and is worthy of our bipartisan support. I ask my colleagues to vote ''yes'' on H.R. 1700.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON has supported this bill from its inception, and so I recognize the gentlelady from Dallas, Texas, for 1 minute.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, let me thank the chairman of the committee.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the COPS Improvements Act of 2007.

As violent crime continues to rise, we must address the needs of our Nation's law enforcement professionals. Law enforcement presence remains one of the greatest assets against crime. I have witnessed firsthand the importance of this program where our community cops simply work with our young people, help to break up gangs, helping them with tutoring in the evening when they are on duty in those communities. So in addition to this bill just allowing the 50,000 cops to be hired, it also allows for the increase in funding to improve technology for our police agencies. And it may be used to update police stations and cars for providing the latest technology in crime fighting.

I am delighted to see that it is being considered, and I strongly support and recommend the approval.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Ohio (Mr. LATOURETTE).

(Mr. LATOURETTE asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LATOURETTE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the COPS Improvements Act of 2007. I want to congratulate Chairman CONYERS, Mr. WEINER and Mr. KELLER for bringing this bill forward.

My written statement talks all about the importance of adding a police officer school, resources officers and things of that nature. I want to talk about an aspect of the bill that I am particularly excited about, and that is the technology grants contained in the bill.

The police departments in my district were recently notified that the backbone radio system that we basically spent millions of dollars on a number of years ago is now going to become obsolete in 2011 because the manufacturer is no longer going to make the spare parts. In the small communities that I represent, it means a bill of $10 million. The technology upgrades in this particular piece of legislation are going to give my communities the opportunity to bid for grants that hopefully will replace that radio system and make our community safer.

Secondly, in the wake of the Virginia Tech shootings, I have heard from most of the school districts in my district that we need to build on the success of the last COPS bill where 225 school resource officers were added to the schools in the State of Ohio. And they are excited again about the opportunity to add new school resource officers in the schools to make them safer for all of the students in our school system and across the country.

So again I want to congratulate the sponsors of this legislation. And I thank Mr. FORBES for yielding.

I rise today to speak in support of the COPS Improvement Act of 2007.

Mr. Speaker, when I meet with law enforcement officials across my district, their biggest concern is that Washington keeps asking them to do more with less, especially in the aftermath of 9–11. Each year, they beg me to adequately fund the COPS program and to reinstate the hiring portion.

In my State of Ohio, the COPS program has been a godsend:

It has funded nearly 3,800 additional cops and deputies.

It has infused about 640 departments across Ohio with more than $227 million in Federal help.

More than 225 school resource officers have been added to Ohio.

More than $55 million has gone to Ohio departments to improve crime-fighting technologies.

In my district alone, in the Akron-Cleveland area, nearly $20 million has gone to local departments and 285 officers have been added to streets and schools in my district.

I met with about 50 police chiefs throughout my district early last month to tout this bill, and share the news that it was coming. They are thrilled with this legislation. Many departments in my district were able to add officers thanks to the COPS program, and they have kept them on their payrolls.

They have patiently waited for us to beef up the COPS program, especially as violent crime experiences an uptick. They want and need the Federal Government to help fund cops on the beat, new cops in schools, and they are thrilled that $350 million will be available for competitive grants to pay for laptop computers, radios, cameras, and all the technological marvels our police departments must have and can barely afford.

My police chiefs in Lake County recently found out that they have to replace their entire radio system because the manufacturer will no longer be able to repair or replace them.

My chiefs are thrilled that this bill recognizes the importance of school officers. They spoke of the need to keep schools safe, and the bond that develops with students so students can feel safe to confide in them. These school officers serve as mentors, friends and protectors—they are worth their weight in gold. It's a small investment to make.

In the days following the shootings at Virginia Tech, I heard from many school districts pleading that funding be made available for school resource officers. This bill will allow law enforcement to partner with the schools. I also heard from the Ohio School Resource Officers Association in the aftermath of Virginia Tech. They say passage of the COPS Improvement Act can't happen fast enough. The Senate passed it in March, and I am proud that the House will today.

This is great legislation. It's a good value for taxpayers. We ask our police to protect our homes, our businesses and our schools and for too long we've asked them to do it on the cheap.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased now to yield 1 minute to the chairman from Illinois, RAHM EMANUEL.

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, in 1994, when we passed the Community Policing Program that added 100,000 community police onto America's streets and also followed through with the strategy of not only getting cops on the beat, but getting gangs, guns and drugs off the street, we saw the longest and largest decline of violent crime in America's history.

After that program's success of adding 120,000 community police officers to the streets across this country, when it was ended in 2002 we saw violent crime in America begin to inch up again. Community police officers walking the beat, knowing the neighborhood and knowing their community is the linchpin of a successful anti-crime strategy.

□ 1215

I am so proud that we have a bill here representing, again, going back to a very basic approach of community policing by putting more cops on the beat, which is the success to reducing violent crime in America. We saw that rise again because this COPS Program ended. Every sheriff, police chief and mayor has asked for this program to be renewed, and I am proud we have done that to successfully once again get back to helping our communities reduce crime. In Chicago, we added 1,800 cops and we saw crime reduced in our neighborhood.

I thank the chairman from Michigan and also the gentleman from New York for their leadership in getting this bill passed.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1 minute to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PASCRELL).

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, to both sides, thanks for coming together on this critical bill. Anthony, you have done a good job, and the chairman as well.

There is nothing like the presence of a police officer. It is not only a deterrent to crime, but it is at the very heart of homeland security. That is why the British are way ahead of us. They have a bottom-up philosophy of looking at what is going wrong in the community. We cannot have a top-down.

So 117,000 police officers later, to our rear right now is going the National Peace Officers Memorial Service, and we know who is there. But we know who is here. This is critical. We pray for these police officers on the streets every day. I agree with the gentleman from Ohio, the technology is just as significant as the number of personnel we put on the street.

This administration tried to cut the FIRE Program, and they tried desperately to cut the COPS Program. It is a new day, and we started it in the sunshine.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. PRICE).

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding and I appreciate his leadership on this.

I would rise, Mr. Speaker, to say that all of us obviously support police officers on the street. But there are some legitimate concerns about this bill and others that are brought to the floor. One that I would point out on this bill is that we attempt to find some objective information about the programs that we put in place here at the Federal level.

The Office of Management and Budget has a program called Program Assessment Rating Tool which attempts to determine the effectiveness of what we do here on the floor, and their grade for this COPS Program is ''Not performing, results not demonstrated'' in the latest review.

That is not to say that we don't support cops on the street, police on the street, but it is important to appreciate that there are some legitimate concerns about the program.

Another concern I have is that one of our House rules, XIII section 3(d)(1) says that all committee reports must contain a statement citing the specific powers granted to the Congress in the Constitution to enact the law proposed by the bill or joint resolution. In fact, in this bill being brought to the floor, there is no such statement available from the committee.

So I think there are legitimate concerns, Mr. Speaker, and I ask my colleagues to review those.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY).

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1700 and the law enforcement officers that keep our neighborhoods and communities safe.

The small cities of Connecticut's Fifth District may not rival the size of those neighboring districts, but they still have the same need for vigorous community-based law enforcement. Since the COPS Program began in 1994, 265 police officers have been put on the beat in the Fifth District. This bill could put an additional 113 police officers out on the streets. One bill, this bill, could increase the law enforcement personnel by the COPS Program by 50 percent.

For the last 6 years as I sat in the Connecticut State legislature, I have watched the Federal Government walk away from its commitment to partner with States and towns to provide funding necessary to keep our communities safe. In Connecticut, our law enforcement community has been asked to do more with less. They are the pride of our community, but they have seen the cuts in action that have been imposed by this Congress.

The numbers in this bill are meaningful, Mr. Speaker. I urge all Members to support the bill. It is important for our law enforcement officers and important for the safety of our communities.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, once again I want to emphasize my support of this legislation and my support of additional police officers, but it is important that we continue to make sure we are separating the facts from some statements that are being made.

Testimony that we have received before the committee strikes a great contrast between different areas in our

country. Sending money alone, even putting cops on the streets alone, will not solve our crime problem. As we mentioned earlier, in New Orleans we had testimony that only 7 percent of the individuals arrested, and this is pre-Katrina, only 7 percent of the individuals arrested ever end up in jail, and the police officers themselves, the police chief, testified how demoralizing that was to crime fighting and police officers there.

That is why a comprehensive approach, looking at more police officers, but also such things as abolishing parole, mandatory sentencing and three-strikes legislation work to help cut down on the crime that we have.

We have also heard testimony from both sides of the aisle about the importance of technology. Many police departments are recognizing across the country that it is not just the quantity of police officers, but it is how they use them. New York came in and testified that what they have done is actually decreased the number of police officers they have, but they have used technology to do it in a smarter way, which has reduced overall crime.

Mr. Speaker, we support this legislation, but let's make sure we are not using the hyperbole, that we are using the facts. It is important to have police. It is important to have them used in a smart, effective and comprehensive manner if we are going to deal with the crime that our communities are so concerned about.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, how much time remains on both sides?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HOLDEN). The gentleman from Michigan has 5¼ minutes remaining. The gentleman from Virginia has 3 minutes remaining.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield one-quarter of a minute to the author of the bill, the gentleman from New York (Mr. WEINER).

Mr. WEINER. Mr. Speaker, I just want to clarify some of the mistakes made by the previous speaker, at least the misimpressions left.

One, technology grants cut under the previous Republican Congress; two, alternatives to incarceration cut under the previous Republican administration; three, police officers, I have already talked about, cut.

Just about all of the elements of a comprehensive package were eliminated under the leadership of your party. So if you care about reducing crime, this is a better day than it was a year ago.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. COHEN).

Mr. COHEN. I thank the chairman.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly rise in support of this bill. It is the bill that I heard most about when I campaigned.

Crime is the number one issue in Memphis, Tennessee, and I think it is the number one issue in most areas in this country. I spoke with the Afro-American Police Association, and the issue they raised to me was the COPS Program, that community policing works.

I spoke with people in the district and they knew that the COPS Program had been successful, that it worked with community policing, and they knew it had been cut by this Congress and they couldn't understand why, and I couldn't tell them. I told them I was going to come to Congress and do what I could to see that the COPS program was reimplemented, that it was funded in a proper fashion, and that it helped cut crime.

In this bill we have an opportunity to work together to bring our troops home and to support our troops because veterans from Afghanistan and Iraq will be given priorities when feasible to get these positions, to come back and render their abilities and their experience for our people rather than the people of Baghdad.

Support our troops, support the COPS Program and make our streets safer.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I am happy to yield 1 minute to the gentlelady from Oakland, California (Ms. LEE).

Ms. LEE. I want to thank the gentleman for his stellar leadership as Chair of the Judiciary Committee, and thank my colleague, Congressman WEINER from New York, for your determination to make our country safer by the introduction of this bill.

The reauthorization of the COPS Program really does come at a very important time in our entire country. As an example, COPS has provided since 1994 in my district alone $45.5 million in grants. These funds have allowed law enforcement agencies in my district to hire 552 additional police officers and 45 new school resource officers. COPS has also provided technology grants totaling $2.9 million in my district.

If passed, this bill will allow COPS to hire more necessary officers. The people of Oakland, Berkeley, Emeryville, the entire Ninth Congressional District, could see 236 new officers, $13 million in grants, 19 school resource officers and $2.8 million in technology funding over the next 6 years.

Our communities throughout the country need the COPS Program. This is about public safety and violence prevention. Community policing does work.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 1 minute.

Mr. Speaker, what has happened here today is very important in terms of developing a justice system that will operate at a very fundamental and basic level, the police level. It doesn't correct the lack of prosecution that has been raised by the gentleman from Virginia. It doesn't correct many parts of the justice system that we on the committee plan to go into. But I think there is a unanimity on both sides of the aisle for restoring a very important community program that has justified itself, and it is in that spirit that I want to commend everyone on both sides of the aisle for their important work that they have done in beginning to restore the program.

Mr. Speaker, I yield the balance of my time to the author of the bill, the gentleman from New York, ANTHONY WEINER, whose perseverance has led us to the floor here today.

Mr. WEINER. And I thank the chairman.

Mr. Speaker, I think one of the many reasons that the American people have turned the Congress over to Democrats is that we have said, like so many Americans, that we don't want to hear just more talk and rhetoric and posturing; that we want to start to actively solve the problems that people face in communities around this country. And whether it be a sheriff's department of two or three officers, or the NYPD which has some 36,000 officers, after today's vote and after it gets passed in the other body, God willing, and signed by the President, we are going to start to do what we need to do to improve homeland security, to reduce drug crime, to reduce the amount of the day-to-day challenges that people face; to hire more officers to go into schools, to get technology so officers can be out on the beat and doing it more.

This is a program that, frankly, never should have died. It is a program that I think too many of my friends on the other side just got blood in their eyes over the idea that it was offered under President Clinton, passed under President Clinton and single-handedly brought down crime during those years. That is not a good enough reason. Let us get past that kind of political haze and just realize that sometimes things are successful, even though they are the ideas of someone else.

John Ashcroft dissented on several occasions. He said, ''I think the COPS Program has been successful.'' Alberto Gonzales, someone whom I am not prone to quote very often, has said, ''The COPS Program has been beneficial.'' The Oneida County Executive, the former Mayor of Rome, says, ''This program has made a difference,'' a tiny city. John Ashcroft said when testifying before the House of Representatives, ''It has been one of the most successful programs we have ever worked with.''

This is a bipartisan success, because every once in a while around here we get it right. We design a program with a goal in mind, and in this case it was to get the Federal Government off the sidelines.

There are many in this body who hold this kind of old-fashioned federalist notion that, you know what,

protecting citizenry is something that only localities do. Well, we realize now in the post-9/11 world that has changed.

We are doing something about it, and I commend my colleagues of all stripes for finally joining that bandwagon.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, as I rise to close, I just want to say that I don't think the American people much care whether it is Republicans in charge or Democrats in charge. I think what they really care about is whether or not we are reaching across and trying to forge solutions to the problems they face. That is why I want to compliment the chairman for his bipartisan manner in which he has not only handled working on this bill, but has handled this debate on the floor today.

□ 1230

Mr. Speaker, this bill was never put on the sidelines. As I have mentioned before, the facts show in 2005 we reauthorized it through 2009 for $1.047 billion.

The key was the DOJ Office of the Inspector General and GAO reports note that thousands of hires funded by COPS never materialized as law enforcement agencies used COPS funding to cover their own budget shortfalls. In fact, they showed that $277 million were misspent funds.

Mr. Speaker, by working together in a bipartisan manner, I think we have crafted a bill that will help in a comprehensive manner continue to put police officers on the streets and continue to allow our local and State enforcement agencies to be able to use technology and smart policing to do what they want us to do, and that is to reach out to form practical solutions of how they deal with crime and the crime that is plaguing their communities.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this piece of legislation.

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to announce my support for the COPS Improvements Act of 2007. Although the COPS Act was originally introduced in 1994, its reauthorization is a clear indication of this Congress' dedication to passing legislation with the intent of securing our streets and providing for first responders, all of whom are vital to securing our Nation. The COPS Improvements Act is a post-9/11 legislation implementing a homeland security policy, specifically in the areas of terrorism preparedness, intelligence gathering, interoperability and other concerns we have in our communities across America.

The Committee on Homeland Security supports the COPS Improvements Act authorizing $600 million per year to hire officers to engage in their communities across a variety of policing duties, including counter-terrorism. The Amtrak Police Department, whose officers are on the frontlines of transportation security, will be given the resources to hire and train officers to perform intelligence, anti-terror, and other homeland security duties protecting our railroads.

The COPS Improvements Act is also applauded by the Committee on Homeland Security for authorizing $350 million per year for COPS technology grants. Among the grants established, many were dedicated to the development of interoperable communication technologies. The improvement of interoperable communications is vital to homeland security. It ensures there is communications connectivity between and among civilian authorities, local first responders, and the National Guard in the wake of a national emergency. This is a vital lesson we have painfully learned in the aftermath of emergency responders facing a lack of centralized coordination during a terrorist attack such as 9/11.

The reauthorization of the COPS legislation is important to the protection of our citizens and from domestic and foreign threats. I, and the Committee on Homeland Security, promote the COPS Improvements Act of 2007 as it is legislation that assists in protecting all Americans. But, I want to be clear—the Committee on Homeland Security should work with my colleagues in other committees to ensure these grants are used for their intended purpose and do not somehow exceed their legislative bounds. I look forward to discussing this issue further with Chairman CONYERS and others. Terrorism is an issue we at the Committee take very seriously and believe the COPS Improvements Act can serve a vital role in reducing and responding to a possible terrorist event.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, as our Nation commemorates National Police Week this week and the 26th Annual National Peace Officers' Memorial Day today (May 15), let us honor the memory of those who have fallen in the line of duty and thank those who carry on their legacy, serving in communities across this Nation, keeping the peace, and protecting the American people.

It is altogether fitting that today—with thousands of peace officers in Washington to commemorate these events—the Members of this House will consider this very important bipartisan legislation, the COPS Improvements Act of 2007.

Mr. Speaker, when we pass this bill, the new Democratic Majority in this House will again demonstrate its absolute commitment to taking decisive action that protects our communities and combats crime.

In short, this legislation reauthorizes the highly successful Community Oriented Policing Services Program, or COPS, which was enacted in 1994 under the Clinton Administration and which helped local law enforcement agencies hire 117,000 additional officers between 1995 and 2005—including 908 officers in Maryland's Fifth Congressional District.

In fact, the COPS hiring program—with its emphasis on getting more cops on the beat—is credited with reducing the crime rate.

The nonpartisan General Accountability Office, for example, concluded in one study (and I quote): "COPS-funded increases in sworn officers per capita were associated with declines in rates of total index crimes, violent crimes and property crime."

Unfortunately, however, the former House Majority sharply reduced the funding for the universal hiring program under COPS in recent years—from more than $1 billion a year in the late 1990s, to $10 million in 2005, to the complete elimination of hiring grants in 2006.

Mr. Speaker, let's put these figures in perspective. One billion dollars a years for COPS hiring grants is not an insubstantial sum. But today, in Iraq, our Nation is spending approximately $10 billion a month—or $2.5 billion a week.

House Democrats believe it is imperative to reinvigorate the successful COPS program. And thus, this legislation calls for putting 50,000 additional police officers on the streets over the next 6 years by authorizing $600 million a year for COPS hiring grants.

Furthermore, this bill authorizes $350 million a year for COPS technology grants, and $200 million a year for hiring community prosecutors.

Mr. Speaker, today, through this bipartisan legislation, this House will demonstrate that it is committed to protecting and strengthening America's communities.

We will demonstrate that the Federal Government is a committed partner in protecting Americans not only from the threat posed by international terrorism, but also from the dangers posed by domestic crime.

I urge my colleagues: Support the COPS Improvements Act.

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Speaker, today, the House of Representatives is doing the right thing for our Nation's police and first responders by passing the COPS Improvements Act. This bill will improve the safety of communities across our Nation, and will help to reverse the damaging budget cuts that our first responders have suffered in the past 7 years.

In 1994, President Clinton's COPS program changed the way law enforcement in this country operates, by giving local departments the resources to fight crime and put 100,000 new law enforcement officers on the streets. The COPS program helped transform our major cities, and gave rural police and sheriffs the resources needed to fight the growing problems of drugs and violence.

As a former law enforcement officer, I know how important the COPS program has been to local communities. Its federal-to-local structure puts resources where they are needed: cops on the front lines.

As co-chair of the Congressional Law Enforcement Caucus, I work with law enforcement professionals from around the country, and they are unanimous in their verdict: COPS is a program that works.

Unfortunately, the current administration disagrees with the approach that was so successful in reducing crime during the Clinton years. The administration has repeatedly attempted to cut and gut the program, in spite of repeated endorsements from every major law enforcement organization and the proven success of COPS in reducing crime. Under the Republican Congress, COPS funding was reduced from its Clinton-era high of $1.42 billion to less than $500 million in 2006, a cut of two-thirds.

These cuts had a severe impact on local departments in my district and in districts around the country. Attempts to keep officers on the street, protect our schools, fight drugs and improve our homeland security were all undermined. Republicans in Congress and the Bush administration have been full of rhetoric about the heroism of local first responders and the importance of fighting terrorism, but the budget numbers tell a different story: for the Republican Congress, local cops simply were not a priority.

Now we have a chance to set things right. The law enforcement community has a tremendous need for this legislation to be enacted and fully funded. Experts have said that it may cost as much as $18 billion to fully upgrade our first responders to interoperable

communications; this bill will provide money for technology grants to help close that gap. News reports show that the violent crime rate has begun to rise again in our cities; this bill will help local departments deploy more officers to fight violence and make our streets safe.

The COPS Improvements Act represents our commitment to listen to our local police departments and give them the resources they need to do their job. I am proud to support this bill, and I urge the President to sign it into law, so that our law enforcement officers can again receive the support and assistance they deserve to keep us and America safe.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1700, the COPS Improvement Act. The COPS hiring program has been an unqualified success. Since the program first began in 1994, we have seen crime rates plummet throughout the country.

There are many factors one can point to for this drop in crime, but the most obvious one is that the COPS hiring program has given our local governments over $9 billion to hire over 117,000 police officers.

Law enforcement agencies in my district, New York's 17th, have received $625,984,137 in COPS grants since 1994. This funding has translated into 6,997 additional law enforcement officers in my district. Unfortunately, Republicans ended the COPS hiring program last year. A likely result of this, is that crime rates are inching upward.

It is essential that we stay vigilant in our fight against crime by passing the COPS Improvement Act. When this bill passes, law enforcement agencies across the country will be able to add over 50,000 police officers to our streets. In my district, we will gain $190,978,211 in funding and 2,991 more police officers.

But the COPS program is not just about the number of police officers; it is also about giving police officers the tools they need. Since 1994, $26,678,080 in COPS grants have been awarded to law enforcement agencies in the 17th District of New York to purchase technology that enables agencies to put more officers on the beat. This translates into more bulletproof vests and mobile computers.

If the COPS Improvement Act of 2007 passes into law, an additional $8,139,075 in technology grants will likely flow to the 17th District of New York.

Mr. Speaker, I join the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the National Sheriffs Association, the Fraternal Order of Police, the National Association of Police Organizations, the U.S. Conference of Mayors, and the National League of Cities in urging my colleagues to pass the COPS Improvement Act of 2007.

Mr. RAMSTAD. Mr. Speaker, as co-chair of the Congressional Law Enforcement Caucus and proud cosponsor of H.R. 1700, the COPS Improvement Act, I rise to urge my colleagues to support this important legislation.

Since its creation in the 1994 Crime Bill, the COPS program has been a key component of the Federal effort to keep our communities safe. The program has been widely hailed as a success. It has supported the hiring of over 100,000 officers and contributed to a nationwide decrease in violent crime in the 1990s.

H.R. 1700 makes several improvements to the program to increase public safety across the country. It reauthorizes the COPS hiring program to help put 50,000 new police on the beat in our communities, provides $350 million a year for State and local agencies to develop new technologies for crime prevention and police training and provides $200 million a year for community-based prosecution programs.

In my home state of Minnesota, I've seen, firsthand, the importance of the COPS program to local police in reducing crime and improving public safety.

The COPS program has been an invaluable resource to state and local law enforcement agencies for hiring, technology and school safety grants, and has been critical to providing personnel, equipment, training and technical assistance in the war on drugs and homeland security.

We must never forget our cops are on the front lines—in the war on crime, fighting drug dealers and protecting our homeland.

As Chris Matthews of MSNBC said after the attacks of September 11: ''Before the attacks on our homeland, America's heroes were the rich and famous. Since Sept. 11, America's heroes are the cops and firefighters. And that's good for America.''

Today, America's heroes are counting on us. Congress owes it to these brave men and women who put their lives on the line every day they put on the badge. Our nation's law enforcement officers need all the tools Congress can provide. It's time to honor the sacrifices made by our Nation's law enforcement community and give our Nation's finest the support they need.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, as a proud co-sponsor I rise in strong support of H.R. 1700, the COPS Improvement Act of 2007, introduced by my colleague Mr. WEINER. This act would amend the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968, expanding the ability of the Attorney General to make grants for the COPS ON THE BEAT program. This important program provides for public safety and community policing activities, and it very simply puts more cops on the streets.

This legislation would bring much needed relief to our brave and overworked law enforcement officers, who are on the front line of the war against crime. At a minimum, the passage of this legislation would bring 374 additional police officers to reinforce the streets of the 18th congressional district of Texas, which I proudly represent. These 374 cops would be supported by a much needed funding increase of $17,346,456, as well as an additional $2,753,784 in technology grants to law enforcement agencies in my district. The 18th congressional district is only one of hundreds of communities across the nation that will enjoy greater security, safety, and stability as a result of this important legislation.

During the 1990s, the crime rates for all categories of crime in the United States fell dramatically and almost continuously, with homicide rates plunging 43 percent to reach their lowest level in 35 years in 2001. Unfortunately, after this sustained drop across all geographic areas and population groups, crime rates have once again begun to rise. In particular, 2005 marked the greatest increase in violent crime in 14 years. This increase in crime, not coincidentally, corresponds with cuts to the funding of the COPS program by the GOP-led Congress.

This is not acceptable. As part of the New Direction for America ushered in by this Democratic Congress, we are committed to ensuring that Americans can enjoy real security within our Nation's borders. We are committed to guaranteeing that our country's communities, like my own 18th district, have police forces that are adequately staffed, equipped, and funded. We are committed to reinvigorating programs, like COPS, that have proven highly successful in the past.

Mr. Speaker, an increase in crime mandates an increase in the number of police. Since 1995, the COPS office has awarded over $11.4 billion to over 13,000 state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies throughout the United States. These funds allow agencies to hire and train law enforcement officers to participate in community policing, to purchase and deploy new crime-fighting technologies, and to develop and test new and innovative policing strategies.

Despite the demonstrated success of the COPS program in reducing crime rates, the current administration has targeted its funding. This would jeopardize the marked headway this program has made into creating and maintaining safe communities nationwide. H.R. 1700 provides an opportunity to reverse this harmful process, and, as a result, enjoys the support of numerous law enforcement organizations, including Fraternal Order of Police, National Association of Police Organizations and the National Sheriffs' Association.

This bill allows us to build upon a program that has already proven successful by expanding the mission and increasing the prospects for grants under the COPS program. It allows us to both protect America's communities from increasing violent crime, and to provide adequate resources for those whom we entrust with guarding our safety.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly support this legislation because I believe the work of our State, local, and tribal law enforcement officials to be crucial to the security of our communities and our Nation. I believe that the program's record is clear, and the evidence shows that more cops equals less crime. I strongly urge my colleagues to join me in support this legislation.

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 1700, the COPS Improvement Act of 2007. I would like to thank the chief sponsors of this legislation, Congressmen WEINER and KELLER, for their efforts in bringing this bipartisan bill to the floor today.

Congress created the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program as part of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 (Public Law 103–322). Administered by the U.S. Department of Justice, the COPS program awards grants to state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies to hire and train community policing personnel, implement new technologies to combat crime, and develop new policing techniques.

Since its establishment, the COPS program has been widely hailed as a success. It most notably has supported the hiring of over 120,000 additional police officers and helped contribute to a nationwide decrease in the rate of violent crime. In Hawaii alone, COPS grants have helped to hire 522 additional police officers and sheriffs and placed 18 new resource

officers in primary and secondary schools throughout the islands.

Yet funding for this successful program has become a yearly Congressional battle. President Bush's latest FY 2008 budget request seeks to cut funding for the COPS program by 50 percent, which is actually an improvement from previous years in which program funding was simply zeroed out.

In justifying the COPS program funding cut, the administration has often cited the need to refocus our energies on homeland security issues. However, our State and local law enforcement agencies play an increasingly significant role in homeland security through their already established roles in local crime prevention and investigation. It is not unreasonable to suggest that State and local law enforcement entities are among our first lines of defense in keeping our homeland secure. To that end, it is the responsibility of this Congress to continue to support and strengthen the COPS program.

H.R. 1700 is an affirmative step in this direction, as it would authorize $1.15 billion each year in years 2008 through 2013 for the COPS program. This is a 10 percent or $103 million increase from the amounts authorized in current law. Of that amount, $600 million would be allocated each year for the hiring of additional law enforcement officers. It is estimated that this amount will translate into at least 50,000 new police officers on our streets. H.R. 1700 would also allow for up to $350 million annually for grant programs that improve crime-fighting technologies and up to $200 million each year to assist district attorneys in hiring prosecutors.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of H.R. 1700, as it supports the work of law enforcement officers across our Nation. I would also like to extend a heartfelt mahalo (thank you) to our State and local law enforcement officers who serve our Nation with distinction and aloha.

Mr. FARR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 1700, COPS Improvement Act of 2007. Since 1994 the COPS program has allowed local law enforcement agencies to hire an additional 117,000 officers. It is unconscionable that over the past several years, the Republican-led Congress has repeatedly cut the COPS program and eventually eliminated all funding in the 2006 budget.

I'm proud that my district has benefited significantly from the COPS program. In fact, in 1996 President Clinton came to the City of Salinas, CA, to commend Mayor Caballero and Salinas law enforcement officials on a successful community policing program. In addition, Salinas was awarded one of a handful of COPS grants for tracking weapons. These tools enabled the City of Salinas to reduce gang violence. As funding for the COPS program dried up, gang violence in Salinas spiked and in 2005 there were 24 homicides. This time, on its own dime, the City of Salinas and the County of Monterey have busted their budgets to implement a community policing gang task force. Reauthorization of the COPS program, with full funding, will enable Salinas and other communities all across the country to again implement effective community policing programs to combat crime.

Reauthorization of the COPS program should not be a partisan issue. After all, all crime is local. Community policing is effective because it addresses crime at the local level. H.R. 1700 will allow for the hiring of up to 50,000 new cops on the beat over the next 6 years. In addition, the bill authorizes $600 million a year for COPS hiring grants, $350 million a year for COPS technology grants, and $200 million a year for hiring community prosecutors.

I urge my colleagues to pass H.R. 1700.

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, later today we will consider reauthorizing the COPS program for another 6 years. It is fitting that the House will take up this bill during National Police Week. I hope our law enforcement community regards this bill and this week as recognition of our thanks for keeping us safe and protected. We appreciate their work and sacrifices immensely. Reauthorizing the COPS program is very important to our State and local law enforcement, as the program provides grants directly to them. My district has received nearly $11 million in COPS grants over the past decade and a half, and it is extremely important that this program continues. This money has helped and will help keep Hoosiers in the Ninth District safe by ensuring a greater law enforcement presence on our streets back home and combating violent crime such as meth trafficking and usage. I fully support reauthorizing COPS and thank our law enforcement for all the sacrifices they make day in and day out.

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. I am deeply disappointed that the Democratic leadership has chosen to bring up H.R. 1700, the COPS Improvement Act of 2007, under suspension. While the Committee on Judiciary reported the bill out without objection, I am concerned that the hundreds of Members not on the committee will not have any opportunity to offer any improvements to the bill.

Had I been allowed the opportunity, I would have introduced an amendment to more fairly allot grants by State. According to last year's funding statistics, small States received a disproportionate amount of funds. In fact, in some cases small States have received more funds than States more than five times their population. For instance, Alabama gets more assistance than California.

My home State, New Jersey, a densely populated State nestled between the major metropolitan centers of New York City and Philadelphia and also home to a heavily trafficked drug corridor and its own inner-cities, receives less than 2 percent of all grants.

As if this imbalance weren't bad enough, the Office Management and Budget's Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) graded COPS as "not performing: results not demonstrated." The bill authorizes $1.15 billion for this program next fiscal year and another $4.6 billion over the next 4 years. With so much taxpayer money at stake, and so few positive results demonstrated, why is the House missing this opportunity to fully consider how we might improve a program that is failing despite its good intentions?

The people of New Jersey watch a disproportionate share of their Federal taxes go to Washington to carry out this unproven program in other States. And for these reasons, I regret that I simply could not support this bill on the floor today.

Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support H.R. 1700, the COPS Improvements Act.

This program, begun under President Clinton, has invested over $12 billion to add officers to the Nation's streets and schools, enhance crime-fighting technology, support crime prevention initiatives, provide training and technical assistance, administer grant programs, and advance community policing. Since President Bush has taken office, he has done everything he could to cut or eliminate funding for this worthwhile program.

In the Third District of Florida alone, over $89,420,196 in COPS grants were awarded to law enforcement agencies: COPS grants have funded 1,192 additional police officers and sheriffs deputies to engage in community policing activities, including crime prevention, in the 3rd District; 24 local and State law enforcement agencies in the 3rd District have directly benefited from funding made available through the COPS Office; $6,187,466 has been awarded to add 52 school resources officers to improve safety for students, teachers, and administrators in primary and secondary schools throughout the 3rd District; and $10,780,628 has been awarded for crime-fighting technologies. This funding has allowed officers to spend more time on the streets of the 3rd District of Florida fighting and preventing crime through timesaving technology, information-sharing systems, and improved communications equipment.

My district is not alone. The COPS program has helped districts across the Nation by reducing crime and making communities safer for residents to live their lives.

Earlier this session, I introduced a resolution urging increased funding for both the COPS program and the Weed and Seed program, which is an innovative, comprehensive, multi-agency approach to law enforcement, crime prevention, and community revitalization. Both these programs go together—community policing and community revitalization.

I am submitting for the record a letter from the city of Orlando in support of this bill.

I urge support for the COPS program, safer communities and this bill.

CITY OF ORLANDO,
Orlando, FL, May 15, 2007.

Hon. CORRINE BROWN,
U.S. Representative,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSWOMAN BROWN: I am writing on behalf of the City of Orlando to advise you of our strong support for H.R. 1700, the "COPS Improvements Act of 2007".

In 1994, Congress established the Office for Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) and, in the decade that followed, our nation experienced a significant drop in crime rates. A large part of this success was the nation's commitment to community oriented policing, particularly it's hiring component, which helped get more officers on the beat. This approach was validated by a Government Accountability Office (GAO) study of the COPS program, which stated that: "COPS-funded increases in sworn officers per capita were associated with declines in the rates of total index crimes, violent crimes, and property crime."

Now, after years of historically low crime rates, we are seeing a disturbing new trend—a jump in violent crimes in our City as well as in many of our nation's large and medium-sized cities. Just as the decrease in crime was directly related to an increased focus on hiring law enforcement officers at the state and local level, the more recent increase in certain crimes can be directly related to the loss of Federal funds supporting state and local law enforcement. This legislation will reinstitute the COPS program—a program we all know to be effective—and is needed now more than ever.

Specifically, this bill will establish the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services as a distinct entity within the U. S. Department of Justice and will reauthorize hiring programs for three specific purposes—community policing officers, local counterterrorism officers, and school resource officers. The bill also reauthorizes funds for technology grants and community prosecutors. The COPS program and the community policing approach are, and should continue to be, an important part of our national crime-fighting strategy.

Your commitment to reducing crime and your recognition of the important role local law enforcement plays throughout the nation is commendable. Be assured that the City of Orlando will do our part in the fight against crime and, given the proper resources, we can keep Orlando one of the safest cities in the nation.

Sincerely,

BUDDY DYER,
Mayor.

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise to show my support for H.R. 1700, the COPS Reauthorization Act of 2007.

The original COPS bill, passed in 1994, enabled local law enforcement agencies to hire 117,000 additional police officers across the Nation. H.R. 1700 will establish the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services as a distinct entity within the U.S. Department of Justice and will reauthorize hiring programs for three specific purposes: community policing officers, local counterterrorism officers, and school resource officers.

School resource officers are especially important to keep schools safe and to keep children in school. About 13.7 million or 22 percent of children and youth were physically bullied in the last year and 15.7 million were teased or emotionally bullied. Bullying behavior has been linked to other forms of antisocial behavior, such as vandalism, shoplifting, skipping and dropping out of school, fighting, and the use of drugs and alcohol. Having school resource officers on campuses will help combat this growing problem.

School resource officers are also needed to combat the national gang epidemic. In Los Angeles alone during the last 5 years, there were over 23,000 verified gang related violent crimes. These include 784 homicides, nearly 12,000 felony assaults, approximately 10,000 robberies and just under 500 rapes. It is imperative to reauthorize the COPS program and get more officers on the street to stop this trend.

I am proud to support this bill and encourage all of my colleagues to vote "yes" on H.R. 1700, COPS Reauthorization Act of 2007.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 1700 the COPS Improvements Act of 2007.

Unfortunately, over the past several years funding for the hiring of additional police officers has been drastically reduced and the COPS program was basically eliminated.

The Community Oriented Policing Services Improvements Act revives the grant hiring program. These grants will allow local police departments to hire 50,000 additional police officers over the next 6 years.

I know in Houston after Hurricane Katrina we saw a significant rise in violent crime. This program will allow our local communities to hire additional police officers to protect their citizens.

This bill will also provide critical funding for technology grants and hiring community prosecutors. These are tools that our communities need to reduce our crime rates.

When the COPS program was eliminated our nation experienced a drastic increase in crime rates. By providing our law enforcement community with adequate funding and technology we will give them the ability to reduce crime rates.

I have strongly supported this program since it was first introduced during the 1990's. Today I urge my colleagues to support this critical piece of legislation today.

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, in my remarks in support of H.R. 1700, the "COPS Improvements Act of 2007," I refer to amended language in the bill that would have required COPS grant recipients participating in the "Troops-to-Cops" program to give special hiring preference to former members of the Armed Forces who served in Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. I first introduced this provision in an amendment during the Judiciary Committee markup of H.R. 1700. I withdrew that amendment with the understanding that, after working with Ranking Member LAMAR SMITH upon the committee's urging to craft mutually agreeable language, this provision was to be included in the final version of H.R. 1700.

Through what I believe to have been an inadvertent omission, the hiring preference for veterans of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom was not included in the final version of H.R. 1700 that has been presented to the full House of Representatives. It is my understanding that the language will be added either in the Senate bill or at conference and, therefore, will be contained in the bill sent to the President for his signature.

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of HR 1700, the COPS Reauthorization Act. I am proud to be a cosponsor of this important legislation that will reauthorize the Community Oriented Policing Services grant programs.

Over the first 10 years of its existence, from 1994 to 2005, the COPS hiring grant programs have helped local law enforcement agencies hire 117,000 additional police officers. As a result there have been significant drops in the crime rates across our Nation. Unfortunately the previous Congress drastically reduced and then eliminated funding for the COPS hiring grants in the 2005 and 2006 funding cycles.

H.R. 1700 will reinvigorate the COPS program by authorizing $600 million a year for hiring grants. This level of funding will help put an additional 50,000 police officers in our communities over the next 6 years. I am proud that this Congress is acting to restore funding for these hiring grants that are so critical to local law enforcement agencies across the country.

In addition, this legislation will authorize $350 million for COPS technology grants. These grants will help local law enforcement agencies buy critical technology like computers for patrol cars and crime mapping software. I have seen this type of crime mapping software at work in the city of Santa Ana, California, in my district. This technology acts as a force multiplier, allowing each officer to be more effective in fighting crime and keeping our communities safe.

H.R. 1700 also authorizes $200 million for programs that focus on hiring the community prosecutors that play a critical role in following up on police work and convicting criminals.

All of these COPS grant programs will provide critical resources to local law enforcement agencies across the country that are facing a variety of challenges including emerging and ongoing gang activity. In previous years, a COPS grant provided funding to the Santa Ana Police Department for Firearms Identification technology that can read the unique fingerprints that connect bullets and guns. The Santa Ana Police Department has been able to solve many gang-related shootings and other violent crimes by using this ballistics technology. I hope that the passage of this legislation will help ensure that law enforcement agencies across the nation benefit from the valuable COPS grant programs.

I urge my colleagues to join me in voting for H.R. 1700.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in support of H.R. 1700, the Community Oriented Policing Services Reauthorization Act, which has provided greater numbers of police officers to protect our citizens in every State in the union. My district in Oregon has benefited significantly from this program through the addition of 279 police officers and a total of over $24 million secured for local law enforcement agencies since 1994.

I find it perplexing that the administration continually attempts to reduce funding for COPS when independent studies confirm that the grants significantly contributed to the crime reduction in the late 1990s. Nationally, the strain on law enforcement has never been greater, as resources are stretched to combat the recent rise in crime while also addressing homeland security responsibilities. For this reason, I support the revitalization of this program to protect our families and give law enforcement the support they need.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1700, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

SAFE AMERICAN ROADS ACT OF 2007

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1773) to limit the authority of the Secretary of Transportation to grant authority to motor carriers domiciled in Mexico to operate beyond United States municipalities and commercial zones on the United States-Mexico border, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1773

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Safe American Roads Act of 2007''.

SEC. 2. LIMITATION ON GRANTING AUTHORITY.

The Secretary of Transportation may not grant authority to a motor carrier domiciled in Mexico to operate beyond United States municipalities and commercial zones on the United States-Mexico border, except under the pilot program authorized by this Act.

SEC. 3. PILOT PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Transportation may carry out, in accordance with section 350 of Public Law 107–87, section 31315(c) of title 49, United States Code, all Federal motor carrier safety laws and regulations, and this Act, a pilot program that grants authority to not more than 100 motor carriers domiciled in Mexico to operate beyond United States municipalities and commercial zones on the United States-Mexico border.

(b) LIMITATION ON COMMERCIAL MOTOR VEHICLES PARTICIPATING IN PILOT PROGRAM.—The number of commercial motor vehicles owned or leased by motor carriers domiciled in Mexico which may be used to participate in the pilot program shall not exceed 1,000.

(c) PILOT PROGRAM PREREQUISITES.—The Secretary may not initiate the pilot program under subsection (a) until—

(1) the Inspector General of the Department of Transportation submits to Congress and the Secretary a report—

(A) independently verifying that the Department is in compliance with each of the requirements of subsections (a) and (b) of section 350 of Public Law 107–87; and

(B) including a determination of whether the Department has established sufficient mechanisms—

(i) to apply Federal motor carrier safety laws and regulations to motor carriers domiciled in Mexico; and

(ii) to ensure compliance with such laws and regulations by motor carriers domiciled in Mexico who will be granted authority to operate beyond United States municipalities and commercial zones on the United States-Mexico border;

(2) the Secretary of Transportation—

(A) takes such action as may be necessary to address any issues raised in the report of the Inspector General under paragraph (1); and

(B) submits to Congress a detailed report describing such actions;

(3) the Secretary determines that there is a program in effect for motor carriers domiciled in the United States to be granted authority to begin operations in Mexico beyond commercial zones on the United States-Mexico border;

(4) the Secretary publishes in the Federal Register and provides sufficient opportunity for public comment on the following:

(A) a detailed description of the pilot program and the amount of funds the Secretary will need to expend to carry out the pilot program;

(B) the findings of each pre-authorization safety audit conducted, before the date of enactment of this Act, by inspectors of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration of motor carriers domiciled in Mexico and seeking to participate in the pilot program;

(C) a process by which the Secretary will be able to revoke Mexico-domiciled motor carrier operating authority under the pilot program;

(D) specific measures to be required by the Secretary to protect the health and safety of the public, including enforcement measures and penalties for noncompliance;

(E) specific measures to be required by the Secretary to enforce the requirements of section 391.11(b)(2) of title 49, Code of Federal Regulations, as in effect on the date of enactment of this Act;

(F) specific standards to be used to evaluate the pilot program and compare any change in the level of motor carrier safety as a result of the pilot program;

(G) penalties to be levied against carriers who, under the pilot program, violate section 365.501(b) of title 49, Code of Federal Regulations, as in effect on the date of enactment of this Act;

(H) a list of Federal motor carrier safety laws and regulations for which the Secretary will accept compliance with a Mexican law or regulation as the equivalent to compliance with a corresponding Federal motor carrier safety law or regulation, including commercial driver's license requirements; and

(I) for any law or regulation referred to in subparagraph (H) for which compliance with a Mexican law or regulation will be accepted, an analysis of how the requirements of the Mexican and United States laws and regulations differ; and

(5) the Secretary establishes an independent review panel under section 4 to monitor and evaluate the pilot program.

SEC. 4. INDEPENDENT REVIEW PANEL.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT OF PANEL.—The Secretary of Transportation shall establish an independent review panel to monitor and evaluate the pilot program under section 3. The panel shall be composed of 3 individuals appointed by the Secretary.

(b) DUTIES.—

(1) EVALUATION.—The independent review panel shall—

(A) evaluate any effects that the pilot program has on motor carrier safety, including an analysis of any crashes involving motor carriers participating in the pilot program and a determination of whether the pilot program has had an adverse effect on motor carrier safety; and

(B) make, in writing, recommendations to the Secretary.

(2) RECOMMENDATIONS.—If the independent review panel determines that the pilot program has had an adverse effect on motor carrier safety, the panel shall recommend, in writing, to the Secretary—

(A) such modifications to the pilot program as the panel determines are necessary to address such adverse effect; or

(B) termination of the pilot program.

(c) RESPONSE.—Not later than 5 days after the date of a written determination of the independent review panel that the pilot program has had an adverse effect on motor carrier safety, the Secretary shall take such action as may be necessary to address such adverse effect or terminate the pilot program.

SEC. 5. INSPECTOR GENERAL REVIEW.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Inspector General of the Department of Transportation—

(1) shall monitor and review the pilot program;

(2) not later than 12 months after the date of initiation of the pilot program, shall submit to Congress and the Secretary of Transportation a 12-month interim report on the Inspector General's findings regarding the pilot program; and

(3) not later than 18 months after the date of initiation of the pilot program, shall submit to Congress and the Secretary an 18-month interim report with the Inspector General's findings regarding the pilot program.

(b) SAFETY DETERMINATIONS.—The interim reports submitted under subsection (a) shall include the determination of the Inspector General of—

(1) whether the Secretary has established sufficient mechanisms to determine whether the pilot program is having any adverse effects on motor carrier safety;

(2) whether the Secretary is taking sufficient action to ensure that motor carriers domiciled in Mexico and participating in the pilot program are in compliance with all Federal motor carrier safety laws and regulations and section 350 of Public Law 107–87; and

(3) the sufficiency of monitoring and enforcement activities by the Secretary and States to ensure compliance with such laws and regulations by such carriers.

(c) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 60 days after the date of submission of the 18-month interim report of the Inspector General under this section, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on—

(1) the actions the Secretary is taking to address any motor carrier safety issues raised in one or both of the interim reports of the Inspector General;

(2) evaluation of the Secretary whether granting authority to additional motor carriers domiciled in Mexico to operate beyond United States municipalities and commercial zones on the United States-Mexico border would have any adverse effects on motor carrier safety;

(3) modifications to Federal motor carrier safety laws and regulations or special procedures that the Secretary determines are necessary to enhance the safety of operations of motor carriers domiciled in Mexico in the United States; and

(4) any recommendations for legislation to make the pilot program permanent or to expand operations of motor carriers domiciled in Mexico in the United States beyond municipalities and commercial zones on the United States-Mexico border.

SEC. 6. DURATION OF PILOT PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Transportation may carry out the pilot program under this Act for a period not to exceed 3 years; except that, if the Secretary does not comply with any provision of this Act, the authority of the Secretary to carry out the pilot program terminates.

(b) FINAL REPORT.—Not later than 60 days after the last day of the pilot program, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a final report on the pilot program.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) and the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 1773.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, we have before us very important legislation. It is bad enough that NAFTA has caused the United States to hemorrhage more than 1 million jobs; but now the administration with the NAFTA trucks proposal would add insult to injury. Not only would it put in jeopardy more American jobs, those of American truck drivers, but it would also jeopardize the safety of the traveling public on America's highways.

I want to congratulate Representative BOYDa for bringing such an important issue to the Congress so early in her congressional career and Representative HUNTER on the other side of the aisle for his contributions to this issue and to this legislation.

We have here what is called a SAP. It is a statement of administration policy. They take us for saps if they believe we will believe the information they have conveyed to us in this letter.

They say that the safety standards, including hours of service, driver medical standards, financial responsibility, and drug and alcohol testing, will all be remedied by their program. There is and are no hours of service regulations in Mexico. We have heard anecdotal evidence from Mexican truck drivers that they are often forced, as they are exploited down there working for relatively low wages compared to truck drivers in the U.S., to drive for 48 to 72 hours at a stretch. How do they do that? They laugh and they say ''dust.'' What is dust? Drugs, uppers. They are commonly used in Mexico. There are no meaningful hours of service regulation. There is no drug testing in Mexico, and illegal substances are frequently used for these extended trips.

But the administration would have us believe that by signing a piece of paper and waving a magic wand and having in place paper provisions on drug and alcohol testing or hours of service, that these things will happen meaningfully. Suddenly, there will be a tremendous change in the culture of the American trucking industry.

They go on to say there will be an in-depth safety inspection before they are allowed to operate in the United States. Well, that is interesting because in testimony before my committee recently, the administration admitted that when a new bus carrier, and we are having a problem with illegally run bus service, what is called ''curb service'' here in the Northeast, it takes them up to 18 months to get out and certify that company actually exists and look at the papers in a filing cabinet. They never go out and look at the buses. Never.

We have the same thing going on with the American trucking industry. Only a tiny fraction of trucks are inspected on an annual basis. But somehow, magically, an agency that is totally overwhelmed by the volume of traffic is going to inspect each and every truck meaningfully in Mexico, inspect the credentials of the Mexican truck drivers in depth, certify the nonexistent drug testing programs, and certify tracking of the nonexistent hours of service in Mexico. And then they say that this will all be made available to the American public.

Here is the form in which it is made available. It is right here in the Federal Register. They are saying we are requiring publication, and they say it would be redundant to have all of the safety audits in detail published in the Federal Register because they put up this page. It has a date. That is good. That is a good start. It is up for 7 days, by the way.

And in order to access this page, you have to know the MX docket number. You have to know the particular docket number of that Mexican carrier. You have to know specifics to get nonspecific information that will only be posted for 7 days. And if you get through that maze and you happen to hit the 7-day window, because it goes down after 7 days, I guess they don't have enough memory capacity down there at DOT to leave it up longer for the public to review to, you get this, a form that has the applicant information, business address, and status. Quote: ''Provisional authority issued.''

That is the in-depth information that FMCSA is going to put up for the American public to review to understand that these audits are being conducted and these carriers are safe.

We need this legislation so we can be assured that we are protecting the safety of the American public.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to voice my support for H.R. 1773, the Safe American Roads Act of 2007, which passed the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee by unanimous vote, 100 percent support by both Democrats and Republicans.

In order to comply with NAFTA, the Department of Transportation has taken steps to fully open the Mexican border to truck traffic. To start this process, DOT has announced a cross-border demonstration program. The bill we are considering today specifies requirements that DOT must meet when implementing this program.

But compliance with NAFTA does not mean we have to or even that we should open the border without any scrutiny of the process. It is a priority for our committee and for this Congress to stay engaged on this issue and ensure that the border opening for trucks is handled properly with the safety of American motorists as our top priority.

A major theme of the bill we are considering today is constant review of the program as it is implemented by the Department of Transportation.

The bill requires DOT to ensure the trucks crossing into the U.S. not only understand our safety regulations for motor carriers, but that they are fully compliant with them as well. This bill also requires DOT to maintain an active review of the demonstration project. DOT must respond to the Inspector General's periodic reviews and provide comments and suggestions to make the program better. And when we mean better, we mean safer.

I want to say that this bill is an excellent example of bipartisanship. Concern over Mexican trucks does not fall on one side of the aisle or the other. Many Republicans and Democrats both feel strongly about this issue. It impacts the entire country.

Two bills were recently introduced that address this issue, one by our colleague, Mrs. BOYDA from Kansas, and one by Mr. HUNTER from California, on which I was an original cosponsor. While Mrs. BOYDA's bill is the base bill and we certainly want to commend her, the bill we are considering today has many aspects from Mr. HUNTER's bill as well, combined together to create the bill we are voting on today. I believe H.R. 1773 was made stronger by taking the best attributes from both the Boyda bill and the Hunter bill.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, we need reciprocity. I said at a hearing on this legislation that we should not approve more Mexican trucking companies than American trucking companies that are approved to go into Mexico. We need reciprocity, and we need fairness for American trucking companies and American workers. Again, though, I will voice my support for this bill, H.R. 1773, and I urge my colleagues to support it as well.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON).

(Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Chairman OBERSTAR and the subcommittee Chair, Mr. DEFAZIO, and the ranking member, Mr. DUNCAN. I am very pleased to join them in support of this bill.

As you know, Texas shares a longer border with Mexico than any other border State. In 2004, at Texas border ports of entry, there were 3 million commercial crossings.

The safety and congestion impacts of this pilot program will be felt the most by Texas drivers, roads and businesses. The impact will be felt particularly by my constituents as Interstates 20, 30, 35 and 45 all converge in the heart of my congressional district.

I agree with the chairman of the committee when he says we must not bolster trade with Mexico at the expense of the safety of American drivers. This bill requires that Federal motor carriers complete all safety inspections on the Mexican side of the border. The bill also mandates that safety can be assured before Mexican trucks enter our country under this program.

We in Congress cannot afford to be soft in our oversight of this matter. Passing a safety inspection in Mexico, even one administered by Federal motor carriers, is not a guarantee to Mexican trucks and drivers that they will have free rein over our roads.

In the event that this program proves successful, it is important for this body to give adequate guidance and assistance to border States like Texas to address the burden of increased freight traffic, including congestion, air quality, and wear and tear on our roads. The Department of Transportation cannot use Texas and other border States as guinea pigs and not give them the support they need.

In closing, I fully support this bill. It removes much of the uncertainty regarding safety that this committee found in the Department of Transportation's proposed pilot program.

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to our colleague, Mrs. MILLER

of Michigan, who has been one of the most active members of our committee on this particular legislation.

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. I appreciate the gentleman yielding time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in very strong support of H.R. 1773, the Safe American Roads Act. This legislation sets out very, very stringent, quantifiable safety standards which the Department of Transportation must meet before permitting Mexican-based trucks to operate through the United States.

Before coming to Congress, I had the pleasure of serving for 8 years as the Michigan Secretary of State with a principal responsibility of being that State's chief motor vehicle administrator. I was also the chairman of the Traffic Safety Commission of my State, and so I had the responsibility for all licensing, commercial drivers licenses as well as hazardous material endorsements. So I had immediate concerns about how the DOT pilot program might compromise the safety of our roads. Here in the United States, we have reciprocity amongst the States so we can share driving records across State lines.

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In Mexico, licensing requirements are very poor, and it's well-known that fraud in their system runs rampant. In fact, the Transportation Committee heard in testimony from the DOT's Inspector General that one in five Mexican driving records contained an error of some type. Mr. Speaker, if we had a 20 percent error rate in the United States we would consider it a crisis, and I actually believe that was a very low estimate.

There are also concerns about the insurance provisions of this program. American truckers must carry very expensive insurance policies in the event that they are in an accident. What if it happens that a Mexican truck has an accident somewhere in the United States? Good luck to the victims of that accident who will try to collect on damages from a Mexican company.

I believe that if we let these Mexican truckers into our country with questionable identification and insurance, it exposes American drivers to more dangerous conditions on our roadways.

First of all, because the Mexican drivers are allowed to work far longer hours than our truckers; and secondly, it is well-known that there's widespread drug use in this profession, as the chairman of our subcommittee has already articulated. Presently, there is no system under which secure testing could take place. In fact, it's been said that there is a not a single testing lab in Mexico to ensure that the drivers coming into our country are drug free.

The numbers I think are the easiest way to tell whether or not this proposal is a fair deal for the United States. As soon as this pilot program was announced, 800 Mexican trucking companies lined up to come into the United States. By contrast, only two American companies desired to deliver into Mexico. I think those numbers are very indicative of whether or not this is a fair agreement for the United States.

Because of all of these problems, groups like the Teamsters, as well as the Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association, also the Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety have all come out in opposition to this proposal.

Mr. Speaker, we need to ensure the program can only take place once these trucks and drivers from Mexico can meet the same standards that American trucks and drivers do. Trucks participating in the pilot program will be subject to rigorous safety inspections limited to a total of 1,000. Their drivers must also demonstrate clean driving records and have a proficiency in English.

This legislation as well would require extensive oversight and review of the pilot program from an independent review panel.

I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2½ minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER).

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman.

I thank Chairman DEFAZIO and Ranking Member DUNCAN and Chairman OBERSTAR for this creative solution to a very difficult problem.

I happen to live at the border. I represent the whole California-Mexico border. Through my district, at least 4,000 trucks a day pass through. That means across the whole border three or four, five times that will cross. The volume is enormous. There is no way for us to inspect this incredible volume of traffic. In fact, when there was a test case several years ago of inspecting all the trucks, they found 100 percent of the trucks had either insurance or safety violations.

We are dealing with issues of insurance. We are dealing with issues of truck safety. We're dealing with issues of driver certification and jobs on this side of the border. There's no question that these certifications are just not the same standards that we apply. We have fraudulent use of papers. There is enormous difficulty in getting accountability.

But, in addition, if we allow the truckers to cross they will be in this country and able to take jobs away from our local companies, especially small trucking companies. It costs them about 150 dollars to go to L.A. from San Diego and back. A Mexican trucker will do it for 50 dollars. That puts all our guys out of business if the administration proposal was allowed to go through.

So I thank the Chair for coming up with this creative solution. This is a bad, bad vision that the administration has to allow all trucks across in a way which does not really meet the safety or insurance or certification standards that we have in this country. And we're going to have a major accident somewhere, and the people in America are going to say how did this happen.

Well, we intend in Congress to make sure that we keep our safe roads and we keep our jobs for American truckers.

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO).

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the gentleman from Tennessee for yielding, and I'd like to thank the leadership on the Transportation Committee for the creative solution that you have brought back with H.R. 1773 because it places important restrictions upon the pilot program planned by the Department of Transportation to allow Mexican trucks to operate across this country.

My first concern with the pilot is its impact on the safety of our Nation's highways. This Congress gave this department specific criteria to ensure adequate safety and security measures were taken prior to allowing Mexican trucks to travel on our highways. I believe it is important that all of these criteria are met prior to the start of any pilot project on our Nation's highways.

I am also very concerned about the economic consequences of allowing Mexican trucks to operate within the United States. It is my hope that if this pilot program is indeed implemented, the Department will work closely with State and local law enforcement to ensure that the prohibition on point-to-point deliveries within the United States by Mexican trucking companies is enforced.

I am especially pleased that this bill will require a plan to enforce existing English proficiency regulations prior to the start of any pilot program. It is critical for the safety of anyone on the road that truckers are able to understand traffic and warning signs and are able to communicate with law enforcement and emergency management officials.

It is absolutely critical that we stop the Department from implementing their pilot program until we can ensure the safety of our American motorists and our American highways.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Kansas (Mrs. BOYDA), the author of the legislation, who's made an extraordinary commitment so early in her career.

Mrs. BOYDA of Kansas. Thank you, Chairman DEFAZIO. I certainly appreciate your support.

This is a tremendously huge issue in my district. People want to know that Congress is out there making our roads safe. I have two children and went back and forth on I–70 between Kansas City and St. Louis for years with two little kids. The truck traffic is amazingly dense. We spent years encouraging truck safety and spending billions of

dollars on safety and environmental standards, and it just does not make any sense to now watch that be reversed.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Transportation has unveiled a pilot program that will permit poorly regulated Mexican traffic onto American highways. In its present form, the DOT proposal exhibits reckless disregard for America's road safety, not to mention our border security and our economic interests.

Under current law, trucks registered in Mexico can drive only within a narrow border zone in the United States before cargos are transferred to an American vehicle. This system not only protects U.S. highways from unsafe Mexican traffic, but it prevents drug smuggling and illegal immigration, and it safeguards American transportation jobs.

But the DOT intends to halt this very sensible system. Under their pilot program, Mexican-domiciled trucks could penetrate far into the American heartland. The traditional safety standards required for vehicles on American roads, such as frequent safety inspections, limits on the number of hours driven in a day, drug testing and criminal background checks for drivers hauling hazardous materials, either would not be applied or would be weakly enforced.

Mexico certainly does not have a system right now for keeping these kinds of records in place. It's ridiculous for us to consider that they will be able to enforce these regulations in any way that comes up to our standards.

Again, let me say that our trucking industry has spent so much money getting our trucks, making them safer and so much to bring them up to environmental standards, it's just crazy to now say that we are going to bring in trucks that do not have to meet those same standards.

If the DOT pilot program proceeds as planned, drivers in Kansas and all across America will soon share their roads with unsafe Mexican trucks. The flood of foreign traffic will inevitably rise, result in collisions, injuries and even fatalities.

I introduced the bill now under consideration, the Safe American Roads Act of 2007, to rein in the Department of Transportation. The bill requires the cross-border pilot program to comply with 22 specific strict safety criteria. It creates an independent review panel to monitor and evaluate the pilot program after it launches, and it provides that the program can be terminated at any point if the Secretary of Transportation does not comply with all of these provisions.

By decisively approving the Safe American Roads Act, Congress can protect the millions of American families who drive our highways every day. I'd also like to thank Chairman OBERSTAR and Chairman DEFAZIO for their assistance and support, and I certainly urge my colleagues to support this important bill.

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to our colleague from North Carolina (Mr. HAYES).

Mr. HAYES. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman DUNCAN for the time and wish to add my strong support to H.R. 1773, along with Mr. DEFAZIO, Mr. OBERSTAR, Mrs. BOYDA, and want to thank the chairmen and ranking members of Transportation and Infrastructure for their leadership on this issue.

I was proud to cosponsor Congressman HUNTER's legislation, H.R. 1756, and am happy to support the revised H.R. 1773, the bill before us, which incorporates many of the strongest provisions from the Hunter bill. Safety of Americans and American highways must always take precedence over some obscure treaty obligation. As far as I am concerned, the safety of Americans and enforcing American law is far and away the number one priority here.

It's commonsense legislation that would prevent Mexican motor carriers from operating in the United States beyond the commercial zones of the United States-Mexico border until the Secretary of Transportation unequivocally certifies several minimum standards: requiring English language proficiency and ensuring U.S. law enforcement personnel have the ability to access databases, verify driving records, identification, criminal history and risk to homeland security the same way the information is used to verify U.S. operators. We do not need 90,000-pound unguided missiles on our highways.

Every day, the trucking industry ships more cargo in our Nation than any other mode of transportation. The American professionals behind these rigs and their equipment are subject to constant stringent safety standards. This bill ensures that at the very minimum Mexican truckers are subject to the same standards as our own operators. The safety of our citizens on our roadways must be our top priority, and I urge all Members to support H.R. 1773.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, could I ask the time remaining please.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Oregon has 7½ minutes remaining. The gentleman from Tennessee has 10½ minutes remaining.

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. FERGUSON).

Mr. FERGUSON. I thank the gentleman from Tennessee.

I want to thank Congresswoman BOYDA for her work on addressing this very important issue and of course Chairman OBERSTAR and Ranking Member MICA and all those who have worked so hard on this legislation. I am a strong supporter and cosponsor of the Safe American Roads Act.

This legislation takes a reasoned and commonsense approach to dealing with opening our borders to Mexico-domiciled trucks. Instead of providing blanket access to U.S. roads, this bill places important standards and restrictions on the DOT's proposed pilot program, ensuring that our roads remain safe and that our Nation's trucking industry remains competitive.

The heart of this legislation centers on establishing a pilot program that employs standards that we in Congress approved, while maintaining an open comment period to ensure that expert opinions are considered with respect to safety and compliance and enforcement.

The bill ensures accountability through both the administrative and legislative process, requiring an Inspector General review of the pilot program to determine whether Mexico-domiciled motor carriers participating are in full compliance with U.S. motor carrier safety laws, and requiring a report to Congress within 90 days of completion of the program.

The Safe American Roads Act does not aim to close America's roadways to foreign truckers. Instead, it requires the Department of Transportation to tap on the brakes, to slow down and make sure that the road we travel down is one that ensures the highest standards of safety and accountability.

Further, the legislation ensures the competitiveness of our Nation's trucking industry by preventing Mexico-domiciled motor carriers from accessing U.S. highways until U.S.-based trucking companies are given comparable access in Mexico.

□ 1300

Once again, I want to thank Congresswoman BOYDA for introducing this legislation and her work with Mr. HUNTER and so many others. I urge all of our colleagues to join me in supporting passage of this legislation.

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, how much time remains on our side?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Tennessee has 8½ minutes remaining.

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE).

Mr. POE. Thank you to the gentleman from Tennessee for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly support this legislation as a cosponsor. Being from Texas, we get the brunt of trucks coming from Mexico into the United States. Mexican truck drivers shouldn't be treated any better or worse than American truck drivers.

The general reputation of the American trucking industry is very good. They maintain their vehicles, and they maintain competence of their drivers. This legislation will require the same of Mexican truck drivers that come into the United States to have vehicles that don't pollute, that are not overweight, that are maintained as well as American trucks, and it will require the simple but very logical principle that Mexican truck drivers that drive throughout the United States, those massive 18 wheelers, be able to read a street sign.

I think it's important that people who drive our freeways are able to read the directions and the signs of the cities into which they travel. This legislation makes a lot of sense; it's common sense. It's needed to equalize the crossings into the United States of Mexican truck drivers with the competence of American truck drivers.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the chairman of the Transportation Committee, Mr. OBERSTAR, for 5½ minutes.

Mr. OBERSTAR. I thank the gentleman for yielding and for his splendid leadership of the Subcommittee on Highways and Transit, this portion of the session holding intensive hearings charting the future course for transportation as we move into the second half of the authorization of the SAFETEA–LU bill, and laying the groundwork for the future transportation of America. The gentleman has done a superb job.

I congratulate the Congresswoman, Mrs. BOYDA of Kansas, for recognizing the threat of Mexican trucks admitted unabashedly, without restraint, into the United States, or very minimal restraint that the Department proposed.

I also express my great appreciation to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MICA) for participating throughout the shaping of this legislation and working constructively for a reasonable counter to the administration's plan. The gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN) with his ever-judicial manner has helped us shape a very good balance to the allowing of Mexican trucks into the United States.

This cross-border pilot program the administration launched is not just a little initiative, something to let pass, it's a major shift in transportation policy. They were intent on opening the border with minimum public notification and at great cost to safety.

Despite serious concerns raised by the Congress, by safety advocates in the private sector, by nonprofit organizations, by States who were concerned about Mexican-domiciled trucks coming into the United States, this legislation limits the authority of the Secretary to open the U.S.-Mexican border to trucks coming into the United States.

It will not allow a 1-year pilot program as simply a gimmick, a ruse, under which they can allow the border to be opened unilaterally under terms and conditions that the Department or the administration might choose. Instead, we have a strict set of prerequisites, a strict set of conditions. A pilot program of 3 years, 100 motor carriers for Mexico, 1,000 trucks, does not provide blanket authority for 3 years. If the Secretary fails to comply with any provision of the act, the program terminates.

We also require the Inspector General of the Department of Transportation, concurrently, while the program is under way, to review and report back to the public, to the Congress, to the Department where there are failures and deviations, if there are any, from the program that we have set in place, especially if Mexican carriers do not meet strict Federal safety requirements.

This is not a run, operate, and evaluate. It is operate and concurrently evaluate what the Department is doing, what the Mexican trucks are doing. Are they, in Mexico, requiring fundamental elements of highway safety that U.S. drivers are required to submit to? Do they have hours of service requirements comparable to those in the United States?

Mexico does not have a single certified lab to test drivers for drug and alcohol compliance, as our drivers are required to be subjected to. The Inspector General has to verify that every requirement of section 350 of Public Law 107–87, the basic authority under which they propose to operate, has sufficient mechanisms in place to ensure safety, to enforce safety.

DOT has to also, under this legislation, provide the public with an opportunity to comment on issues of safety and cabotage, that the trucks that come into the United States and deliver goods to a destination point and carry goods back to Mexico aren't moving goods from one U.S. city to another U.S. city in violation of our cabotage laws. We don't allow it in aviation; we are not going to allow it in trucking.

We are living up to our commitments under NAFTA, but we have put in place requirements that are vigorous, protections that are important to protect travelers on our U.S. roads from failures in Mexico.

Now, the Department of Transportation has sent up their letter, their statement of policy, in which in one place there is a complaint that this legislation gives the agency ''only 5 days to take action necessary to address adverse findings or terminate the program.''

That's a requirement on safety. If you find an unsafe condition, how much longer than 5 days do you want to allow it to go? How much longer do you want to have an unsafe condition existing on our roads? That's just dead wrong.

Then, in another provision, they complain that we, their language says, purporting to require the Secretary of Transportation to submit legislative recommendations to Congress. They submit legislative recommendations to Congress, every executive branch agency. Whether we want them or not, they submit legislative recommendations. We are saying the Secretary may submit. If there are some things they want changed, we invite them to submit their recommendations to the Congress.

I simply don't buy that. I think they are sort of a half-hearted statement.

This is good legislation, good sound policy. It protects U.S. drivers and allows us to keep commitments under NAFTA, and we will protect American roadways.

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the ranking Republican on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, a man who has been a leader on this legislation and on many others, Mr. MICA.

Mr. MICA. I thank our ranking member, Mr. DUNCAN.

Mr. Speaker and colleagues, I rise today in support of H.R. 1773, the Safe American Roads Act of 2007. This bill has some good provisions in it. I regret that a bill which I consider even better and stronger, which was drafted by Mr. HUNTER, the gentleman from California, and introduced in Congress, is not the bill that we are considering.

I am sorry Mr. HUNTER is not with us today also to speak, but I know he has many important obligations in his responsibility in securing our national defense.

Again, I believe Mr. HUNTER's bill would have been a stronger bill that would have even more teeth to make certain that Mexican trucks comply with not only our safety regulations, but also our economic regulations against cabotage.

Now, let me make the record clear that I served in Congress when NAFTA was voted on in 1993. I did not vote for that legislation, and one reason was some of the unfair provisions, the inequity between the economy of Mexico and the United States. I had no problem with Canada, but Mexico is a different situation. I am for open and fair trade, but what passed in NAFTA then and today was a trade agreement between unequal partners when it comes to Mexico.

This administration, the Bush administration, unfortunately, has inherited what I call the haunting legacy of the Clinton administration, one of the haunting legacies, which pushed for passage of a lopsided NAFTA agreement. Back in 1993, in October, actually in October of 1992, President Clinton had only positive things to say about NAFTA.

Also, I have quotes by current Speaker PELOSI, then the Representative from California: ''In supporting NAFTA, I am casting my vote for the young people of America and for the future.''

The future isn't to send jobs to the south, to Mexico, and then now open up the borders and truck the product produced by those jobs to the north. The responsibility we have in Congress is to make certain that even though we have to comply with some of the terms of this unfair agreement, that we do protect the safety, that we do protect the economic opportunity and the disaster this unfair agreement has brought upon our economy.

So it's critical today that Congress, that what we are doing today maintain, at least at a minimum, in keeping the unfair provisions of the treaty enacted by a Democratic Congress, under the promotion of President Clinton, from doing even more damage to us at this time.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, I will close on our side.

I will simply say that no matter how much we want to have good relations and trade with our friends in Mexico, and we all certainly want that, the first obligation of the U.S. Congress is to the American people.

This bill is important for the safety of American roads, it's important to our American trucking companies, our small businesses, and to our truck drivers. It's legislation that all of our colleagues can support, and I urge our colleagues to do so.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

My good friend from Florida, the ranking Republican member of the committee, made a point that NAFTA was promoted by and passed during the Clinton administration. That's true, and I have continually castigated that administration and that President for that act.

However, he does need to remember that the agreement was negotiated by the first Bush administration, adopted by the Clinton administration, unfortunately, and to the discredit of the Clinton administration, and passed the House of Representatives with a large majority of Republican votes. Yes, it was a Democratic House, but a very substantial majority of the Democrats opposed the legislation.

So this is truly a bipartisan problem. But if he wants to attribute blame, the Republican Members of the House would bear that, and not the Democratic Members, although we were in the majority. He also talked about unfair portions of the agreement.

Well, the President has the authority to give 6 months' notice at any time that we are going to withdraw in order to require renegotiation of provisions of the agreement. So if this President felt any of the provisions were unfair, or they felt they were under duress to allow the Mexican trucks into this country, they have the tools to renegotiate that agreement. I wish they would use those tools. But they won't because this administration is all about killing off American jobs and American labor. That's what this is ultimately intended to do.

You can get a Mexican truck driver to work for a heck of a lot less than a Teamster in the United States. You can get a Mexican dock worker to work for a heck of a lot less than a longshoreman in the United States.

That's what this ultimately is designed to do. The dream of the NAFTA proponents is that the goods, all the goods, the things we don't make in America anymore, will be imported from China to a port in Mexico, avoiding the U.S. ports, the U.S. longshoremen, and loaded on Mexican trucks, avoiding U.S. trucking companies and U.S. drivers and brought up into America's heartland.

This bill is about protecting the safety of the American traveling public. That's what's before us today. I would love to renegotiate and revisit NAFTA any day of the week, but today we are all about the safety of the American public. That's what we are ensuring with this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1773, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

□ 1315

JAMES A. LEACH FEDERAL BUILDING

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1505) to designate the Federal building located at 131 East 4th Street in Davenport, Iowa, as the ''James A. Leach Federal Building,'' as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1505

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. DESIGNATION.

The United States courthouse located at 131 East 4th Street in Davenport, Iowa, shall be known and designated as the ''James A. Leach United States Courthouse''.

SEC. 2. REFERENCES.

Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the United States courthouse referred to in section 1 shall be deemed to be a reference to the ''James A. Leach United States Courthouse''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON) and the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GRAVES) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous materials on H.R. 1505.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I might consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1505, as amended, is a bill to designate the Federal building in Davenport, IA, as the James A. Leach United States Courthouse. Our former colleague, Jim Leach, was elected to Congress in 1977 from Iowa and served for 14 consecutive Congresses. His contributions to and interests in the House of Representatives are numerous, including his longstanding support for the use of HOPE VI HUD funds to help smaller cities develop affordable housing.

A career public servant, Congressman Leach served 30 years as a Representative in Congress, where he chaired the Banking and Financial Services Committee, the Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs, and the Congressional Executive Commission on China.

He holds eight honorary degrees, has received decorations from two foreign governments, and is the recipient of the Wayne Morris Integrity in Politics Award, the Woodrow Wilson Award from Johns Hopkins, and the Adlai Stevenson Award from the United Nations Association, and the Edgar Wayburn Award from the Sierra Club.

Jim Leach was hard working, highly respected on both sides of the aisle, and dedicated to the welfare of his constituents. It is fitting and proper to honor his public service with this designation. I support 1505 and urge its adoption.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GRAVES. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1505 designates the United States courthouse located at 131 East 4th Street in Davenport, IA, as the James A. Leach United States Courthouse. The bill honors Congressman Leach's dedication to public service.

Congressman Leach began his long and distinguished career of public service as a congressional staffer in the 1960s. He later served as a foreign service officer and as a delegate to the United Nations General Assembly.

In 1976 Congressman Leach was elected to the House of Representatives. He served in the U.S. House for 30 years, from 1977 to 2007. During his time in Congress, he chaired the Committee on Banking and Financial Services, the Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs, and the Congressional Executive Commission on China.

Mr. Speaker, I support this legislation and urge my colleagues to do the same.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR).

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, Congressman Jim Leach was a very decent, distinguished and thoughtful Member of Congress. He was a learned Member of the body. He's a personal friend.

He served this country in many capacities. He began his service as a staff

member for then-Congressman Don Rumsfeld. He went to the State Department in 1968. He served as special assistant to director of the Office of Economic Opportunity. He served in capacities with the United Nations, with the U.S. Advisory Commission on International Education and Cultural Affairs.

He served in an advisory capacity with the Federal Home Loan Bank Board, rather well-rounded career before being elected to Congress one term after I was elected.

He chaired, at one point, the Committee on Banking and Financial Services, the Subcommittee on Asian Pacific Affairs, and the Congressional Executive Commission on China.

He, along the way, collected a number of honorary degrees. He's the recipient of the Wayne Morris Integrity in Politics Award, the Woodrow Wilson award from Johns Hopkins University, the Adlai Stevenson Award from the United Nations Association, and an award from the Sierra Club, the Edgar Wayburn award.

He's now serving on the faculty of Princeton's Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs as a visiting professor.

He's been ably succeeded by the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LOEBSACK), and I really congratulate him and the entire Iowa delegation for so graciously and thoughtfully introducing and supporting this bill to honor one of Congress's most respected and well-liked Members.

There are rare people who pass through this body and leave with good feelings and with good memories by those of us who continue to serve, and Jim Leach is one of those. It is very appropriate to designate the U.S. courthouse at Davenport, Iowa, in his honor, in his name.

And, again, I really express my great admiration to the Iowa delegation for so recognizing this distinguished former Member of Congress. His service in no way takes away from the service of Mr. LOEBSACK who succeeded him, who is, himself, a distinguished professor, has distinguished himself in the arena of public policy during his college teaching career, and brings that same thoughtfulness and constructiveness to the public policy process that his predecessor did, whom we honor today.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation and respect the memory of Jim Leach.

Mr. GRAVES. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING).

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Missouri for yielding. And I thank the gentleman from Iowa for bringing this resolution to honor our good friend and colleague.

And we are proud, as Iowans, to stand here today and ask for support for this resolution to name the building in Davenport the James A. Leach Courthouse.

I look back on his career, what a stellar career. All of these years, elected to Congress in 1976, served till the end of the 109th Congress, a couple of days into this year, actually.

And one of the things that stands out with Jim Leach is Jim Leach was a champion. He was a champion in 1960 as a State wrestling champion, and I'd point out to our wrestling champions here in this Congress, a State wrestling champion in Iowa is like being a national champion someplace else, just to set humility aside for the moment.

But that is a characteristic that Jim Leach had, the characteristic of real humility and the characteristic of a champion.

And as he came here to Congress and he began that long tenure that was here, he touched a lot of different issues. But his history and his experience in the financial industry was unparalleled in the contemporary Congress. And I know of no period in previous history when there's been someone that's been so respected, that has taken such leadership in the financial affairs.

And as chairman of the Finance Committee, and then later on as chairman of the Subcommittee on International Relations, Jim Leach was a leader that was respected on both sides. He was, some would call him a bipartisan legislator. I would say Jim Leach was a nonpartisan Member of this Congress. He evaluated each one of those issues that came before him, drew an independent judgment.

And if you might question his independence, I'll also make a concession on Congressman Leach in that he didn't always have every bit of his hair in place and he led sometimes with a sweater underneath his jacket, and it was only picked up by Senator GRASSLEY as a stylish tip. But that's because Jim Leach followed his own mission, his own conscience, his own intellect and, in fact, he used his time to focus on those issues that were the good things for Americans, good things for Iowans.

So I'm proud today to stand in support of this resolution and proud to be able to call Jim Leach a colleague and a friend in the opposite order. It's with great admiration I ask support for this resolution of this Congress.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LOEBSACK).

Mr. LOEBSACK. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to offer H.R. 1505. This bill designates the United States Federal building located at 131 East 4th Street in Davenport, Iowa, the James A. Leach United States Courthouse.

Jim Leach represented Iowa with grace and distinction for 30 years, and this legislation is a tribute to his service. His legacy of statesmanship, his leadership in foreign affairs and financial services is already recounted. His dedication to public service and his capable representation of his constituents left a lasting impact on the district I am now honored to represent.

Jim is a native son of Iowa; and throughout his time in Congress, his representation of the State was based upon the values of the people he represented and of the town in which he grew up.

Jim recently joined the faculty of the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton, his alma mater. As a former professor myself, and I say former now, I believe I can say with some authority that the experience and knowledge that Jim has brought to the Woodrow Wilson School has no doubt been a tremendous asset for Princeton students and faculty.

In fact, as a professor at Cornell College in Iowa, I was pleased to invite Jim to campus to lecture on foreign policy matters. His talks were always informative and engaging. I know that these guest lectures were only a glimpse of the knowledge, the depth of the knowledge and expertise that Jim has brought to Princeton on a daily basis.

That he chose to continue his commitment to public service by training the next generation of scholars and practitioners is indicative of Jim's time in Congress, and I wish him the best of luck in his new career.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Jim for his many years of service. It is my hope that I am able to represent Iowa's Second District as capably as he did for so many years. And I join with my colleagues and urge you to pass this resolution.

Mr. GRAVES. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LATHAM).

Mr. LATHAM. I thank the Speaker for the time to rise in support of this resolution to honor our great friend, Jim Leach, by naming the courthouse in Davenport, Iowa, after him. It is a well-deserved honor.

I miss Jim Leach around here because of his great sense of humor, his insight, his thoughtfulness, someone who was a strong Iowa Hawkeye supporter, having the Hawks in his district, and I, myself, representing Iowa State, so we used to go back and forth an awful lot.

Jim Leach will be remembered here in this body for his 30 years of service, his great thoughtfulness, his intellect, someone who, whether it be in financial services, and the Financial Services Modernization Act bears his name, the Gramm-Leach-Bliley bill; whether it be trying to stop gambling predators over the Internet; someone who knew and understood international policy, foreign affairs like no one else; someone who had such a broad breadth of knowledge, who could bring that forth and convey it to other folks in a very kind and thoughtful way.

He does represent the very best of what's in this Congress, and that is a spirit of bipartisanship, of thought over politics, of actions rather than posturing; someone who I have the greatest personal respect for. And I'm so pleased that Mr. LOEBSACK has

brought this resolution to the floor of the House, and I would urge everyone to support this resolution in honor of James Leach. And I want to commend him, also his wife, Deva, and the family; just wonderful people, and an honor like this could not go to a nicer person or a more deserving individual.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER).

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentlewoman's courtesy in permitting me to add my voice, expressing the appreciation to Mr. LOEBSACK and to the Iowa delegation for bringing this resolution forward commemorating the service of our friend and former colleague, Jim Leach.

The 30 years that we were privileged in this body to watch him at work, the words, the recitation to what Jim Leach did doesn't do him justice. He was dignified and principled, one of the few people who could navigate these Halls successfully without ever being mired in partisan politics, doing it his way, a way that was right for the country, if often difficult for him politically.

Just reciting the facts misses the quality of his service. Jim Leach predicted the savings and loan crisis. He was spot on in his observations about American diplomacy from the Middle East to North Dakota. I meant to say North Korea, probably North Dakota as well, as I think about it.

He, as an example of his principled nature, resigned from the Foreign Service in protest of President Nixon's firing of special prosecutor Archibald Cox.

In his congressional campaigns, he was one of the few people who refused to accept PAC contributions and out of State donations. He wouldn't run negative ads, and he tried to stop outside groups who were supporting him from, in turn, running negative ads.

In 1997, he refused to vote for Speaker Newt Gingrich because of deep ethics concerns. And while it was the right thing to do, as history has shown, it was a tough vote against a sitting Speaker in your own party. But it was an example of how Jim Leach operated.

He correctly predicted what was going to happen with our ill-advised adventure in Iraq with great clarity and force in committee and on the floor. And then he voted against it, again, at some difficulty for himself politically, particularly at that time. That wasn't the direction of the prevailing winds in his party or in the country.

But that's how Jim Leach was. He thought about issues. He analyzed them. He shared his analysis in his own thoughtful, understated way. He was usually right, and the congressional deliberations were better as a result.

I must say that I'm sorry that President Bush chose not to take the advice of dozens of Members in this body on both sides of the aisle who urged that Jim Leach be appointed as the U.S. Representative to the United Nations, a post for which he would be eminently well qualified.

□ 1330

I am confident we will see a new chapter in his distinguished career whether in the United Nations, perhaps in a new administration. As a friend, a colleague and an American, I look forward to whatever that next chapter is in Jim's career.

Mr. GRAVES. Mr. Speaker, I would love to stand with the gentleman from Minnesota and the gentlewoman from Texas in urging our colleagues to vote for this. He was a good individual.

Mr. BRALEY of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, and thanks to Congressman LOEBSACK for introducing this bill and working hard to designate the James A. Leach Courthouse in Davenport, Iowa. I would also like to thank Chairman OBERSTAR and Ranking Member MICA for reporting this bill out of Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

Congressman Leach is a good man who served his constituents with distinction and grace, and it is fitting that we honor him with a hometown reminder of his commitment and service to Iowa. While his career in Congress was distinguished and honorable, I want to touch on another passion of his—wrestling.

Jim Leach began wrestling in his birthplace of Davenport as a seventh-grader. As a student at Davenport High School, he won the 1960 state wrestling championship at the 138-pound weight class. Competing for Princeton University, he lost just one dual meet match. Later, as a research student at the London School of Economics, he went on to compete in freestyle matches. In 1995, he was awarded the Outstanding American Award from the National Wrestling Hall of Fame.

His wrestler's spirit was evident in his public service, as he took a disciplined and hard working approach to his duties. For thirty years, Congressman Leach served his constituents, and he never lost touch of his Davenport roots. As an original cosponsor of HR 1505, I am proud to support the James A. Leach Courthouse.

Mr. GRAVES. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1505, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The title was amended so as to read: ''A bill to designate the United States courthouse located at 131 East 4th Street in Davenport, Iowa, as the James A. Leach United States Courthouse'.''.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

AUTHORIZING GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATOR TO CONVEY A PARCEL OF REAL PROPERTY TO ALASKA RAILROAD CORPORATION

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1036) to authorize the Administrator of General Services to convey a parcel of real property to the Alaska Railroad Corporation, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1036

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. CONVEYANCE OF GSA FLEET MANAGEMENT CENTER TO ALASKA RAILROAD CORPORATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subject to the requirements of this section, the Administrator of General Services shall convey, not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act, by quitclaim deed, to the Alaska Railroad Corporation, an entity of the State of Alaska (in this section referred to as the ''Corporation''), all right, title, and interest of the United States in and to the parcel of real property described in subsection (b), known as the GSA Fleet Management Center.

(b) GSA FLEET MANAGEMENT CENTER.—The parcel to be conveyed under subsection (a) is the parcel located at the intersection of 2nd Avenue and Christensen Avenue in Anchorage, Alaska, consisting of approximately 78,000 square feet of land and the improvements thereon.

(c) CONSIDERATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—As consideration for the parcel to be conveyed under subsection (a), the Administrator shall require the Corporation to—

(A) convey replacement property in accordance with paragraph (2); or

(B) pay the purchase price for the parcel in accordance with paragraph (3).

(2) REPLACEMENT PROPERTY.—If the Administrator requires the Corporation to provide consideration under paragraph (1)(A), the Corporation shall—

(A) convey, and pay the cost of conveying, to the United States, acting by and through the Administrator, fee simple title to real property, including a building, that the Administrator determines to be suitable as a replacement facility for the parcel to be conveyed under subsection (a); and

(B) provide such other consideration as the Administrator and the Corporation may agree, including payment of the costs of relocating the occupants vacating the parcel to be conveyed under subsection (a).

(3) PURCHASE PRICE.—If the Administrator requires the Corporation to provide consideration under paragraph (1)(B), the Corporation shall pay to the Administrator the fair market value of the parcel to be conveyed under subsection (a) based on its highest and best use as determined by an independent appraisal commissioned by the Administrator and paid for by the Corporation.

(d) APPRAISAL.—In the case of an appraisal under subsection (c)(3)—

(1) the appraisal shall be performed by an appraiser mutually acceptable to the Administrator and the Corporation; and

(2) the assumptions, scope of work, and other terms and conditions related to the appraisal assignment shall be mutually acceptable to the Administrator and the Corporation.

(e) PROCEEDS.—

(1) DEPOSIT.—Any proceeds received under subsection (c) shall be paid into the Federal Buildings Fund established under section 592 of title 40, United States Code.

(2) EXPENDITURE.—Funds paid into the Federal Buildings Fund under paragraph (1) shall be available to the Administrator, in amounts specified in appropriations Acts, for expenditure for any lawful purpose consistent with existing authorities granted to the Administrator; except that the Administrator shall provide to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Environment and Public Works of the Senate 30 days advance written notice of any expenditure of the proceeds.

(f) ADDITIONAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS.—The Administrator may require such additional terms and conditions to the conveyance under subsection (a) as the Administrator considers appropriate to protect the interests of the United States.

(g) DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY AND SURVEY.—The exact acreage and legal description of the parcels to be conveyed under subsections (a) and (c)(2) shall be determined by surveys satisfactory to the Administrator and the Corporation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON) and the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GRAVES) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous materials on H.R. 1036.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1036 authorizes the Administrator of General Services to convey a parcel of real property to the Alaska Railroad Corporation. Subject to certain requirements, but not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of the bill, the Administrator shall convey to the Alaska Railroad Corporation a parcel of real property known as GSA Fleet Management Center.

The GSA Fleet Management Center is a parcel located at the intersection of 2nd Avenue and Christensen Avenue in Anchorage, Alaska, consisting of approximately 78,000 square feet of land. The Alaska Railroad Corporation, in exchange for the land, will either provide a replacement facility for the GSA Fleet Management Center to be conveyed or the Alaska Railroad Corporation will pay the Administrator for the fair market value of the GSA Fleet Management Center based on its highest and best use as determined by an independent appraisal commissioned by the Administrator and paid by the Alaska Railroad Corporation. All proceeds derived from the possible sale of the GSA Fleet Management Center would be deposited in the Federal Buildings Fund.

I support this bill to transfer this property, Mr. Speaker, from the GSA inventory to the Alaska Railroad Corporation and particularly want to note, consistent with Transportation and Infrastructure Committee policy and guidance on these transfer matters, that the bill protects the Federal interest.

H.R. 1036 requires either the GSA is provided with a replacement facility or the railroad corporation will pay the fair market value for the building based on an appraisal of the highest and best use. Further, if the building is bought by the railroad, the proceeds will be deposited into the Federal Buildings Fund.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GRAVES. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1036, as amended, was introduced by Representative Don Young from Alaska on February 13, and it requires the Administrator of General Services to convey a small GSA property to the publicly owned Alaska Railroad.

The parcel of property is known as the Fleet Management Center. It is located in Anchorage, Alaska. It is currently being utilized as a GSA motor pool, but it is necessary for the planned expansion of the rail yard there in Anchorage.

H.R. 1036 requires the Administrator to sell the property at either fair market value or to exchange the property for a like valued piece of real estate. The value of the property will be determined by an independent appraisal commissioned by the GSA and paid for by the Alaska Railroad Corporation. This bill requires that all the proceeds from the sale be deposited into the Federal Buildings Fund.

Mr. Speaker, I support this measure, and I urge my colleagues to do so.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the chairman of the committee, Mr. OBERSTAR.

Mr. OBERSTAR. I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

It is very important to move this legislation. The former chairman of our committee, the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG), introduced this legislation in the 109th Congress, but for various reasons of logjams, legislative logjams, it just didn't make it to the House floor because of scheduling problems of the House. But it is very important for the Alaska Railroad, which is an entity of the State of Alaska, and the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG) has several times talked to me about the need to move this bill. We had it all ready to go in the last Congress, as I said, and I am very happy we are able to bring it up early on in this session of the 110th Congress.

If looked at on its face, it would be a very simple matter to do, a 78,000 square foot parcel of real property in Anchorage, Alaska, needed for the Alaska Railroad's operations. But as we got into it, the Office of Management and Budget and the Congressional Budget Office raised some scoring issues. So in further review of the matter, we found a way to subject the transfer and the transfer of funds to the appropriation process. That removes the scoring issue. The Administrator of GSA will require the Administrator of the Railroad Corporation to pay fair market value of the property based on highest and best use by an independent appraisal, and that independent appraisal will be commissioned by the Administrator of GSA and will be paid for by the Alaska Railroad Corporation. Then that money will be deposited into the Federal Buildings Fund and the whole exercise will be subject to the appropriation process. That way the interests of the Federal Government are fully protected and the entire transaction will be totally transparent. It is a very good outcome. It benefits the GSA. It benefits the Public Buildings Fund of the Federal Government, and it benefits the Alaska Railroad and the State of Alaska.

I know that the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG) is very pleased with the outcome, and I want to thank the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management for his participation through this process and bringing it to a successful conclusion and also the Chair of our subcommittee, Chairwoman Norton.

With that, I urge passage of this legislation.

Mr. GRAVES. Mr. Speaker, I think the gentleman from Minnesota said it all.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1036, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

AUTHORIZING USE OF CAPITOL GROUNDS FOR DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA SPECIAL OLYMPICS LAW ENFORCEMENT TORCH RUN

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 123) authorizing the use of the Capitol Grounds for the District of Columbia Special Olympics Law Enforcement Torch Run.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

H. CON. RES. 123

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring),

SECTION 1. AUTHORIZATION OF USE OF CAPITOL GROUNDS FOR D.C. SPECIAL OLYMPICS LAW ENFORCEMENT TORCH RUN.

On June 8, 2007, or on such other date as the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Rules and Administration of the Senate may jointly designate, the 2007 District of Columbia Special Olympics Law Enforcement Torch Run (in this resolution referred to as the ''event'') may be run through the Capitol Grounds as part of the journey of the Special Olympics torch to the District of Columbia Special Olympics summer games.

SEC. 2. RESPONSIBILITY OF CAPITOL POLICE BOARD.

The Capitol Police Board shall take such actions as may be necessary to carry out the event.

SEC. 3. CONDITIONS RELATING TO PHYSICAL PREPARATIONS.

The Architect of the Capitol may prescribe conditions for physical preparations for the event.

SEC. 4. ENFORCEMENT OF RESTRICTIONS.

The Capitol Police Board shall provide for enforcement of the restrictions contained in section 5104(c) of title 40, United States Code, concerning sales, advertisements, displays, and solicitations on the Capitol Grounds, as well as other restrictions applicable to the Capitol Grounds, in connection with the event.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON) and the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GRAVES) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on House Concurrent Resolution 123.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Texas?

There was no objection.

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Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, House Concurrent Resolution 123 authorizes the use of the Capitol Grounds for the District of Columbia Special Olympics Law Enforcement Torch Run.

The Capitol Police, along with the D.C. Special Olympics, will participate in the torch run to be held on June 8, 2007. The D.C. Special Olympics will work closely with the Capitol Police and the Architect of the Capitol to make sure that the event is in full compliance with rules and regulations governing the use of the Capitol Grounds.

The Law Enforcement Torch Run for the Special Olympics is run nationwide by law enforcement officials leading up to each State's or national Special Olympics summer games. Each year, nearly 50 local and Federal law enforcement agencies in Washington, D.C. participate to show their support of the D.C. Special Olympics. This torch relay event is a traditional part of the opening ceremonies for the Special Olympics. For the fifth year these opening ceremonies will take place at Catholic University in the District of Columbia. This is a worthwhile event attended by thousands of Special Olympians, their families and friends, and I support the resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GRAVES. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

House Concurrent Resolution 123 authorizes the use of the Capitol Grounds for the District of Columbia Special Olympics Law Enforcement Torch Run, which will be held June 8, 2007. This event is cosponsored by the U.S. Capitol Police.

The Special Olympics is an international organization dedicated to enriching the lives of children and adults with disabilities through athletics. The U.S. Capitol Police will host the opening ceremonies for the torch run, which will take place on the west terrace of the Capitol. Once lit, the torch will be carried to Fort McNair. An estimated 2,000 law enforcement representatives from more than 60 local and Federal law enforcement agencies will participate in this year's event.

Congress has traditionally supported this worthy cause by authorizing the use of the Capitol Grounds. I encourage my colleagues to join the law enforcement community in supporting the Special Olympics and join me in supporting this resolution.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Con. Res. 123, which authorizes the use of the Capitol Grounds for the District of Columbia Special Olympics Law Enforcement Torch Run.

Thanks to the tenacity to Eunice Kennedy Shriver and her family, thousands of Special Olympians see their self-confidence, self-esteem, and health increase by participating in the Special Olympics. These games highlight the athletic feats of mentally challenged children and young adults. Confidence and self-esteem are the building blocks for these Olympic Games. Better health, coordination, and lasting friendships are the results of participation.

The Law Enforcement Torch Run for the Special Olympics is run nationwide by law enforcement officers, leading up to each state's and the national Special Olympics Summer Games. Each year, nearly 50 local and Federal law enforcement agencies in Washington, DC, participate to show their support of the DC Special Olympics. This torch relay event is a traditional part of the opening ceremonies for the Special Olympics. Law enforcement officers, who are part of the extensive volunteer network that supports the games, carry the Olympic torch across the Capitol Grounds through the District of Columbia to Catholic University. The Capitol Police, along with the DC Special Olympics, will participate in the torch run to be held on June 8, 2007.

Each year, approximately 2,500 Special Olympians of all ages compete in the DC Special Olympics in more than a dozen events. The event is supported by thousands of volunteers from the District and the region and is attended by thousands more family and friends of Special Olympians.

These games are a wonderful expression of inclusiveness and a confirmation of individual contribution. I enthusiastically support this resolution and the very worthwhile endeavor of the Special Olympics.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H. Con. Res. 123.

Mr. GRAVES. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I urge passage, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 123.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the concurrent resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF NATIONAL PUBLIC WORKS WEEK

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 352) supporting the goals and ideals of National Public Works Week.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 352

Whereas public works infrastructure, facilities, and services play a pivotal role in the health, safety, and well-being of the people of the United States;

Whereas public works infrastructure, facilities, and services could not be provided without the skill and dedication of public works professionals, including engineers and administrators, representing State and local governments throughout the United States;

Whereas public works professionals design, build, operate, maintain, and protect the transportation systems, water supply infrastructure, sewage and refuse disposal systems, public buildings, and other structures and facilities that are vital to the citizens, communities, and commerce of the United States;

Whereas the Department of Transportation estimates that every $1,000,000,000 invested in the Nation's highway system creates 47,000 jobs, and every $1 invested in the Nation's highway system generates more than six times that amount in economic activity;

Whereas every $1 invested in public transportation generates as much as $6 in economic returns to the Nation's economy;

Whereas the capital asset program of the General Services Administration is authorized annually to provide Federal employees with necessary office space, courts of law, and other special purpose facilities;

Whereas since 1972 the Nation has invested more than $250,000,000,000 in wastewater infrastructure facilities to establish a system that includes 16,000 publicly owned wastewater treatment plants, 100,000 major pumping stations, 600,000 miles of sanitary sewers, and 200,000 miles of storm sewers;

Whereas the Pipelines and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration is charged with the safe and secure movement of almost 1,000,000 daily shipments of hazardous materials by all modes of transportation and oversees the safety and security of 2,200,000 miles of gas and hazardous liquid pipelines, which account for 64 percent of the energy commodities consumed in the United States;

Whereas the National Railroad Passenger Corporation annually provides more than 25,000,000 people with intercity rail service;

Whereas over the next 5 years, 8 airfield projects, including 5 runways, 2 runway extensions, and 1 airfield reconfiguration, will be commissioned providing some of the busiest airports in the Nation with the potential to accommodate more than 400,000 additional annual operations, while decreasing the average delay per operation at these airports by approximately 2 minutes;

Whereas in the report of the Department of Transportation entitled ''2006 Status of the Nation's Highways, Bridges, and Transit: Conditions & Performance'', the Department confirms that investment in the Nation's highway, bridge, and transit infrastructure has not kept up with growing demands on the system;

Whereas in that report, the Department of Transportation found that to maintain highway, bridge, and transit networks, governments at all levels would need to invest $94,600,000,000 per year for each of the next 20 years, and to improve highway, bridge, and transit networks that level of investment would need to increase to $153,700,000,000 per year; and

Whereas public works professionals are observing National Public Works Week from May 20 through 26, 2007: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) supports the goals and ideals of National Public Works Week;

(2) recognizes and celebrates the important contributions that public works professionals make every day to improve the public infrastructure of the United States and the communities that those professionals serve; and

(3) urges citizens and communities throughout the United States to join with representatives of the Federal Government in activities and ceremonies that are designed to pay tribute to the public works professionals of the Nation and to recognize the substantial contributions that public works professionals make to the Nation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON) and the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. DRAKE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

National Public Works Week is celebrated yearly during the third week of May. The week has been designated by a variety of organizations to celebrate our public works professionals and the critical work that they do to keep our infrastructure and transportation systems working efficiently and economically. House Resolution 352 pays tribute to these professionals, recognizing their work the week of May 20 through 26, 2007.

''Public works'' are loosely defined as projects that are carried out for the public good, aptly named because they enable the public to complete its work. Hazardous materials, pipelines, municipal infrastructure such as water supply infrastructure and sewage and refuge disposal systems, and transportation systems, such as rail, highways, airports and public transit, all fall under the public works umbrella.

Our public works are vital to our Nation. Our commerce depends on the shipment of goods through rail, on our roads and through the air. Public transportation provides many with a cost-effective way of travel, while also reducing harmful effects on our environment.

Our public health depends on our water supply infrastructure as well as our sewage and disposal systems. According to a U.S. Geological survey, one person uses an average of 150 gallons of water per day. Although running water is expected in most homes in our Nation, many developing countries still consider this a luxury. Globally, 50 percent of the world's hospital beds are filled with patients suffering from water-borne illnesses, with one child killed every 8 seconds due to water-related sickness.

People in more developed nations, such as the United States, use up to 10 times more water than those in the underdeveloped poor countries. And we do take it for granted. For the importance that they play in our daily lives, our transportation and infrastructure systems and facilities often get the bad end of the deal, that is, although public works are depended on consistently, they receive no glory or praise when accomplishing the job. Rather, many only pay tribute and attention to these public works when they fail, such as sewage line breaks that flood our basements, or levee failures that result in flooded communities.

This legislative session the House has passed several key bills that will improve our water and wastewater infrastructure to further reduce facility and system failure. H.R. 569, the Water Quality Investment Act of 2007, amends the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to authorize appropriations for sewer overflow control grants. H.R. 700, the Healthy Communities Water Supply Act of 2007, amends the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to extend the pilot program for alternative water source projects.

H.R. 720, the Water Quality Financing Act of 2007, amends the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to authorize appropriations for State water pollution control revolving funds.

And lastly, H.R. 1495, the Water Resources Development Act, authorizes water projects and U.S. Corps of Engineers policy changes.

It has been more than 6 years since a water resources bill was signed into law. And although water resource legislation is expected to be signed into law every 2 years, President Clinton was the last White House occupant to take an active role in our country's water and public health needs.

I recognize the importance of public works for our communities and our country, and I am grateful for the administrators, engineers and servicemen who continue to utilize their skills and provide hours of service and dedication to ensure these necessary facilities and systems work for our Nation.

I support this resolution and urge my colleagues to support it as well.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. DRAKE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

House Resolution 352 is a bipartisan resolution which recognizes the important contributions that public works professionals make every day to improve the public infrastructure of the United States. I represent a coastal district in which healthy water transportation and infrastructure systems add to the economic and environmental prosperity of southeast Virginia. Healthy water transportation and infrastructure systems are not only important to coastal communities, but to every district across the country. To meet these needs, as well as the need for flood protection and environmental restoration, passing a Water Resources Development Act for 2007 is a matter of high importance.

According to separate studies conducted by the Congressional Budget Office, EPA and municipal groups, the current rate of capital investment will not keep our wastewater treatment systems operational. State and local governments are spending approximately $10 billion a year in capital investments in wastewater infrastructure. Most of this funding comes from local ratepayers. For rural towns like those located on the eastern shore of Virginia, this often proves to be an unattainable feat.

Because of the importance public infrastructure places in enhancing our quality of life, improving our environment and contributing to our economic prosperity, it is important for Congress to recognize the contributions that professionals, engineers and administrators make to ensuring America remains the world's premier economic power.

I urge all Members to support H. Res. 352.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Res. 352, supporting the goals and ideals of National Public Works Week.

Our Nation's public works—which consist of transportation systems, water supply infrastructure, sewage and refuse disposal systems, public buildings, and other structures and facilities—help our country function in an efficient and effective manner. As our public works support our economy, our public health, and our communities' livelihood, we must support the many public works professionals who design, build, operate, maintain, and protect these systems and structures. National Public Works Week is observed for a full week in May each year.

House Resolution 352 pays tribute to public works professionals, celebrating their work the week of May 20 through 26, 2007.

Without our vast network of rail, highways, airports, and public transit, our industries would not have the global reach that they currently utilize each working day. Without these transportation systems, many tourists would not have the chance to experience the vastly different climates and cultures our Nation has to offer.

Without our water supply systems, or our sewage and waste disposal facilities. our communities would not be able to exist and thrive. Simple conveniences that we may take for granted—running water in our homes for cooking and cleaning, and water systems that feed our backyard gardens, as well as our agriculture, factories, and industry—would not be possible without the dedicated work of the public works professionals who keep these facilities moving on a daily basis.

Indeed, it is often only when our systems and facilities fail to work consistently that we appreciate their contribution to our daily routines.

Infrastructure keeps our country working, but in previous legislative sessions, we have not kept working on our infrastructure. In the "2006 Status of the Nation's Highways, Bridges, and Transit: Conditions and Performance" report prepared by the Department of Transportation, the Department confirms that investment in the Nation's highway, bridge, and transit infrastructure has not kept pace with demands on the system.

This Congress, we are working to reverse this unjustifiable trend.

The Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure has taken our public works needs seriously. Since the start of the 110th Congress, the Committee has shepherded four critical water infrastructure bills through the House:

H.R. 569, the Water Quality Investment Act of 2007; H.R. 700, the Healthy Communities Water Supply Act of 2007; H.R. 720, the Water Quality Financing Act of 2007; and H.R. 1495, the Water Resources Development Act of 2007.

It is my hope that this Resolution will reinforce the necessity for our colleagues in the other body to pass similar legislation. It is critical for us to conference these bills without delay, and ask the President to recognize both the needs and the accomplishments of public works and its professionals.

I celebrate our country's transportation and infrastructure.

I urge my colleagues to join with me in supporting House Resolution 352, to honor the professionals who provide the backbone for our transportation and infrastructure systems and facilities.

Mrs. DRAKE. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I would urge the passage of this measure, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 352.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

COMMEMORATING MARINAS AND EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR SIXTH ANNUAL NATIONAL MARINA DAY

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 343) commemorating the marinas of the United States, expressing support for the designation of the sixth annual National Marina Day, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 343

Whereas the citizens of the United States highly value recreation time and their ability to access 1 of the greatest natural resources of the United States, its waterways;

Whereas, in 1928, the word ''marina'' was used for the first time to define a recreational boating facility;

Whereas the United States is home to over 12,000 recreational boating facilities that contribute substantially to their local communities by providing safe, reliable gateways to boating for members of their communities and welcomed guests;

Whereas marinas of the United States also serve as stewards of the environment, actively seeking to protect their surrounding waterways not only for the enjoyment of the current generation, but for generations to come;

Whereas marinas of the United States also provide their communities and visitors a place where friends and families, united by a passion for the water, can come together for recreation, rest, and relaxation; and

Whereas marinas throughout the United States will be celebrating National Marina Day on August 11, 2007: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) commemorates the marinas of the United States for providing environmentally friendly gateways to boating for the citizens of, and the visitors to the United States; and

(2) supports designation of the sixth annual ''National Marina Day'' in order—

(A) to honor the marinas of the United States for their many contributions to their local communities; and

(B) to make citizens, policy makers, elected officials, and employees more aware of the overall contributions marinas make to their well-being.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PASTOR). Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) and the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. DRAKE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Maryland.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on H. Res. 343.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Res. 343, as amended, which would support designation of August 11, 2007, as the sixth annual National Marina Day.

National Marina Day recognizes the central role that marinas play in giving shelter and providing gateways to the nearly 13 million recreational boats registered in the United States. National Marina Day is also intended to recognize the important role that recreational boaters and marina operators play in protecting our Nation's critical marine resources.

Recreational boating is a central part of the tourism and recreation industry in the United States. According to the National Marine Manufacturers Association, in 2005 recreational boating generated an estimated $37 billion in sales and services nationwide. In my own State of Maryland, there are just over 200,000 registered boats. A study by the Maryland Sea Grant program estimated that in 2005 every 7.5 boats in the State supported a job in our State's economy and contributed just over $7,600 in economic activity. Recreational boating contributed an estimated $1.8 billion to the State's gross product.

The millions of Americans who participate in recreational boating activities rely on the estimated 12,000 marinas and associated boating facilities in our Nation to access not only the water, but also the support services that boats and boaters need. An estimated 30 percent of these marinas are owned by municipal or State governments and provide the public with water access at low or limited cost. The remaining 70 percent of marinas are private, and many are owner-operated facilities with long family histories.

Importantly, however, marinas are not only centers where boats can obtain fuel and services. They are also centers providing boating safety and boating education programs intended to help improve the operating proficiency of recreational boaters.

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Though 35 States now have some type of operator education or licensing

requirement, the National Transportation Safety Board reported in 2007 that more than 80 percent of all recreational boaters have still never taken any kind of boating educational program. Perhaps in large measure as a result of the still limited enrollment in recreational boating safety classes, total deaths in recreational boating exceed deaths in general aviation. Marinas will continue to play a critical role in helping to reduce boating accidents and to lower the number of fatalities associated with recreational boating by organizing and hosting boating education programs to complement the technical services they provide.

I hope that all marina operators through these United States will take the opportunity afforded this year by the National Marina Day to continue their vital effort to expand boating safety programs and efforts. I commend marina operators for their vital role in supporting recreational boating in the United States.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. DRAKE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 343, which was introduced by my colleague HAROLD ROGERS, recognizes August 11, 2007, as National Marina Day. This resolution acknowledges the significant contributions that marinas provide to so many of our local waterfront communities.

There are over 12,000 marinas in the United States, and these facilities serve as a place where people who share a passion for the water can come together to enjoy our Nation's oceans, lakes and rivers. Marinas also serve as stewards of the environment and actively seek to protect the waterways that surround them.

I represent a district in which recreational boating plays an important role in the lives of many constituents, and marinas provide an easy access point for citizens who wish to enjoy our Nation's waterways. This resolution highlights the importance of marinas and their role in promoting recreational boating and in connecting people to their local waterways.

I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. DRAKE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. ROGERS).

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlelady for yielding me time, and I want to thank the gentlelady and the chairman for ushering this piece of legislation through the committee and on to the floor honoring and acknowledging the contributions of marina owners and operators across this great country.

Whether it is fishing one of the 1,000 lakes in Minnesota, cruising the inland waterways of the Sunshine State, or enjoying the 1,200 miles of shoreline along Lake Cumberland in my district, marinas are America's launching point for millions of boats and boaters seeking to enjoy the beautiful rivers, lakes, bays and oceans.

These marinas employ nearly 140,000 people at over 13,000 operations nationwide, providing safe harbor and supply depots for boaters. In Kentucky, over 130 marina facilities served over 176,000 registered boats in the Commonwealth of Kentucky, from Fishtrap Lake in the east to Lake Barkley out west. In between in my district is the crown jewel of Kentucky's waterways, Lake Cumberland.

Over 5 million visitors a year jet ski, enjoy bass fishing and cruise the 40,000 acres of Lake Cumberland. Lake associated businesses, including the 11 large scale marina operations, generate over $160 million in economic activity for the region.

The lake area is famously dubbed the ''Houseboat Capital of the World,'' made famous by the prominence of world class houseboat manufacturing in Wayne, Pulaski and Russell Counties. These 100-foot houseboats are literally floating homes, with hot tubs, roof decks, full size kitchens, waterslides, grills, kitchens and the like. These boats are great venues for fishing trips, reunions or weekend escapes on the waterways across the Nation.

This resolution, Mr. Speaker, recognizes the essential role marinas and the men and women who own and operate them play in the United States, providing their communities and visitors a place where friends and families can come together for recreation, rest and relaxation.

I thank the committee for bringing this resolution through to the floor. I urge my colleagues to support this resolution and designation of National Marina Day.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve my time.

Mrs. DRAKE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. MILLER), the cochair of the Boating Caucus.

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentlelady yielding, and I certainly rise in strong support of House Resolution 343, which commemorates the marinas of the United States and expresses support for the sixth annual National Marina Day.

The purpose of National Marina Day is to inform the public about the important role that marinas do play in our local communities by providing a very safe, family-friendly venue to encourage the recreational boating industry, which can generate literally millions and billions of dollars in economic activity. The positive spin-off effects of marinas encourage the development of all kinds of businesses and restaurants to supplement the marinas' putting people to work.

Actually, in my home municipality of Harrison Township, Michigan, a huge part of our commercial tax base is marinas and recreational oriented businesses, and my congressional district is a shoreline waterfront district as well and our marinas play a very large role in the very identity of our region.

In the Great Lakes region alone, boating and marinas generate $4.3 billion annually. Actually, I grew up in the marina business. It was our family business as well as our hobby. So I know firsthand that marinas also provide an essential venue for recreational boating, which is an important part in creating a very high quality of life in a community.

While increasing access to our Nation's water resources, marinas also play an important role in keeping our Nation's water clean. Marinas provide an appropriate place to dispose of waste materials so that they are not discharged out into the waterways. Operators of marinas often play an important role in organizing cleanup efforts to collect marine debris to keep our waters clean.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, marinas are playing a very important role as well in the defense of our Nation. I say that because they have been partnering with the United States Coast Guard, and the marina operators and their customers are staying vigilant and keeping their eyes open for suspicious activity. Just as our truck drivers are our eyes and ears on the interstate, marina operators and their customers are really our eyes and ears on the waterway as well. Marina operators fill a critical role in keeping our Nation secure along our liquid borders, such as the one that my home State of Michigan shares with our great neighbors of Canada.

So I would certainly urge my colleagues to join me in support of this resolution.

Mrs. DRAKE. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, once again I want to thank Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky for this legislation, and I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of it.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of House Resolution 343, commemorating the marinas of the United States and expressing support for the designation of National Marina Day on August 11, 2007.

There are more than 12,000 marinas in the United States. They provide services and access for millions of recreational boaters to the lakes, rivers, and bays of the United States. In my State of Minnesota, marinas provide boaters access to thousands of lakes and the headwaters of the Mississippi River.

Each weekend, millions of Americans take to the water from marinas to enjoy fishing, kayaking, sailing, and just cruising down the river enjoying the water. Marinas make all of this happen. They employ more than 140,000 people whose sole purpose is to help boaters enjoy their time on the water safely.

On August 11, 2007, National Marina Day will focus on the role marinas play as safe, family-friendly gateways to boating, and the invaluable service marina operators and owners perform as stewards of the environment. Activities include fishing tournaments, boating

safety demonstrations, water sports, and environmental demonstrations.

We also recognize that the role of the marina operator has changed since September 2001. They are helping the Coast Guard and others keep an eye out for suspicious activities on the waterways. Marina operators are on the water every day. They know what is routine—and what looks suspicious. They are keeping a lookout for aggressive behavior, unusual diving, suspicious packages on bridges or terminals, and other activities that appear out of place.

Members of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure recognize the waterways of the United States as an important component of our national transportation system. However, these waterways also serve another important purpose: They allow people to have fun on the water. Marinas allow these types of recreational activities to occur.

I thank the gendeman from Kentucky (Mr. ROGERS) for introducing this resolution and urge my colleagues to join me in supporting House Resolution 343.

Mr. WHITFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the National Marina Day. Kentucky's Marinas aye a substantial impact on the Commonwealth's economy. The First District of Kentucky is home to many of the United States' most adored lakes, which provide recreation areas for Kentuckians and important habitats for fish and wildlife.

While it would be too exhaustive to name every lake, two of the largest lakes are Kentucky Lake and Lake Barkley. Together they create the Land Between the Lakes National Recreation Area, LBL. LBL contains nearly 17,000 acres of habitats, trails, and campsites, providing tourists with a wide array of outdoor experiences. A canal connecting Lake Barkley with Kentucky Lake forms one of the greatest freshwater recreational complexes in the country. This site has been used for numerous fishing tournaments and other outdoor events. These lakes are also home to many marinas that facilitate boating and fishing activities. Their presence helps ensure safe and reliable access to our lakes.

On the eastern side of my District is another exhilarating outdoor experience. Lake Cumberland is visited by more than 4.7 million people annually. According to the Travel Industry Association of America, the tourism economic impact for the four-county area, Clinton, Pulaski, Russell, Wayne, with access to the lake is $152.6 million. Recently, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers began a rehabilitation project at the Wolf Creek Dam on Lake Cumberland, which has impacted some of the marinas in the area. However, the lake continues to be a great recreation and vacation spot, and we welcome visitors to come enjoy the opportunities available at the lake.

Marinas are instrumental to recreation and tourism and that is why I stand today in support of this industry. I ask that my colleagues do the same by voting in favor of H. Res. 343 sponsored by U.S. Representative HAL ROGERS.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PASTOR). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 343, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

AUTHORIZING THE USE OF THE CAPITOL GROUNDS FOR THE GREATER WASHINGTON SOAP BOX DERBY

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 79) authorizing the use of the Capitol Grounds for the Greater Washington Soap Box Derby.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

H. CON. RES. 79

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring),

SECTION 1. AUTHORIZATION OF SOAP BOX DERBY RACES ON CAPITOL GROUNDS.

The Greater Washington Soap Box Derby Association (in this resolution referred to as the ''Association'') shall be permitted to sponsor a public event, soap box derby races, on the Capitol Grounds on June 16, 2007, or on such other date as the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Rules and Administration of the Senate may jointly designate.

SEC. 2. CONDITIONS.

The event to be carried out under this resolution shall be free of admission charge to the public and arranged not to interfere with the needs of Congress, under conditions to be prescribed by the Architect of the Capitol and the Capitol Police Board; except that the Association shall assume full responsibility for all expenses and liabilities incident to all activities associated with the event.

SEC. 3. STRUCTURES AND EQUIPMENT.

For the purposes of this resolution, the Association is authorized to erect upon the Capitol Grounds, subject to the approval of the Architect of the Capitol, such stage, sound amplification devices, and other related structures and equipment as may be required for the event to be carried out under this resolution.

SEC. 4. ADDITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS.

The Architect of the Capitol and the Capitol Police Board are authorized to make any such additional arrangements that may be required to carry out the event under this resolution.

SEC. 5. ENFORCEMENT OF RESTRICTIONS.

The Capitol Police Board shall provide for enforcement of the restrictions contained in section 5104(c) of title 40, United States Code, concerning sales, advertisements, displays, and solicitations on the Capitol Grounds, as well as other restrictions applicable to the Capitol Grounds, with respect to the event to be carried out under this resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) and the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. DRAKE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Maryland.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H. Con. Res. 79.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, House Concurrent Resolution authorizes the use of the Capitol Grounds for the 2007 Greater Washington Soap Box Derby. As with all events on the Capitol Hill, this event will be open to the public and free of charge. The event organizers will work with the Office of the Architect of the Capitol and the Capitol Hill Police to ensure all rules and regulations will be followed.

The 2007 Greater Washington Soap Box Derby takes place on Constitution Avenue between Delaware Avenue and Third Street, N.W., on June 16, 2007. This event has been held on the U.S. Capitol Grounds since 1991 and has attracted over 50 participants, ranging in ages from 8 to 17. Participants competing in the event will come from the metropolitan Washington, D.C. area. The D.C. metropolitan race winners from each age division will meet later in the summer in Akron, Ohio, to compete in the All American Soap Box Derby.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly support the resolution and reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. DRAKE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, House Concurrent Resolution 79 authorizes the use of the Capitol Grounds for the 66th Annual Greater Washington Soap Box Derby to be held on June 16, 2007. The event is open to the public and free of charge.

The Greater Washington Soap Box Derby is one of the largest qualifying races in the country. The races take place on Constitution Avenue between Delaware Avenue and Third Street, N.W. Participants are residents of the Washington Metropolitan area and range in age from 8 to 17. They compete in three open divisions depending on their level of expertise. The winners of these races will represent the Washington Metropolitan Area at the national finals held annually in Akron, Ohio.

The Annual Soap Box Derby is a wonderful summer tradition. I support this resolution, which continues our custom of authorizing the use of the Capitol Grounds for this exciting event, and urge my colleagues to do the same.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER), the majority leader, who is the sponsor of this resolution, one who has constantly put children first.

Mr. HOYER. I thank my friend for yielding and I congratulate him on his leadership of this subcommittee and

his leadership in our State of Maryland. I am proud to be Mr. CUMMINGS' colleague. I also thank the gentlelady from Virginia for her leadership in bringing this matter to the floor.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly sponsor this resolution allowing the Greater Washington Soap Box Derby Association to hold the 66th Annual Greater Washington Soap Box Derby on the Capitol Grounds on Saturday, June 16.

□ 1415

Our Nation's tradition of soapbox racing began, Mr. Speaker, as you may know, in 1934, when Myron E. Scott, a photographer for the Dayton Daily News, saw boys racing engineless cars down a hill. This inspired Mr. SCOTT to hold a race and award the winner with a ''loving cup.''

The first year, the race took place in Dayton, Ohio. The following year the race moved to Akron due to the city's numerous hills. With the hard work of countless civic organizations, a permanent track site for the youth racing classic was created with the assistance of the Works Progress Administration, affectionately known as the WPA.

Soapbox derby racing in our Nation's Capital has a long and rich tradition as well. In 1938, Norman Rocca beat out 223 other racers to win the inaugural Greater Washington Soapbox Derby, which was then held on New Hampshire Avenue.

Over the years, thousands of the region's young people have participated in this great race. Although the location has moved from the original site on New Hampshire Avenue to Capitol Hill, the essence of the race has remained the same: homemade gravity-powered cars, the spirit of competition, and the pure joy of racing.

The soapbox derby consists of dozens of drivers, both boys and girls, ranging in ages from 8 to 17. These racers are divided into three divisions: stock, superstock and masters. The local winner of each division will automatically qualify to compete with racers from around the world in the 70th All-American Soapbox Derby in Akron, Ohio, on July 26.

The festivities in Akron begin when the racers receive a police escort into town and conclude in the winner's circle with the awarding of scholarships and merchandise. In between, the racers and their families participate in a whirlwind of activities that leave them with enduring friendships and memories that last a lifetime.

Mr. Speaker, this event has been called ''the greatest amateur racing event in the world,'' and it is an excellent opportunity for the contestants from the District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia to learn basic building skills while gaining a real sense of accomplishment and competition.

I strongly encourage my colleagues to join with me and the other original cosponsors, Representatives FRANK WOLF, JAMES MORAN, ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON, AL WYNN, and CHRIS VAN HOLLEN, as well as Mr. CUMMINGS and Mrs. DRAKE, in supporting this resolution, which honors such an extraordinary and in some respects uniquely American event here on Capitol Hill.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I join the Majority Leader (Mr. HOYER) and Ms. NORTON, along with Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. MORAN of Virginia, Mr. WOLF, and Mr. WYNN in supporting House Concurrent Resolution 79, to authorize use of the Capitol Grounds for the Greater Washington Soap Box Derby. I especially want to acknowledge the dedication of Mr. HOYER, who faithfully introduces this resolution each year to authorize use of the Capitol Grounds for this wonderful event.

This annual event encourages all boys and girls, ages eight through 17, to construct and operate their own soap box vehicles. The Washington event, which attracts a great number of spectators and extensive media coverage, has grown in size and has become one of the best-attended events in the country. The winner in each of three age divisions wins a trip to the national race in Akron, Ohio. The Washington Soap Box Derby is supported by hundreds of volunteers and parents.

The principles of aerodynamics are combined with fun and excitement for all participants and their families in the Greater Washington area. It is an excellent opportunity for parents to have direct involvement in their children's activities. The derby's mission is to provide children with an activity that promotes technical and social skills that will serve them throughout their lives.

This year, the Greater Washington Soap Box Derby is scheduled for June 16.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting House Concurrent Resolution 79.

Mrs. DRAKE. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote for this wonderful resolution, and with that I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 79.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the concurrent resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PROMOTING NATIONAL SAFE BOATING WEEK

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 386) recognizing the Coast Guard, the Coast Guard Auxiliary, and the National Safe Boating Council for their efforts to promote National Safe Boating Week, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 386

Whereas recreational boating is one of our Nation's most popular pastimes, with an estimated 78,000,000 recreational boaters in the United States and nearly 13,000,000 recreational vessels registered;

Whereas the number of recreational boating fatalities has declined by more than half since 1970, thanks to the increased use of life jackets, cooperative boating safety education, enforcement efforts between the Coast Guard and State governments, and safer vessels and equipment manufactured in accordance with Coast Guard standards;

Whereas recreational boating accidents have nevertheless claimed the lives of 697 Americans in 2005, more than half of whose lives could have been saved with the proper use of a personal flotation device;

Whereas a continued emphasis on accident prevention can reduce recreational boating fatalities still further, and in particular deaths by drowning, which remain the leading cause of recreational boating fatalities; and

Whereas boating safety organizations, with the support of the Coast Guard and the Coast Guard Auxiliary, have proposed designating the week of May 19 through 25, 2007, as National Safe Boating Week: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) supports initiatives for recreational boating safety education and accident prevention to minimize the number of annual recreational boating fatalities;

(2) recognizes the Coast Guard, the Coast Guard Auxiliary, and other boating safety organizations for their efforts each year during May to highlight the importance of safe recreational boating; and

(3) supports the goals of National Safe Boating Week.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) and the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. DRAKE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Maryland.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on H. Res. 386.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, as the chairman of the Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation, I rise today in support of H. Res. 386, as amended.

This resolution recognizes the goals of National Safe Boating Week and recognizes the Coast Guard and the Coast Guard Auxiliary for the outstanding work that they do to keep boaters safe and to rescue those in distress at sea.

Like so many other of the critical safety awareness campaigns in the transportation field, National Safe Boating Week came about through the dedication of a concerned voluntary group. The North American Safe Boating Campaign began some 50 years ago this year. In 1958, a year after the campaign began, Congress passed a joint resolution that authorized and requested the President to designate the week prior to Memorial Day weekend as National Safe Boating Week.

In keeping with this tradition, this year, on May 10, President Bush again

designated the week before Memorial Day as National Safe Boating Week. According to the Coast Guard, as of 2005, there were just under 13 million registered recreational boats in the United States. In 2005 a total of 4,969 recreational boating accidents were reported to the Coast Guard, although it is likely that there were many more accidents that were never reported.

According to the Coast Guard, the leading types of recreational boating accidents were collisions and falls overboard. Careless inattention on the part of a boat's operator was the largest single cause of recreational boating accidents in 2005.

However, the use of alcohol was the largest cause of accidents that resulted in fatalities. Simply put, mixing boats and alcohol can yield the same fatal results that mixing cars and alcohol can yield. In 2005, recreational boating accidents caused nearly 3,500 injuries and nearly 700 deaths. Total deaths in 2005 were down approximately 25 percent below the total of 924 fatalities experienced in 1991. Unfortunately, however, recreational boating deaths in 2005 increased after 3 straight years of steady decline.

The Coast Guard reports that of the nearly 700 people who died in recreational boating accidents in 2005, 491 died as a result of drowning and 426 of those who drowned were not wearing a life jacket. In my own State of Maryland, 13 of the 15 people who died in recreational boating accidents drowned.

In response to the prevalence of drowning as the cause of death among recreational boaters, the theme of this year's National Safe Boating Week is simply ''Wear It.'' This imperative emphasizes the singular importance of the use of personal flotation devices during recreational boating.

Importantly, however, it is not enough merely to have a personal flotational device on board a boat. Recreational boaters must familiarize themselves with the use of life jackets and should also take the time to experience swimming while wearing the device.

I commend all those in our Nation's boating clubs who work year round to train recreational boaters on safe boating practices and to maintain awareness of safe boating practices.

In closing, I want to recognize the outstanding work that the Coast Guard performs preserving life at sea. I have often said they are our thin blue line at sea, and that they are. Last year the Coast Guard saved more than 4,400 lives in the course of its search and rescue operations, many of which were performed under very difficult and dangerous circumstances.

Just yesterday, we were again reminded of the incredible dedication and skill that the Coast Guard brings to their work when they coordinated the successful evacuation of a reported 281 passengers and crew members from the Empress of the North cruise ship off the coast of Alaska.

Finally, I want to remember the Coast Guardsmen who have been lost this year, and all who have died in our Nation's service. I thank all of the members of the Coast Guard for their outstanding work. I also thank them for their work in the gulf coast during the Hurricane Katrina storm.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. DRAKE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I introduced House Resolution 386 last week which recognizes the important work of the Coast Guard, the Coast Guard Auxiliary, and National Safe Boating Council in promoting boating safety.

I represent a district in which recreational boating plays an extremely important role in the lives of many constituents. Sailors, water sports enthusiasts, and fishermen are active recreational boaters in the Chesapeake Bay and in Virginia's coastal waters.

Recreational boating is one of the Nation's most popular pastimes, and while the number of recreational boating fatalities has declined by more than half since 1970, many lives are still lost each year. And, unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, there are far too many of us who have lost friends or family members.

More than half of these lives could be saved with the proper use of boating safety equipment. The Coast Guard and States continue to work closely together to promote boating safety and to decrease the number of accidents, injuries and fatalities on U.S. waters, and they should be commended for their efforts.

Congress took action in 2005 to support State and Federal boating safety programs by establishing the Sport Fishing and Recreational Boating Safety trust fund. In fiscal year 2006, more than $92 million in recreational boating safety State grants were provided to the States and U.S. territories from revenues that were wholly derived from Federal taxes on marine fuels and fishing equipment. This funding supports programs that encourage the use of personal flotation devices and other safe boating practices and are critical in safeguarding the recreational boating public.

This resolution highlights the importance of safe recreational boating, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, we have no additional speakers, so I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. DRAKE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. MILLER).

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in very strong support of H. Res. 386, commending the efforts of the United States Coast Guard, the Coast Guard Auxiliary, and the National Safe Boating Council for their efforts to promote National Safe Boating Week.

I actually grew up in the boating industry. My family was in the marine business and still today our family hobby is boating. As well, I serve as co-chair of the Congressional Boating Caucus, and I know firsthand the benefits and enjoyment to be had from boating, but also the serious risks associated with irresponsible boating practices.

While my home State of Michigan actually has the third most registered boats of any State in the Nation, unfortunately that great enjoyment of our nautical culture goes hand in hand with the many stories each year of boating accidents. We hear about persons lost overboard, or collisions or just reckless boating which results in accidents each year, many of them sadly ending in death that occurred while individuals were enjoying their favorite activity out on the water.

The Coast Guard, the Coast Guard Auxiliary, and the National Safe Boating Council have taken it upon themselves to promote safe boating practices every day of the year, but especially they emphasize these goals during National Safe Boating Week. House Resolution 386 commends these groups for their service in this field.

Mr. Speaker, some of the principles that are espoused by the National Safe Boating Week include the proper use of personal flotation devices or observing the rules of the road like who has the right-of-way, just understanding port from starboard, attending a boating education course, and avoiding the use of alcohol while operating a boat. All of these things can significantly cut down on the number of on-the-water accidents and help everybody enjoy their time on the lakes, rivers, bays, and oceans we are absolutely so very blessed to have in our great country.

It is my pleasure to support this resolution, as well as all of the groups that it commends. In fact, I want to make note that my congressional district is a shoreline district and I also want to say thanks as well to all of the sheriff's marine divisions that operate not only in my counties but all around the Great Lakes basin and throughout our great Nation as well. They play a critical role in keeping our waterways safe. I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

Mrs. DRAKE. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN).

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. I thank the gentlelady for the time.

Mr. Speaker, I think that the introduction of this legislation is very important, because it honors our Coast Guard, our Coast Guard Auxiliary and the National Safe Boating Council.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the brave men and women of our Coast Guard and our Coast Guard Auxiliary, including those that work at Coast Guard Sector Key West in my congressional district. They work night and day to keep our

Nation's waterways safe. Without their tireless dedication and outstanding service, we would not have such a superb safety record on our oceans, on our lakes and on our rivers.

Recreational and commercial boating is also a big part of life for my district, Congressional District 18 in Florida, and our citizens truly appreciate the hard work and the dedication of the Coast Guard patrolling our Nation's waters.

I will also once again express my deep appreciation for the remarkable work that our Coast Guard and Auxiliary does on behalf of the public as we celebrate the upcoming National Safe Boating Week, and I thank the gentlelady for introducing this legislation.

Mrs. DRAKE. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Very briefly, we want to again congratulate Mrs. DRAKE on the sponsorship of this legislation. It is very important.

One of the things our Subcommittee on the Coast Guard just recently had, we had a hearing with regard to fishing safety. One of the interesting things that came forth during that discussion and during that hearing was how the industry was so very much interested in making sure that there was boating safety, and they wanted to make sure that their industry was regulated.

□ 1430

That was very pleasing to our ears. So it is with that, Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to vote in favor of this legislation.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of House Resolution 386, recognizing the Coast Guard, the Coast Guard Auxiliary, and other boating safety organizations for their efforts to promote National Safe Boating Week.

National Safe Boating Week is really about educating boaters. In 2005, there were 697 boating fatalities in the United States. The leading cause of death in a boating accident is drowning. Of the 491 people that drowned in 2003, almost 90 percent were not wearing a lifejacket. It is estimated that more than 50 percent of these deaths could have been prevent by proper use of a Personal Flotation Device.

The Coast Guard Auxiliary, and its 27,000 members, are on our Nation's waterways every day conducting voluntary safe boating examinations and educating the public about safe boating practices. In addition, the Auxiliary conducts harbor patrols, assists in search and rescue and marine environmental protection, and conducts boating safety courses; volunteering more than 2 million hours annually to benefit their fellow boaters.

Boating safety organizations, such as the National Safe Boating Council, educate recreational boaters about safety issues. As the summer boating season begins, they have some simple recommendations for boaters:

Do wear a Life Jacket. They Float. You Don't.

Don't mix alcohol and boating.

Do observe the nautical rules-of-the-road.

Don't stand in a small boat.

Do check the weather forecast before getting underway.

Don't overload your boat.

Do keep a good lookout.

Mr. Speaker, this House should help educate the boating public about prudent safety measures that can help save their lives.

I strongly urge my colleagues to join me in supporting House Resolution 386 and help bring more attention to the importance of boating safety.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 386, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

The title was amended so as to read: ''Resolution recognizing the Coast Guard, the Coast Guard Auxiliary, and other boating safety organizations for their efforts to promote National Safe Boating Week''.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF NATIONAL EOSINOPHIL AWARENESS WEEK

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 296) supporting the goals and ideals of National Eosinophil Awareness Week, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 296

Whereas the term ''eosinophilic disorders'' is a general term used to describe a group of diseases and disorders caused by the production of too many white blood cells called eosinophils;

Whereas eosinophilic disorders patients suffer from their immune system attacking their body's own normal, healthy tissue, resulting in inflammation or swelling;

Whereas an estimated 50,000 people are affected by eosinophilic disorders in the United States, many of whom remain undiagnosed or misdiagnosed;

Whereas inflammatory eosinophilic disorders are thought to be both allergic and autoimmune diseases, such that the body's immune system, which normally fights infections and viruses, mistakes common food proteins and environmental allergens as foreign;

Whereas eosinophilic disorders cause chronic illness that significantly impacts a person's quality of life and ability to attend school and work, and dramatically alters dietary lifestyles;

Whereas some eosinophilic disorders cause life-threatening and sometimes fatal illnesses by causing inflammation of the vital organs, such as the heart, lungs, kidney, and gastrointestinal tract;

Whereas eosinophilic disorders are difficult to diagnose and treatment is often delayed, resulting in unnecessary suffering;

Whereas many patients with eosinophilic disorders often have severe long-term disabilities as well as the severe limitations imposed by the disease itself;

Whereas some eosinophilic disorder patients will suffer permanent irreversible organ damage as a result of delays in diagnosis and proper treatment; and

Whereas the American Partnership For Eosinophilic Disorders has identified the third week of May as an appropriate time to recognize National Eosinophil Awareness Week in order to educate communities across the Nation about eosinophilic disorders and the need for research funding, accurate diagnosis, and effective treatments: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) supports the goals and ideals of National Eosinophil Awareness Week; and

(2) encourages health care providers and the American Partnership for Eosinophilic Disorders to increase education and awareness regarding eosinophilic disorders.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. CAPPS) and the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Mrs. MYRICK) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 296, recognizing National Eosinophil Awareness Week, and I commend my colleague Congressman JOHN LARSON for bringing attention to this issue.

Eosinophilic disorders are devastating as patients literally suffer from an attack on their bodies by their own immune systems. They are chronic disorders that have no cure and can even be fatal. Because they are rare, patients often go undiagnosed or misdiagnosed.

And as a nurse, I have seen intimately how heartbreaking it is for a patient and his or her family to go through test after test while suffering all the while from an unidentifiable condition.

That is why I support this resolution, calling for greater awareness of eosinophilic disorders and encouraging health care providers to increase education about these diseases.

I urge my colleagues to support this resolution as well.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. MYRICK. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I am pleased to speak on behalf of this bill which does promote awareness about eosinophil disorders. These are little known disorders that are thought

to be both allergic and autoimmune in nature. The body produces white blood cells in higher than normal amounts, and it attacks food proteins and tissues as a result.

The patients who have this chronic disease suffer a variety of symptoms, and of course it is sometimes life-threatening. As of now, there's no known cure.

I know Mr. LARSON is going to be speaking on this because he personally has firsthand knowledge.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield such time as he may consume to my colleague from Connecticut (Mr. LARSON).

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from California for yielding but also for her continued outstanding service in the United States Congress and bringing the knowledge of her profession and her expertise to this body on a regular basis and especially the compassion that's needed for so many of those who suffer from eosinophilic disorder, more than 50,000 in this Nation.

I want to applaud my colleague from North Carolina, also, Representative MYRICK, for her cosponsoring this legislation and understanding as well the importance that this has for so many families who oftentimes are the ones who suffer along with the patient because of lack of diagnosis, and then also because of the way Representative CAPPS has described the nature of this disease, what it does to the patient that it attacks when the white blood cells in your own system begin to attack itself and creates the disorders that it does, often resulting in people having to be fed by tubes. You can imagine the tremendous stress that this causes on the parts of parents and of course family members.

This bill comes before us not because of me, but because of a courageous woman like LOIS CAPPS and like SUE MYRICK who understand what families go through when they face issues like this.

I was fortunate to have Dr. Wendy Book from my district in Connecticut, who resides in Gastonbury, a doctor herself, as well as her husband, come before me to talk about this disorder because of their desire to make sure that the Nation be made aware of what so many children are suffering from.

She was joined by Beth Mays, who together are the co-founders of the American Partnership for Eosinophilic Disorders. When Dr. Book's son Ryan was sick before his first birthday, doctors sent him home with a feeding tube and no explanation for his mysterious illness. This illness went undiagnosed for 2 more years. Now, this Ryan, his parents are doctors. They are in the field, and so for doctors to be as confounded by a lack of understanding or a diagnosis, imagine the consternation that they feel, and then exemplify that by how other parents must feel who do not come from similar professions.

And so they felt in founding this organization, this partnership, that what was needed across the country was awareness and understanding. Quite frankly, what's also needed is funding, but it has to start in a place of education, awareness and understanding, and as most pieces of critical legislation do, it comes not from a Member of Congress, but it comes from a constituent, a citizen, who has the temerity to stand up and speak out for suffering that a neighbor or one of their own children is going through.

As Mrs. CAPPS pointed out, sometimes there is no cure or the diagnosis eludes all the best efforts of professions, but it is getting better, and with awareness, they know they can deal with this going forward.

Hospitals in Cincinnati, and most notably, the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, where I visited personally, are working hard at identifying this disorder and helping parents and working with them. I want to commend the work of Dr. Chris Lancouris and Dr. Jonathan Spergel and especially Michelle Shuker who spent so much time dealing with the parents and helping them through this process.

As someone who has a son who has an illness that has gone undiagnosed, I empathize deeply with parents who go through this experience and understand deeply the need for education, the need for better understanding, and the responsibility that we share as Members of Congress to do our part, to first educate the public with respect to this disorder, but then secondly and more hopefully, to make sure that we follow through by funding and assisting.

But what you have to step back and admire, however, is the courage of these parents who, without their love and devotion and care for their children, without their consistent nurturing and support, you wonder what would happen to these children. But because of their courage and because of their ability to come forth and speak out about this, hopefully through resolutions like this and greater understanding we will be able to assist them and help them and assist families, and their not-for-profit organization will get the support that it needs, will create the understanding that it needs and provide the much needed relief for the children who are afflicted and the families that deal with this problem.

So I thank Representative CAPPS and I thank Representative MYRICK and a number of cosponsors on this legislation for having come forward and assisted in bringing this to the forefront.

There will be members from this association on the Hill tomorrow going to various House Members and to their offices and talking with them and their staff about this disorder. Please listen to them. Take them into your heart. It is an important issue and vital not only for their children, their families, but I dare say for all of us in the country. It speaks volumes to the better angels that we have here in the United States Congress and our willingness to reach out and assist the constituents we are sworn to serve.

Mrs. MYRICK. Mr. Speaker, I have no more speakers, and I would like to inquire of the gentlewoman if she has any more speakers.

Mrs. CAPPS. I have no more speakers.

Mrs. MYRICK. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. CAPPS. As I indicated, I have no more speakers, either, but I do want to say a word of thanks to my colleague from North Carolina. We serve on the same committee. This is an issue that we both care about, but particular thanks to my colleague from Connecticut for reaffirming in me one of the major reasons that I am pleased to be part of this body, which was illustrated by his comments regarding his constituent.

As he observed their personal experience and was able to relate some of his own is when we do the work of the people, to carry the pain and suffering, if you will, the unanswered questions and the concerns, and to do the people's work by first creating an awareness of a situation. We have many issues before us, but for a family with a person diagnosed with an eosinophilic condition, it is a major, major part of their lives.

And we owe a responsibility and it is a privilege and a honor to carry their concerns to this body, to take this first step of recognition and to be welcoming to those who come with personal experiences to our office doors tomorrow and then to learn what the next step after this one might be and to stand ready as elected officials to work on behalf of those who simply desire to relieve the pain and suffering of dear and loved members of their family.

So I thank both of my colleagues for bringing this to the floor.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. CAPPS) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 296.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on motions to suspend the rules previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

H.R. 634, by the yeas and nays;

H.R. 692, by the yeas and nays;

H.R. 916, by the yeas and nays;

H.R. 1700, by the yeas and nays;

H.R. 1773, by the yeas and nays.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. Remaining electronic votes will be conducted as 5-minute votes.

AMERICAN VETERANS DISABLED FOR LIFE COMMEMORATIVE COIN ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 634, as amended, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MOORE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 634, as amended.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 416, nays 0, not voting 16, as follows:

[Roll No. 345]

YEAS—416

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Aderholt
Akin
Alexander
Allen
Altmire
Andrews
Arcuri
Baca
Bachmann
Bachus
Baird
Baker
Baldwin
Barrett (SC)
Barrow
Barton (TX)
Bean
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
Berry
Biggert
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blumenauer
Blunt
Boehner
Bonner
Bono
Boozman
Boren
Boswell
Boucher
Boustany
Boyd (FL)
Boyda (KS)
Brady (TX)
Braley (IA)
Brown (SC)
Brown, Corrine
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Buchanan
Burgess
Burton (IN)
Butterfield
Buyer
Calvert
Camp (MI)
Campbell (CA)
Cannon
Cantor
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carney
Carson
Carter
Castle
Castor
Chabot
Chandler
Clarke
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coble
Cohen
Cole (OK)
Conaway
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Costello
Courtney
Cramer
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (IL)
Davis (KY)
Davis, David
Davis, Lincoln
Davis, Tom
Deal (GA)
DeFazio
DeGette
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Donnelly
Doolittle
Doyle
Drake
Dreier
Duncan
Edwards
Ehlers
Ellison
Ellsworth
Emanuel
Emerson
English (PA)
Eshoo
Etheridge
Everett
Fallin
Farr
Feeney
Ferguson
Filner
Flake
Forbes
Fortenberry
Fossella
Foxx
Frank (MA)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Gerlach
Giffords
Gilchrest
Gillibrand
Gillmor
Gingrey
Gohmert
Gonzalez
Goode
Goodlatte
Gordon
Granger
Graves
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Hall (NY)
Hall (TX)
Hare
Harman
Hastert
Hastings (FL)
Hastings (WA)
Hayes
Heller
Hensarling
Herger
Herseth Sandlin
Higgins
Hill
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Hirono
Hobson
Hodes
Hoekstra
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hooley
Hoyer
Hulshof
Inglis (SC)
Inslee
Israel
Issa
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jefferson
Jindal
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jones (NC)
Jones (OH)
Jordan
Kagen
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Keller
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilpatrick
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kirk
Klein (FL)
Kline (MN)
Knollenberg
Kucinich
Kuhl (NY)
LaHood
Lamborn
Lampson
Langevin
Lantos
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
LaTourette
Lee
Levin
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (GA)
Lewis (KY)
Linder
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lucas
Lungren, Daniel E.
Lynch
Mack
Mahoney (FL)
Maloney (NY)
Manzullo
Marchant
Markey
Marshall
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (CA)
McCarthy (NY)
McCaul (TX)
McCollum (MN)
McCotter
McCrery
McDermott
McGovern
McHenry
McHugh
McIntyre
McKeon
McNerney
McNulty
Meehan
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Melancon
Mica
Michaud
Miller (MI)
Miller (NC)
Miller, Gary
Miller, George
Mitchell
Mollohan
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Moran (KS)
Moran (VA)
Murphy (CT)
Murphy, Patrick
Murphy, Tim
Murtha
Musgrave
Myrick
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Neugebauer
Nunes
Oberstar
Obey
Olver
Ortiz
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Payne
Pearce
Pence
Perlmutter
Peterson (MN)
Peterson (PA)
Petri
Platts
Poe
Pomeroy
Porter
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Pryce (OH)
Putnam
Radanovich
Rahall
Ramstad
Rangel
Regula
Rehberg
Reichert
Renzi
Reyes
Reynolds
Rodriguez
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothman
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Salazar
Sali
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Saxton
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schmidt
Schwartz
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sestak
Shadegg
Shays
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuler
Shuster
Simpson
Sires
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Solis
Souder
Space
Spratt
Stark
Stearns
Stupak
Sullivan
Sutton
Tanner
Tauscher
Taylor
Terry
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Tierney
Towns
Turner
Udall (CO)
Udall (NM)
Upton
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walberg
Walden (OR)
Walsh (NY)
Walz (MN)
Wamp
Waters
Watson
Watt
Waxman
Weiner
Welch (VT)
Weldon (FL)
Weller
Westmoreland
Wexler
Whitfield
Wicker
Wilson (NM)
Wilson (OH)
Wilson (SC)
Wolf
Woolsey
Wu
Wynn
Yarmuth
Young (AK)
Young (FL)

NOT VOTING—16

Bartlett (MD)
Brady (PA)
Cubin
Davis, Jo Ann
Engel
Fattah
Gutierrez
Hunter
McMorris Rodgers
Miller (FL)
Nadler
Paul
Pickering
Pitts
Tancredo
Wasserman Schultz

□ 1510

Mr. STEARNS changed his vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ARMY SPECIALIST JOSEPH P. MICKS FEDERAL FLAG CODE AMENDMENT ACT OF 2007

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 692, as amended, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. STUPAK) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 692, as amended.

This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 408, nays 4, not voting 20, as follows:

[Roll No. 346]

YEAS—408

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Aderholt
Akin
Alexander
Allen
Altmire
Andrews
Arcuri
Baca
Bachmann
Baird
Baker
Baldwin
Barrett (SC)
Barrow
Barton (TX)
Bean
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
Berry
Biggert
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blumenauer
Blunt
Boehner
Bonner
Bono
Boozman
Boren
Boswell
Boucher
Boustany
Boyd (FL)
Boyda (KS)
Brady (TX)
Braley (IA)
Brown (SC)
Brown, Corrine
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Buchanan
Burgess
Burton (IN)
Butterfield
Buyer
Calvert
Camp (MI)
Cannon
Cantor
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carney
Carson
Carter
Castle
Castor
Chabot
Chandler
Clarke
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coble
Cohen
Cole (OK)
Conaway
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Costello
Courtney
Cramer
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (IL)
Davis (KY)
Davis, David
Davis, Lincoln
Davis, Tom
Deal (GA)
DeFazio
DeGette
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Donnelly
Doolittle
Doyle
Drake
Dreier
Duncan
Edwards
Ehlers
Ellison
Ellsworth
Emanuel
Emerson
English (PA)
Eshoo
Etheridge
Everett
Fallin
Farr
Feeney
Ferguson
Filner
Forbes
Fortenberry
Fossella
Foxx
Frank (MA)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Gerlach
Giffords
Gilchrest
Gillibrand
Gillmor
Gingrey
Gohmert
Gonzalez
Goode
Goodlatte
Gordon
Granger
Graves
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Hall (NY)
Hall (TX)
Hare
Harman
Hastings (FL)
Hastings (WA)
Hayes
Heller
Hensarling
Herger
Herseth Sandlin
Higgins
Hill
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Hirono
Hobson
Hodes
Hoekstra
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hooley
Hoyer
Hulshof
Inglis (SC)
Inslee
Israel
Issa
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jefferson
Jindal
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jones (NC)
Jones (OH)
Jordan
Kagen
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Keller
Kennedy
Kildee

Kilpatrick
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kirk
Klein (FL)
Kline (MN)
Knollenberg
Kucinich
Kuhl (NY)
LaHood
Lamborn
Lampson
Langevin
Lantos
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
LaTourette
Lee
Levin
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (GA)
Lewis (KY)
Linder
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lucas
Lungren, Daniel E.
Lynch
Mack
Mahoney (FL)
Maloney (NY)
Manzullo
Marchant
Markey
Marshall
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (CA)
McCarthy (NY)
McCaul (TX)
McCollum (MN)
McCotter
McCrery
McDermott
McGovern
McHenry
McHugh
McIntyre
McKeon
McNerney
McNulty
Meehan
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Melancon
Mica
Michaud
Miller (MI)
Miller (NC)
Miller, Gary
Miller, George
Mitchell
Mollohan
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Moran (KS)
Moran (VA)
Murphy (CT)
Murphy, Patrick
Murphy, Tim
Murtha
Musgrave
Myrick
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Neugebauer
Nunes
Oberstar
Obey
Olver
Ortiz
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Payne
Pearce
Pence
Perlmutter
Peterson (MN)
Petri
Platts
Poe
Pomeroy
Porter
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Pryce (OH)
Putnam
Radanovich
Rahall
Ramstad
Rangel
Regula
Rehberg
Reichert
Renzi
Reyes
Reynolds
Rodriguez
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothman
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Salazar
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Saxton
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schmidt
Schwartz
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sestak
Shays
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuler
Shuster
Simpson
Sires
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Solis
Souder
Space
Spratt
Stark
Stearns
Stupak
Sullivan
Sutton
Tanner
Tauscher
Taylor
Terry
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Tierney
Towns
Turner
Udall (CO)
Udall (NM)
Upton
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walberg
Walden (OR)
Walsh (NY)
Walz (MN)
Wamp
Waters
Watson
Watt
Waxman
Weiner
Welch (VT)
Weldon (FL)
Weller
Westmoreland
Wexler
Whitfield
Wicker
Wilson (NM)
Wilson (OH)
Wilson (SC)
Wolf
Woolsey
Wu
Wynn
Yarmuth
Young (AK)
Young (FL)

NAYS—4

Campbell (CA)
Flake
Sessions
Shadegg

NOT VOTING—20

Bachus
Bartlett (MD)
Brady (PA)
Cubin
Davis, Jo Ann
Engel
Fattah
Gutierrez
Hastert
Hunter
McMorris Rodgers
Miller (FL)
Nadler
Paul
Peterson (PA)
Pickering
Pitts
Sali
Tancredo
Wasserman Schultz

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). Members are advised that there are 2 minutes left in this vote.

□ 1516

Mr. NUNES changed his vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

JOHN R. JUSTICE PROSECUTORS AND DEFENDERS INCENTIVE ACT OF 2007

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 916, as amended, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 916, as amended.

This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 341, nays 73, not voting 18, as follows:

[Roll No. 347]

YEAS—341

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Alexander
Allen
Altmire
Andrews
Arcuri
Baca
Bachus
Baird
Baker
Baldwin
Barrow
Bean
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
Berry
Biggert
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bishop (UT)
Blumenauer
Bonner
Bono
Boozman
Boren
Boswell
Boucher
Boustany
Boyd (FL)
Boyda (KS)
Brady (TX)
Braley (IA)
Brown, Corrine
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Buchanan
Burgess
Butterfield
Calvert
Camp (MI)
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carney
Carson
Carter
Castle
Castor
Chabot
Chandler
Clarke
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Cole (OK)
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Costello
Courtney
Cramer
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (IL)
Davis, Lincoln
Deal (GA)
DeFazio
DeGette
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Donnelly
Doyle
Drake
Dreier
Edwards
Ehlers
Ellison
Emanuel
Emerson
English (PA)
Eshoo
Etheridge
Everett
Fallin
Farr
Ferguson
Filner
Forbes
Fortenberry
Frank (MA)
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Gerlach
Giffords
Gilchrest
Gillibrand
Gillmor
Gingrey
Gohmert
Gonzalez
Gordon
Granger
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Hall (NY)
Hall (TX)
Hare
Harman
Hastings (FL)
Hastings (WA)
Heller
Herseth Sandlin
Higgins
Hill
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Hirono
Hobson
Hodes
Hoekstra
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hooley
Hoyer
Hulshof
Inslee
Israel
Issa
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jefferson
Jindal
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, E. B.
Jones (OH)
Kagen
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Keller
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilpatrick
Kind
King (NY)
Kingston
Kirk
Klein (FL)
Knollenberg
Kucinich
LaHood
Lampson
Langevin
Lantos
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
LaTourette
Lee
Levin
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (GA)
Linder
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lucas
Lungren, Daniel E.
Lynch
Mahoney (FL)
Maloney (NY)
Markey
Marshall
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (CA)
McCarthy (NY)
McCaul (TX)
McCollum (MN)
McCotter
McCrery
McDermott
McGovern
McHugh
McIntyre
McKeon
McNerney
McNulty
Meehan
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Melancon
Mica
Michaud
Miller (MI)
Miller (NC)
Miller, George
Mitchell
Mollohan
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Moran (KS)
Moran (VA)
Murphy (CT)
Murphy, Patrick
Murphy, Tim
Murtha
Musgrave
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Nunes
Oberstar
Obey
Olver
Ortiz
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Payne
Perlmutter
Peterson (MN)
Peterson (PA)
Platts
Poe
Pomeroy
Porter
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Pryce (OH)
Putnam
Radanovich
Rahall
Ramstad
Rangel
Regula
Reichert
Renzi
Reyes
Rodriguez
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (MI)
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothman
Roybal-Allard
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Salazar
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Saxton
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schmidt
Schwartz
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Serrano
Sestak
Shays
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuler
Shuster
Simpson
Sires
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Solis
Space
Spratt
Stark
Stupak
Sutton
Tanner
Tauscher
Taylor
Terry
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Tierney
Towns
Turner
Udall (CO)
Udall (NM)
Upton
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walberg
Walz (MN)
Wamp
Waters
Watson
Watt
Waxman
Weiner
Welch (VT)
Weller
Westmoreland
Wexler
Whitfield
Wicker
Wilson (NM)
Wilson (OH)
Wilson (SC)
Wolf
Woolsey
Wu
Wynn
Yarmuth
Young (FL)

NAYS—73

Aderholt
Akin
Bachmann
Barrett (SC)
Barton (TX)
Bilbray
Blackburn
Blunt
Boehner
Brown (SC)
Burton (IN)
Campbell (CA)
Cannon
Cantor
Coble
Conaway
Culberson
Davis (KY)
Davis, David
Davis, Tom
Doolittle
Duncan
Ellsworth
Feeney
Flake
Fossella
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Garrett (NJ)
Goode
Goodlatte
Graves
Hastert
Hayes
Hensarling
Herger
Inglis (SC)
Johnson, Sam
Jones (NC)
Jordan
King (IA)
Kline (MN)
Kuhl (NY)
Lamborn
Lewis (KY)
Mack
Manzullo
Marchant
McHenry
Miller, Gary
Myrick
Neugebauer
Pence
Petri
Rehberg
Reynolds
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Royce
Ryan (WI)
Sali
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shadegg
Smith (NE)
Souder
Stearns
Sullivan
Thornberry
Walden (OR)
Walsh (NY)
Weldon (FL)
Young (AK)

NOT VOTING—18

Bartlett (MD)
Brady (PA)
Buyer
Cubin
Davis, Jo Ann
Engel
Fattah
Gutierrez
Hunter
McMorris Rodgers
Miller (FL)
Nadler
Paul
Pearce
Pickering
Pitts
Tancredo
Wasserman Schultz

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). Members are advised that 2 minutes are left in this vote.

□ 1524

Mr. MARCHANT and Mr. GRAVES changed their vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

Mr. KINGSTON changed his vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

COPS IMPROVEMENTS ACT OF 2007

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1700, as amended, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1700, as amended.

This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 381, nays 34, not voting 17, as follows:

[Roll No. 348]

YEAS—381

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Aderholt
Akin
Alexander
Altmire
Andrews
Arcuri
Baca
Bachmann
Baird
Baker
Baldwin
Barrow
Barton (TX)
Bean
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
Berry
Biggert
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blumenauer
Blunt
Boehner
Bonner
Bono
Boozman
Boren
Boswell
Boucher
Boustany
Boyd (FL)
Boyda (KS)
Brady (TX)
Braley (IA)
Brown (SC)
Brown, Corrine
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Buchanan
Burgess
Burton (IN)
Butterfield
Calvert
Camp (MI)
Cantor
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carney
Carson
Carter
Castle
Castor
Chabot
Chandler
Clarke
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coble
Cohen
Cole (OK)
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Costello
Courtney
Cramer
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (IL)
Davis (KY)
Davis, David
Davis, Lincoln
Davis, Tom
DeFazio
DeGette
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Donnelly
Doyle
Drake
Dreier
Edwards
Ellison
Ellsworth
Emanuel
Emerson
English (PA)
Eshoo
Etheridge
Everett
Fallin
Farr
Feeney
Ferguson
Filner
Forbes
Fortenberry
Fossella
Frank (MA)
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Gerlach
Giffords
Gilchrest
Gillibrand
Gillmor
Gohmert
Gonzalez
Goode
Goodlatte
Gordon
Granger
Graves
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Hall (NY)
Hall (TX)
Hare
Harman
Hastert
Hastings (FL)
Hastings (WA)
Hayes
Heller
Herseth Sandlin
Higgins
Hill
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Hirono
Hobson
Hodes
Hoekstra
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hooley
Hoyer
Hulshof
Inslee
Israel
Issa
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jefferson
Jindal
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, E. B.
Jones (NC)
Jones (OH)
Jordan
Kagen
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Keller
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilpatrick
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kirk
Klein (FL)
Kline (MN)
Knollenberg
Kucinich
Kuhl (NY)
LaHood
Lampson
Langevin
Lantos
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
LaTourette
Lee
Levin
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (GA)
Lewis (KY)
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lucas
Lynch
Mahoney (FL)
Maloney (NY)
Marchant
Markey
Marshall
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (CA)
McCarthy (NY)
McCaul (TX)
McCollum (MN)
McCotter
McCrery
McDermott
McGovern
McHenry
McHugh
McIntyre
McNerney
McNulty
Meehan
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Melancon
Mica
Michaud
Miller (MI)
Miller (NC)
Miller, Gary
Miller, George
Mitchell
Mollohan
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Moran (KS)
Moran (VA)
Murphy (CT)
Murphy, Patrick
Murphy, Tim
Murtha
Musgrave
Myrick
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Neugebauer
Nunes
Oberstar
Obey
Olver
Ortiz
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Payne
Pearce
Perlmutter
Peterson (MN)
Peterson (PA)
Petri
Platts
Poe
Pomeroy
Porter
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Pryce (OH)
Putnam
Radanovich
Rahall
Ramstad
Rangel
Regula
Rehberg
Reichert
Renzi
Reyes
Reynolds
Rodriguez
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothman
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Salazar
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Saxton
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schmidt
Schwartz
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Serrano
Sestak
Shays
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuler
Shuster
Simpson
Sires
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Solis
Souder
Space
Spratt
Stark
Stearns
Stupak
Sullivan
Sutton
Tanner
Tauscher
Taylor
Terry
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Tierney
Towns
Turner
Udall (CO)
Udall (NM)
Upton
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walberg
Walden (OR)
Walsh (NY)
Walz (MN)
Wamp
Waters
Watson
Watt
Waxman
Weiner
Welch (VT)
Weller
Westmoreland
Wexler
Whitfield
Wicker
Wilson (NM)
Wilson (OH)
Wilson (SC)
Wolf
Woolsey
Wu
Wynn
Yarmuth
Young (FL)

NAYS—34

Bachus
Barrett (SC)
Buyer
Campbell (CA)
Cannon
Conaway
Deal (GA)
Doolittle
Duncan
Ehlers
Flake
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Garrett (NJ)
Gingrey
Hensarling
Herger
Inglis (SC)
Johnson, Sam
Kingston
Lamborn
Linder
Lungren, Daniel E.
Mack
Manzullo
McKeon
Pence
Rohrabacher
Sali
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shadegg
Weldon (FL)
Young (AK)

NOT VOTING—17

Allen
Bartlett (MD)
Brady (PA)
Cubin
Davis, Jo Ann
Engel
Fattah
Gutierrez
Hunter
McMorris Rodgers
Miller (FL)
Nadler
Paul
Pickering
Pitts
Tancredo
Wasserman Schultz

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). Members are advised that there are 2 minutes left on this vote.

□ 1532

Mr. MACK and Mr. GINGREY changed their vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

Mr. PEARCE changed his vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated for:

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, in roll call 348, which I just missed a minute ago, the COPS Improvements Act of 2007, I am a strong supporter of that bill. That bill provides, we believe, 165 police positions in my home State of Maine. I certainly intended to vote for that bill and would have had I been in the Chamber at that moment.

SAFE AMERICAN ROADS ACT OF 2007

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1773, as amended, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1773, as amended.

This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 411, nays 3, not voting 18, as follows:

[Roll No. 349]

YEAS—411

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Aderholt
Akin
Alexander
Allen
Altmire
Andrews
Arcuri
Baca
Bachmann
Bachus
Baird
Baker
Baldwin
Barrett (SC)
Barrow
Barton (TX)
Bean
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
Berry
Biggert
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blumenauer
Blunt
Boehner
Bonner
Bono
Boozman
Boren
Boswell
Boucher
Boustany
Boyd (FL)
Boyda (KS)
Brady (TX)
Brown (SC)
Brown, Corrine
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Buchanan
Burgess
Burton (IN)
Butterfield
Buyer
Calvert
Camp (MI)
Campbell (CA)
Cannon
Cantor
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carney
Carson
Carter
Castle
Castor
Chabot
Chandler
Clarke
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coble
Cohen
Cole (OK)
Conaway
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Costello
Courtney
Cramer
Crenshaw
Crowley
Culberson
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (IL)
Davis (KY)
Davis, David
Davis, Lincoln
Davis, Tom
Deal (GA)
DeFazio
DeGette
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.

Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Donnelly
Doolittle
Doyle
Drake
Dreier
Duncan
Edwards
Ehlers
Ellison
Ellsworth
Emanuel
Emerson
English (PA)
Eshoo
Etheridge
Everett
Fallin
Farr
Feeney
Ferguson
Filner
Forbes
Fortenberry
Fossella
Foxx
Frank (MA)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Gerlach
Giffords
Gilchrest
Gillibrand
Gillmor
Gingrey
Gohmert
Goode
Goodlatte
Gordon
Granger
Graves
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Hall (NY)
Hall (TX)
Hare
Harman
Hastert
Hastings (FL)
Hastings (WA)
Hayes
Heller
Hensarling
Herger
Herseth Sandlin
Higgins
Hill
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Hirono
Hobson
Hodes
Hoekstra
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hooley
Hoyer
Hulshof
Inglis (SC)
Inslee
Israel
Issa
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jefferson
Jindal
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jones (NC)
Jones (OH)
Jordan
Kagen
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Keller
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilpatrick
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kirk
Klein (FL)
Kline (MN)
Knollenberg
Kucinich
Kuhl (NY)
LaHood
Lamborn
Lampson
Langevin
Lantos
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
LaTourette
Lee
Levin
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (GA)
Lewis (KY)
Linder
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lucas
Lungren, Daniel E.
Lynch
Mack
Mahoney (FL)
Maloney (NY)
Manzullo
Markey
Marshall
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (CA)
McCarthy (NY)
McCaul (TX)
McCollum (MN)
McCotter
McCrery
McDermott
McGovern
McHenry
McHugh
McIntyre
McKeon
McNerney
McNulty
Meehan
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Melancon
Mica
Michaud
Miller (MI)
Miller (NC)
Miller, Gary
Miller, George
Mitchell
Mollohan
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Moran (KS)
Moran (VA)
Murphy (CT)
Murphy, Patrick
Murphy, Tim
Murtha
Musgrave
Myrick
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Neugebauer
Nunes
Oberstar
Obey
Olver
Ortiz
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Payne
Pearce
Pence
Perlmutter
Peterson (MN)
Peterson (PA)
Petri
Platts
Poe
Pomeroy
Porter
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Pryce (OH)
Putnam
Radanovich
Rahall
Ramstad
Rangel
Regula
Rehberg
Reichert
Renzi
Reyes
Reynolds
Rodriguez
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothman
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Salazar
Sali
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Saxton
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schmidt
Schwartz
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sestak
Shadegg
Shays
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuler
Shuster
Simpson
Sires
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Solis
Souder
Space
Spratt
Stark
Stearns
Stupak
Sullivan
Sutton
Tanner
Tauscher
Taylor
Terry
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Tierney
Towns
Turner
Udall (CO)
Udall (NM)
Upton
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walberg
Walden (OR)
Walsh (NY)
Walz (MN)
Wamp
Waters
Watson
Watt
Waxman
Weiner
Welch (VT)
Weldon (FL)
Weller
Westmoreland
Wexler
Whitfield
Wicker
Wilson (NM)
Wilson (OH)
Wilson (SC)
Wolf
Woolsey
Wu
Wynn
Yarmuth
Young (AK)
Young (FL)

NAYS—3

Cuellar
Flake
Gonzalez

NOT VOTING—18

Bartlett (MD)
Brady (PA)
Braley (IA)
Cubin
Davis, Jo Ann
Engel
Fattah
Gutierrez
Hunter
Marchant
McMorris Rodgers
Miller (FL)
Nadler
Paul
Pickering
Pitts
Tancredo
Wasserman Schultz

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). Members are advised that there are 2 minutes left on this vote.

□ 1539

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably absent from the Chamber today. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall votes 345, 346 and 347, 348, and 349.

WAR IN IRAQ MUST BE WON

(Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to publicly condemn the recent remarks of Senator HARRY REID, the majority leader of the United States Senate. For the leader of one of the greatest legislative bodies in the world to concede defeat in Iraq is a sad commentary on the state of politics in our Nation.

Our troops are the finest fighting force this world has ever known. Our generals are among the finest military minds in the world. My faith is with these brave men and women who put their lives on the line each day in battle, and not on the political choices of a Washington, DC politician.

The American public does not want our troops to shuffle out of Iraq with our tails between our legs. America wants to achieve victory in the global war for freedom, a battle whose center is in the Middle East and in Iraq. Defeatist comments like ''the war is lost'' should be condemned by any freedom-loving Member of this body.

DEFENDING SENATOR REID

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

Ms. BERKLEY. Mr. Speaker, I just happened to be on the floor when I heard the last speaker talking about Senate majority leader HARRY REID and condemning his comments.

I have known Senator REID since I was a high school senior at Valley High School in Las Vegas, Nevada. I don't know a public servant who has devoted more of his life to this country, his State and his community than Senator HARRY REID.

Now, I can't account for everything this man has ever said, but to get on the floor of the House of Representatives and condemn a true patriot, somebody who cares passionately about his fellow citizens and somebody that stays awake at night because of the loss of life and limb in Iraq, to condemn that person on the floor of the House of Representatives I think is a disgrace. And if I didn't stand up and say something, I would never forgive myself.

PULLING OUT OF IRAQ WILL MEAN DEATH SENTENCE TO IRAQI GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

(Mr. KINGSTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, you know, one of the questions that I never hear asked and certainly don't hear answered by those who want to pull out of Iraq, like HARRY REID, who says the war is already lost, I have a question for him and others who say that the war is lost. As soon as America pulls out, the people like al Maliki, or Deputy Prime Minister Saleh, who was here in the Capitol last week, it would be a death sentence to them. All those folks who stepped forward who bought into the American and international concept of freedom and self-government and democracy, they will be executed.

Now, what are we going to do? Are we going to give amnesty to political refugees, 50,000, 100,000? Maybe those on the left have an estimate of how many people we would open our border to.

But I can say this: There is no question about it, these folks who stepped forward to try to build a new government will be executed. Their children will be executed. Their spouses will be executed. Their grandparents will be executed. So inevitably we will open up the borders to them as political refugees. My question is, how many of those will we let in, and can we do that now on a bipartisan basis?

□ 1545

SUPPORTING THE PRESIDENT IN THE WAR IN IRAQ

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I heard the gentlelady speak a moment ago about some of the statements made about Majority Leader REID in

the Senate, and she condemned people for criticizing him for what he said about the war being lost. But I haven't heard anybody over there say anything good about the President, who is trying to protect us against terrorism around the world, which is emanating from the Middle East and al Qaeda. Al Qaeda are the ones that are running the opposition to the United States troops over there right now.

We were attacked by al Qaeda. We were going to go to war to stop terrorism against al Qaeda. And nobody is saying anything good about the President, who is trying to protect this country, and if we say one thing about the majority leader on the other side we are supposed to be condemned. I don't understand it. I just don't understand it.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SARBANES). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

THE 147

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, under the hot summer-like sun of today, several thousand peace officers dressed in their bright uniforms, along with citizens, paid tribute to the 147 peace officers killed in service to America in 2006. Also honored were the families, the spouses, the children, the parents of these peace officers. This service today was held on the West side of the Capitol. It was attended by some of us in Congress and the President of the United States spoke.

The wind blew the flags of the 50 States. They were held by peace officers, and the bagpipes played a solemn tribute in the background to these 147 peace officers. It was a fitting event sponsored for the 26th year of the Fraternal Order of Police.

Mr. Speaker, I have known a lot of police officers for the last 30 years. I was a prosecutor for 8 years in Texas, and then a criminal court judge for 22 years. I came to know a lot of them. Those rare and noble breed that wear the badge of a peace officer are remarkable people. I have even known some that have given their lives in the line of duty for the rest of us.

Peace officers that patrol the small towns or the big cities or the vastness of our counties, whether they are local, State or Federal officers, are America's first line of defense against the lawless, the criminals, the outlaws that live to steal, murder, rob and assault America. Keeping the peace this last year cost 147 men and women from across the Nation their lives. I will submit the names of these 147 names for the record.

Peace officers are all that stand between the law and the lawless. They stand between the good and the evil. They stand between the people and the criminals. When they wear the badge, they are the protector of America's people and the public servant of all communities.

They are on patrol 24 hours a day, so that the rest of us can go about our lives in peace. When we are fearful, they are fearless, and when we flee from terror, they run to terror. They are a cut above the rest of us. They are a true example of the public hero.

So we do not forget the fallen and forget what they have done with this solemn reference today, we remember the 147.

And that's just the way it is.

Mr. Speaker, I include the names of the peace officers killed in the line of duty in 2006 for the RECORD.

PEACE OFFICERS KILLED IN THE LINE OF DUTY IN 2006

ALABAMA

Anthony Maurice Andrews, Micah Joe Burks, Keith Edwin Houts, Mary Freeman Smith.

ARIZONA

Robert Daniel Targosz, Kevin Louis Weeks.

ARKANSAS

Stacy Edward McMurrough, James Walter Sell.

CALIFORNIA

G. John Bailey, Pierre Walter Bain, Kyle Russell Ballard, Daniel S. Bessant, Nich Tomasito Birco, Brent William Clearman, Landon Michael Dorris, Scott Anthony Hanson, William Joseph Hudnall Jr., Richard Allen May Jr., Jeffrey Vaughn Mitchell, David Stan Piquette, Maria Cecilia Rosa, Earl Harwood Scott, Darryl Takeo Tsujimoto, Bryan D. Tuvera.

COLORADO

Jared Scott Jensen, Kenneth C. Jordan, Michael Del Thomas.

CONNECTICUT

Daniel Patrick Picagli.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Gerard Walter Burke Jr.

FLORIDA

Phoenix Montana Braithwaite, Michael Anthony Callin, Christopher Cooper Daniels Sr., Margena Silvia Nunez, John Michael Piskator, Ryan Christopher Seguin, Juan A. Serrano, Brian Keith Tephford, Vernon Matthew Williams.

GEORGIA

Peter William Faatz, Michael William Larson, John William McKinney, Dennis Carmen Stepnowski, Joseph Tim Whitehead Jr., Dennis Christian Wright Sr., Michael Douglas Young.

HAWAII

Steve Bastidas Favela.

ILLINOIS

Jeremy Chambers, Thomas Alan Cook, Elizabeth Mazella Edwards, Brian Keith Gibbons, James F. Knapp, Rodney Todd Miller, Eric Solorio, Thomas T. Wood.

INDIANA

Gary E. Dudley, Gary L. Martin, Scott Lee Severns.

KANSAS

James Leroy Johnson, Cory Allen Ricks.

KENTUCKY

Elmer Kiser, Jonathan Kyle Leonard, David George Whitson.

LOUISIANA

Herman Wayne Brooks, Christopher John Doyle III, Octavio Rafael Gonzalez, Christopher Michael Metternich, Jeremy Paul Newchurch.

MAINE

David Jerome Rancourt.

MARYLAND

William H. Beebe Jr., Anthony A. Bryd, Robert Thomas Krauss, David Warren McGuinn, Jeffery Alan Wroten.

MASSACHUSETTS

Paul Francis Barry.

MICHIGAN

Kenneth Lee Daniels Jr., Jason Anthony Makowski, Riley Scott Sumner, Matthew J. Tuttle.

MISSISSIPPI

T. Michael Byrd, Robert Michael Langley.

MONTANA

David Leroy Briese Jr., Patrick Roy Kramer.

NEVADA

Henry Prendes.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Michael Leland Briggs.

NEW JERSEY

Wayne Robert Clark, Matthew J. Melchionda, Kieran Tyon Shields.

NEW MEXICO

James Archuleta, James Francis McGrane Jr.

NEW YORK

John Robert Allen, Joseph Daniel Corr, Francis J. Hennessy, Kevin M. Lee, Joseph Anthony Longobardo, Andrew J. Sperr, Craig J. Todeschini, Kenneth P. Wilcox.

OHIO

Lawrence M. Barnes Sr., Ethan G. Collins, Dale Rodney Holcomb, Joshua Patrick Risner, Jonathan James Schroeder.

OKLAHOMA

William Lloyd McClendon, Steven Roy Smith.

PENNSYLVANIA

David Michael Petzold, Gary S. Skerski, Scott Alan Wertz.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Jason Lannes Sheppard.

TENNESSEE

William Birl Jones, L. Keith Lyon, Jeremy Victor Reynolds.

TEXAS

Eduardo Chavez, Dwayne N. Freeto, Dale David Geddie, Rodney Joseph Johnson, Matthew DeWayne Myrick, Gregory Dean Stewart, James Lee Sunderland Sr., Donald Ellis Wass, Billy Jack Zachary.

UTAH

Kevin Shumway Orr.

VIRGINIA

Vicky O. Armel, Gary Jonathan Buro, Seneca Bailey Darden, Charles Aubrey Fisher, Michael E. Garbarino, Robert Earl Green, Robert A. Hill Sr., Kevin Carder Manion, Eric E. Sutphin, William Henry Tiedeman Jr.

WASHINGTON

Joselito Alvarez Barber, Steve E. Cox, Edwanton Allen Thomas.

WEST VIRGINIA

Charles Eugene Smith.

WISCONSIN

Stephen Joseph Hahn, Jackie Davis Ryden.

WYOMING

Dennis Merwin Shuck.

FEDERAL

Lorenzo Gomez, Nicholas D. Greenig, Daniel Joseph Kuhlmeier, Gregory J. Rahoi, William Sentner III, David Norman Webb.

PUERTO RICO

Juan Jose Burgos-Velez, Raul Canales-Mundo, Jose Luis Torres-Martinez.

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

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

DEALING WITH THE HIGH PRICE OF GASOLINE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MCCARTHY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, since the beginning of the year, gas prices across the Nation have been increasing. With the summer driving season fast approaching, prices at the pump are again reaching record highs.

With the price quickly approaching $4 a gallon, it is time again for Congress to act to help consumers with this increased cost. High gas prices not only increase the cost of living for American families, but increased gas prices will affect the prices on nearly every single consumer good on the market. Working families are not only paying more at the pump, but at the grocery store, the pharmacy and the shopping malls as well.

These increases have a harmful effect on our Nation's economy and security. They make it harder for working families to commute to and from work, especially in cases where public transportation is lacking. It also increases the cost for public transportation, which makes it harder for those individuals without automobiles to travel.

But we see the effects of high prices across the board. Parcel delivery rates increase. Municipalities must increase their taxes to pay for gas for their emergency responder vehicles. Our utilities go up. We cannot afford to stand by idly as our cost of living steadily increases for the sake of continued record oil company profits.

In response to the rising gas prices, I have requested that the Federal Trade Commission investigate possible gasoline price gouging and hold those accountable who engage in such practices.

I am also a cosponsor of Congressman STUPAK's legislation, H.R. 1252, the Federal Gas Price Gouging Prevention Act. This much needed legislation calls on the FTC and the Attorney General to investigate possible price gouging, both nationally and locally, and to prosecute any group found to be taking advantage of the American people. As summer approaches, travel within the United States historically does increase. According to the Automobile Association of America, gasoline prices may reach an all-time high by Memorial Day.

The time has come for Congress and the President to work together on a solution for the American people. Earlier this year the House passed legislation to repeal tax breaks for oil companies while devoting more Federal resources to renewable fuels. I am hopeful the Senate will quickly act on this much needed legislation this month.

If we are serious about reducing our dependency on foreign oil, we must work with manufacturers and researchers to bring renewable fuels to the forefront. Our environment and economy depend on it.

I look forward to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to ensure American consumers are given a voice about the high price of gasoline.

INVESTIGATING INJUSTICE PERPETRATED AGAINST BORDER PATROL AGENTS RAMOS AND COMPEAN

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, today is the 119th day since a great injustice took place in this country.

On January 17, 2007, two U.S. Border Patrol agents entered Federal prison to begin serving 11 and 12-year sentences respectively. I am hopeful that this will be the month that House Judiciary Chairman JOHN CONYERS and Senate Judiciary Chairman PATRICK LEAHY will hold a hearing to investigate the injustice perpetrated against these two U.S. Border Patrol agents.

Agents Compean and Ramos were convicted last spring for wounding a Mexican drug smuggler who brought 734 pounds of marijuana across our border into Texas. These agents never should have been persecuted. Yet the U.S. Attorney's Office granted immunity to the drug smuggler and prosecuted the agents who were doing their job to protect our borders.

The illegal drug smuggler received full medical care in El Paso, Texas, was permitted to return to Mexico and has sued the Border Patrol for $5 million for violating his civil rights. Many Members of this House, including Congressman TED POE, who is a former judge from Texas, have voiced concerns about the unfair prosecution of these agents.

With the troubling revelations surrounding the leadership of the U.S. Justice Department, I believe it is necessary to investigate the U.S. Attorney's Office in western Texas and the prosecutor's actions in this case. Never in America should the Congress sit by and allow a breakdown of honesty and integrity in our Nation's judicial system.

Mr. Speaker, if the American people cannot have faith in our Federal courts, I am afraid the future of our democracy is in danger. For the sake of these agents and their families and the integrity of our judicial system, I am pleased and grateful that Mr. CONYERS and Senator LEAHY will be holding hearings to investigate the injustice perpetrated against these two agents.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. I yield to the gentleman from Michigan, the chairman of the Judiciary Committee.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, there are very few instances where I have had a Member of Congress persist in the search for justice with the same zeal as my friend from North Carolina, and I commend you.

I recall that I had an opportunity to meet the widow of the slain officer, and I have talked to the gentleman from Virginia, BOBBY SCOTT, chairman of the Crime Subcommittee, and his ranking member about the importance that we pursue at the earliest possible moment a complete and total investigation and hearing about the matter that the gentleman and other colleagues that have now joined you have persisted in.

I congratulate you, and recommit publicly once again to our search and pursuit of justice, because if we don't protect our border agents and law enforcement officials generally, I can only shudder to think how the safety of this country will deteriorate.

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I am grateful to the chairman

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

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

MONITORING DEFENSE SPENDING

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

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, we all respect, admire and appreciate those who serve in our Nation's Armed Forces. Serving in our military is certainly one of the most honorable ways anyone can serve our country. I believe national defense is one of the very few legitimate functions of our national government, and certainly one of the most important.

However, we also need to recognize that our military has become the most gigantic bureaucracy in the history of the world. And like any huge bureaucracy, it does many good things; of course, always at huge expense to the taxpayer. And like any huge bureaucracy, our military does many things that are wasteful or inefficient. And like any huge bureaucracy, it tries to

gloss over or cover up its mistakes. And like any huge bureaucracy, it always wants to expand its mission and get more and more money.

Counting our regular appropriations bills, plus the supplemental appropriations, we will spend more than $750 billion on our military in the next fiscal year. This is more than all the other nations of the world combined spend on their defense.

The GAO tells us that we presently have $50 trillion in unfunded future pension liabilities on top of our national debt of almost $9 trillion. If we are going to have any hope of paying our military pensions and Social Security and other promises to our own people, we cannot keep giving so much to the Pentagon.

No matter how much we respect our military and no matter how much we want to show our patriotism, we need to realize that there is waste in all huge bureaucracies, even in the Defense Department.

There is a reason why we have always believed in civilian leadership of our Defense Department. The admirals and generals will always say things are going great, because it is almost like saying they are doing a bad job if they say things are not doing well and the military people know they can keep getting big increases in funding if they are involved all over the world.

However, it is both unconstitutional and unaffordable for us to be the policeman of the world and carry on civilian government functions in and for other countries. National defense is necessary and vital. International defense by the U.S. is unnecessary and harmful in many ways.

Now we are engaged in a war in Iraq that is very unpopular with a big majority of the American people. More importantly, every poll of Iraqis themselves shows that 78 to 80 percent of them want us to leave, except in the Kurdish areas.

They want our money, but they do not want us occupying Iraq. Surely, we are not adopting a foreign policy that forces us on other people, one that says we are going to run Iraq even if the people there want us to leave. A majority of the Iraqi Parliament has now cosponsored a bill asking us to leave.

It is sure not traditional conservatism to carry on a war in a country that did not attack us, did not even threaten to attack us, and was not even capable of attacking us. And it is sure not traditional conservatism to believe in world government even if run by the U.S.

Our war in Iraq has greatly damaged the Republican Party and conservatism in general. Even though this war has gone against every traditional conservative view, especially fiscal conservatism, it is seen by most as a conservative war. Even worse than the damage it has done to my party and a philosophy I believe in very deeply is the harm it has done to our relations with other countries, especially other countries in the Middle East. But worst of all, of course, is the fact that so many young Americans have been killed and horribly wounded in a very unnecessary war.

President Bush when he ran for office in 2000 campaigned strongly against nation building. Unfortunately, that is what we have been doing in Iraq. The President in 2000 said what we needed was a more humble foreign policy. That is what we needed then, and it is what we need now.

William F. Buckley, often called the godfather of conservatism, summed it up best in a column he wrote almost 2 years ago: ''A respect for the power of the United States is engendered by our success in engagements in which we take part. A point is reached when tenacity conveys not steadfastness of purpose but misapplication of pride. It can't reasonably be disputed that if in the year ahead the situation in Iraq continues about as it has done in the past year, we will have suffered more than another 500 soldiers killed. Where there had been skepticism about our venture, there will be contempt.'' That was William F. Buckley in 2005, and the key point there, he said ''a point is reached when tenacity conveys not steadfastness of purpose but misapplication of pride.''

□ 1600

BALANCED TRADE NOW

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

Mr. KAGEN. Mr. Speaker, last Friday it was announced that the Democratic leadership had struck a deal with the administration and the United States Trade Representative regarding how this country will approach trade agreements with other nations.

While very few have seen the actual text of what this deal looks like, many of us in Congress have concerns as to how these new standards on labor and environment will realistically and effectively be enforced.

As a member of the newly elected class of 2006, I was elected to help change the course of this country, to help change our Nation's trade policy in particular, a policy that cuts the legs out from under American workers and places our industries at a competitive disadvantage. It threatens our quality of life and our global environment at the same time.

We are now operating under a flawed model; and until that model is fixed, our Nation's jobs and the livelihoods of our constituents in Wisconsin and elsewhere are in jeopardy.

As we have seen in our trade with China, we have been unable, unable to stop illegal subsidies, unable to stop illegal dumping and blatant violations of basic human labor rights and environmental standards. What will we Americans have to give up next?

Trade deals in the past were flawed, and the ones still being negotiated must show promise of helping American workers, of helping their families and American communities.

I believe that John Sweeney, president of the AFL–CIO, put it clearly in his statement when he said about a new deal: ''Our trade policy will not be fixed overnight. The Bush administration's consistent unwillingness to enforce trade violations against nations like Jordan and China remind us there is no guarantee the executive branch will enforce any new rights workers may gain through these negotiations, and President Bush has negotiated flawed agreements with gross human rights violator Colombia and a losing, one-sided agreement with South Korea.''

My friends, it is time that the United States of America begins shipping our values overseas and not our jobs. It is time for America to take back our rich history of manufacturing, of making things. After all, if we don't make anything, we won't have anything. What everyone in Wisconsin is asking for is balanced trade, and we need it now.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas). 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.)

HONORING MAGGIE RODRIGUEZ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize Maggie Rodriguez, who recently accepted the lead anchor role on the nationally televised CBS ''Saturday Early Show.'' Maggie has been covering south Florida with CBS's local affiliate, CBS 4, for 7 years. As a news anchor on the 5 p.m. and 11 p.m. newscasts, Maggie has delivered news to millions of people in my community on a regular basis since the year 2000.

Maggie is a product of south Florida who has distinguished herself in her chosen field of journalism. She attended Our Lady of Lourdes Academy, located in the heart of my congressional district. In 1991, she graduated from the University of Miami, my alma mater. As a fellow south Floridian, I am very proud to honor Maggie on her many achievements. She is moving to New York, but she will always be welcomed in her hometown.

Her husband, Michael, is the general manager of Telemundo's local affiliate in Miami. I am sure that Maggie will continue to spend significant time down home in south Florida.

Since beginning her career with Univision in 1991, Maggie's warm personality, coupled with her strong work

ethic, has made her very successful. She has delivered breaking news on a number of notable stories throughout the years. She has extensive experience covering natural disasters. Before taking over as news anchor on CBS 4, Maggie reported on earthquakes and mudslides with KABC in Los Angeles. With CBS 4, she has, unfortunately, covered numerous hurricanes. Like any newscaster in south Florida, the long hurricane season every year has kept Maggie busy.

When hurricanes hit our region, local newscasters play a pivotal role in helping residents prepare and recover from hurricane damage. Oftentimes, they provide around-the-clock coverage. Most recently, Maggie did outstanding work reporting on Hurricane Wilma which severely impacted our region in the year 2005.

Maggie will be moving to New York where she spent significant time reporting for CBS 4 in the aftermath of 9/11. Maggie was noticed by CBS executives for her coverage of this year's Super Bowl in Miami. This led to guest appearances on the ''Saturday Early Show'' and eventually to a full-time position on this program.

Maggie is a great role model also for Hispanic girls in our community. She received the Young Hispanic Leadership Award from the Hispanic Heritage Council for both her professional accomplishments as well as her efforts in strong community service.

As a local news anchor, she has become an active member of our community, lending a helping hand to those in need. Her professional portfolio has garnered several awards, including six Emmys, along with two Edward R. Murrow awards.

She will be missed by so many people who tune in every afternoon and evening to watch her on CBS 4. However, we look forward to watching her on Saturday mornings nationwide. Her pleasant personality makes her ideal for this new role.

Once again, I congratulate Maggie Rodriguez as she begins this new chapter in her life. She truly deserves the recognition she has received, and now millions of Americans across the country will have the opportunity to watch her on Saturday morning.

Godspeed, Maggie.

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

(Ms. WOOLSEY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

HONORING GOVERNOR JAMES HUNT

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

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Madam Speaker, I rise today with Congressmen JONES, PRICE, WATT, ETHERIDGE, MCINTYRE, MILLER and SHULER, all of North Carolina, to honor and observe the 70th birthday of our four-term Governor of North Carolina, the Honorable James B. Hunt, Jr.

Over the years my long-time and dear friend, Governor Hunt, has successfully dedicated so much of himself to public service. He is a man of immense vision with an extraordinary ability to implement his vision with great results. That vision has often been focused on education.

Governor Hunt's list of accomplishments is long and highly distinguished in the area of education. He led efforts to establish the State's primary reading program. He also spearheaded the efforts to reduce class sizes and prevent students from dropping out of school. Governor Hunt assumed the lead role in establishing the State's school of science and mathematics, the Microelectronics Center of North Carolina, and the North Carolina Biotechnology Center.

Smart Start, which was established under Governor Hunt's leadership, has become a nationally recognized and award-winning public-private partnership that ensures that children enter school healthy and ready to succeed. The program helps provide quality child care, health care and family support for every child in need, and there are now 14 States using this model.

Governor Hunt also assisted with establishing one of the most rigorous approaches to measuring student performance, requiring mastery before promotion and graduation, and providing assistance to turn around failing schools.

He did not allow these initiatives, or any of the many others he headed, to stand alone after he signed them into law. Instead, he demanded follow-through and results, and he got them. A study by the RAND Corporation found that our public schools raised their test scores more than any other State in the 1990s.

Governor Hunt's strong-held belief that the key to a quality education is great teaching has benefited students well beyond North Carolina's borders. In fact, it has benefited students and teachers throughout our Nation.

As the founding Chair for the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, Governor Hunt was a driving force in fulfilling the promise of improving student achievement by raising the standards. Today, virtually every State and more than 25 percent of all school districts offer financial rewards or incentives for teachers seeking certification.

Madam Speaker, the economic value of an education and knowledge was well understood by Governor Hunt long before people started talking about its central role in the global economy.

Madam Speaker, Governor Hunt has also led the way in opening up the Democratic Party of our State to full participation by minority citizens. As Governor, Governor Jim Hunt appointed many African American lawyers to the trial bench and appellate court benches to hold positions that had been virtually impossible for them to otherwise obtain. Many of them now serve as judges with distinction, and it was Governor Hunt who made that happen.

In closing, we are honored today to recognize this great man of conviction, principle, and exceptional character on such a joyous occasion. I ask you to join us in congratulating the ''Education Governor,'' the Honorable James B. Hunt, Jr., on his 70th birthday, and in wishing him and his wife, Carolyn, many more years of happiness and accomplishment.

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

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

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Ms. Wanda Evans, one of his secretaries.

□ 1615

VERMONTERS SPEAK OUT

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

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Madam Speaker, I rise to report on an effort in Vermont that honors the tradition of Vermonters speaking out on issues of conscience. Vermonters take public service, political integrity and citizen involvement extremely seriously. This is a tradition that dates back to our earliest days when Vermont became the very first State to ban slavery.

But with rising alarm, Vermont has watched abuse of power and a disregard for checks and balances in Washington that has occurred over the past 6 years.

□ 1615

Vermonters have such extraordinary concern, particularly with the prosecution of this war in Iraq, that many are now actually calling for the President and the Vice President to be impeached.

Impeachment is a dramatic position, but it reflects the collective judgment of many in Vermont that we are in extreme circumstances. Madam Speaker, I do not believe that impeachment is the answer, but I endorse the indictment of the policies of the current administration.

What this Nation has experienced over the past 6 years has been staggering: a war in its fifth year that was justified based on false intelligence; the politicization of our Nation's top

law enforcement agency; the cavalier disregard for civil liberties and constitutional protections; no-bid war contracts to well-connected friends; the use of signing statements to disregard the law; and the denial of habeas corpus, a basic right, for those in U.S. custody.

The list could go on. These and other transgressions have caused some Vermonters to rise up and promote the use of impeachment to restore accountability and curb the abuse of power. This impeachment movement in Vermont started last year in the small town of Newfane, population 1,700, by Dan DeWalt, a selectman on the town board.

After voting for the town clerk, the tax collector and voting whether to fund a village sidewalk project and the local school, the town then voted on a resolution to send a message to Congress to initiate impeachment proceedings. This initiative then spread from one small southern Vermont town to 40 towns across the State.

My own hometown of Hartland joined this call, and I've spoken with many of my neighbors, farmer, teachers, doctors and store owners, about their vote, and what they share is an outrage about the conduct of this administration and the prosecution of this terrible war.

Even last month, the Vermont General Assembly took up the issue. On April 20, the Vermont State Senate voted 16–9 in favor of Congress launching impeachment investigations, and while the Vermont House of Representatives defeated the resolution, it still received 60 supportive votes from Vermont legislators. And nearly 400 Vermonters representing 102 of Vermont's 251 towns came to the State House that day to voice their views. And this past Saturday, I held a town meeting in the town of Hartford, Vermont, and heard from 250 Vermonters advocating for this extraordinary measure.

I applaud these citizen activists who have acted in the Vermont tradition of speaking out and taking a principled stand to protect our democracy. They raise valid concerns about the actions of this administration and, if those actions are allowed to go unchecked, the threat to democracy that we face. Their concerns are well-founded.

But let me be clear, opinion is divided in Vermont about whether impeachment is the right remedy and whether it's the right tactic, but what motivated this effort is a commonly shared view that this administration has grossly abused its power and pursued terribly misguided policies.

Madam Speaker, while I disagree with the tactic of impeachment, I completely share the goal of restoring accountability and a new direction to our government.

Our oversight investigations in Congress have exposed egregiously substandard care at Walter Reed where we have heard about soldiers still recovering from brain surgery forced to wander the grounds to find the outpatient care they were promised.

Congressional oversight has documented unacceptable accounts of political interference by the administration over sound global warming science, with political appointees editing scientific reports.

And our probes have uncovered waste and fraud and abuse associated with the war in Iraq to an unimaginable scale, $12 billion of $100 bills flown from the United States to Iraq and then distributed from the back of pickup trucks.

And through our oversight and subpoenas, we are vigorously seeking to expose and investigate the peddling of faulty intelligence that the administration presented to justify their case for war.

And through our oversight and subpoenas, we are vigorously seeking to expose and investigate the peddling of faulty intelligence the Administration presented in their case for war.

We must demand to know whether the Administration's active dissemination of bad intelligence was premeditated with the intention of deceiving the American people, or was it reckless and cavalier, done to justify a decision to go to war that had already been made?

At every corner, step by step, Congress is methodically peeling back the layers of deception and deceit, holding this Administration accountable. We must get the facts and follow the facts. And that is exactly what is being done.

Madam Speaker, this pursuit of impeachment has consequences to real lives and real people. I measure every decision I make here in Congress based on whether it will hasten or delay an end to this war. Nothing illustrates this urgency more than a phone call I received before a recent trip to Iraq. The call was from a mother in the town of Brattleboro who lost her son in this terrible war. She so desired closure over her son's death, that she asked to accompany me to Iraq so she could see where her son had died. It was a stark reminder that there is no greater challenge we face than ending this war.

I also submit for the record a letter that was read at the Hartland town meeting from Lisa Johnson of Essex Jct. about the death in Iraq of her son Captain Pierre Piché.

I am proud of the Vermonters pushing for facts, prodding for accountability, and demanding oversight.

As I travel around the State, meeting with Vermonters, I also hear a sense of optimism: it is the optimism that comes from Congress restoring the checks and balances that had for too long been lost and an optimism from seeing a Congress finally getting down to making progress with new priorities and a new direction for this country.

SENATE RESOLUTION 16

Whereas, President George W. Bush and Vice President Richard Cheney have exercised the duties of their respective offices with respect to both domestic and foreign affairs in ways that raise serious questions of constitutionality, statutory legality, and abuse of the public trust, and

Whereas, the President's conduct in his role as Commander in Chief in leading our nation into the military conflict in Iraq, and the Vice President's continual advocacy for American troops remaining in Iraq, have cost the United States much of the good will that was extended to our country in the wake of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the United States, and

Whereas, the President's and the Vice President's domestic leadership on issues relating to individual privacy and personal liberty under law has raised constitutional issues of the greatest concern to the nation's citizenry, now therefore be it

Resolved by the Senate:

That the Senate of the State of Vermont urges Vermont's Representative in the United States House of Representatives to introduce, and Vermont's United States Senators to support, a resolution requiring the United States House Judiciary Committee to initiate impeachment proceedings against the President and the Vice President of the United States, and be it further

Resolved: That the Secretary of the Senate be directed to send a copy of this resolution to United States Representative Peter Welch, United States Senator Patrick J. Leahy and United States Senator Bernard Sanders.

MAY 11, 2007.

DEAR MR. WELCH: my son, Captain Pierre Piche', should be teaching young people history or political science right now. Like many of the young people who represent the best that our country has to offer, he is a casualty of the war in Iraq. He was killed in a Blackhawk helicopter on November 13, 2003. He was sent to fly over a high-risk area in Bagdad because he was being required to attend a mandatory R and R. He did not want to go. He knew it was very dangerous and he also knew that was completely illogical. It turned out that these soldiers were being sent in to be part of a photo op for the president. I have to live with this knowledge every day.

My son served proudly in the military for ten years before being sent to Iraq. He earned the rank of captain with blood, sweat and tears, and he loved every minute of it. Before my son was killed he told me that he did not like what he was seeing in Iraq and he did not want to be a part of it.

My son Pierre gave the ultimate sacrifice, knowing that he had been deceived. It is difficult for all of us who oppose this war to observe the ongoing carnage and wearing down of the fabric of the American spirit as this war kills our young people, eats away at the economy and, worse yet, the hearts of the American people. For me, the betrayal is pointed and more personal.

There must be accountability for the real reasons for this war. Keep up the investigations. Keep up the pressure, and add to the pressure by investigating the two people most responsible, Bush and Cheney.

Your courage is needed because this war has to end.

Thank you.

LISA JOHNSON,
Essex Jct. Vermont.

WARNING FOR THE 2006 ANNUAL NEWFANE TOWN MEETING AND ANNUAL NEWFANE SCHOOL DISTRICT MEETING, NEWFANE UNION HALL, MARCH 7, 2006

The legal voters of the Town of Newfane, Vermont and the Town School District of Newfane, Vermont, are hereby notified and warned that, pursuant to Title 17 VSA, Section 2655, they are to meet at the Union Hall, in the Village of Newfane, Vermont on Tuesday, March 7, 2006 at 9 a.m. to act upon the following Articles, to wit:

Article 1: To elect all Newfane Town Officers and Newfane Town School District Officers as required by law for the ensuing year.

(Voting on this article to be by Australian Ballot from 9 a.m. until 7 p.m.)

Town: Constable 1 year term; Delinquent Tax Collector 1 year term; Grand Juror 1 year term; Lister 3 year term; Lister 1 year term; Moderator—Town 1 year term; Selectman 3 year term; Selectman two 1 year terms; Town Agent 1 year term; Town Clerk 1 year term; Town/School Treasurer 1 year term; Trustees Moore Free Library; and Building Fund five 1 year terms

School: Moderator 1 year term; School Director 3 year term; School Director two 1 year terms.

Leland & Gray: Newfane Representative 3 year term and Newfane Representative 1 year term.

Article 2: To see if the voters of the Town and the Town School District will accept the annual report of the Auditor and other Town Officers.

Article 3: To see what salaries and expenses the Town and the Town School District will vote to pay its Officers for the ensuing year. Town Clerk—$12.49/hour, not to exceed 40 hours per week; Town Treasurer—$12.49/hour, not to exceed 40 hours per week; Listers—$10.00/hour. Other Elected or Appointed Officers—$7.25/hour; School Treasurer—$12.49/hour; Mileage reimbursement at 34 cents per mile.

Article 4: To see if the voters of the Town and the Town School District will vote to authorize the Selectmen and the School District to borrow money in anticipation of taxes and in anticipation of Federal & State Monies to be allocated to the Town and the Town School District.

Article 5: To see if the voters of the Town will pay taxes for the ensuing fiscal year on a quarterly basis, due on the 15th of August, October, January and April; and that the charge for interest be at the maximum legal rate of 1% per month for the first three months and 1.5% per month for each month thereafter until paid.

Article 6: To see if the voters of the Town School District will authorize operational fund expenses in the amount of $1,582,195 for the coming year.

Article 7: To transact any other business that may legally come before the Town School District.

Article 8: To see if the voters of the Town will authorize the Board of Selectmen to sell or otherwise convey property acquired through tax sale proceedings.

Article 9: Shall the voters of the Town of Newfane instruct our State Representatives and Senators to oppose: any use of the State Education Fund for purposes that are outside the law's original intent to make payments to school districts and supervisory unions for the support of education; the shifting of existing State General Fund expense obligations to the Education Fund; and the reduction of any existing State General Fund revenue support to the Education Fund?

Article 10: To see if the voters of the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of $750 (Seven-hundred fifty dollars) for Connecticut River Transit, Inc.

Article 11 : To see if the voters of the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of $420 (Four-hundred twenty dollars) for West River Watershed Alliance.

Article 12: To see if the voters of the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of $1,000 (One-thousand dollars) for Williamsville School Preservation Society.

Article 13: To see if the voters of the Town will vote to raise $3,760 by taxation for the Visiting Nurse Alliance of Vermont & New Hampshire (VNA of Southeastern Vermont and the Southern Vermont Home Health Agency). [In the budget]

Article 14: To see if the voters of the Town will vote to raise $2,700 by taxation for Early Education Services. [In the budget]

Article 15: To see if the voters of the Town will vote to raise $2,604 by taxation for the Valley Health Council. [In the budget]

Article 16: To see if the voters of the Town will vote to raise $2,500 by taxation for Grace Cottage Foundation, which supports the services of the Otis Health Care Center, including Grace Cottage Hospital and Emergency Room, Grace Cottage Family Health Services, and Heins Home Community Care Home. [In the budget]

Article 17: To see if the voters of the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of $15,000 to help defray the cost of the Village of Newfane Sidewalk project on West Street (TH#1).

Article 18: To see if the voters will vote to exempt from taxation all real property of the Incorporated Village of Newfane Union Hall building and land property (3 acre ?) for a period of five years pursuant to 32 VSA ' 3840.

Article 19: To see if the voters of the Town will vote to exempt from taxation all real property of the South Newfane Community Association building and land (2 acre ?) for a period of five years pursuant to 32 VSA ' 3840.

Article 20: To see if the voters of the Town will vote to exempt from taxation all real property for the NewBrook Volunteer Fire Association building and land (1.6 acres ?) for a period of five years pursuant to 32 VSA' 3840.

Article 21: To see if the voters of the Town will vote to exempt from taxation all real property for the South Newfane/Williamsville Fire Station and land (3 acre ?) for a period of five years pursuant to 32 VSA ' 3840.

Article 22: To see if the voters of the Town will vote to exempt from taxation all real property of the Valley Lions Club property (12.9 acres ?) for a period of five years pursuant to 32 VSA ' 3832(7).

Article 23: To see if the voters of the Town will vote to exempt from taxation all real property of the Williamsville School Preservation Society (2 acre ?) for a period of five years pursuant to 32 VSA ' 3832(6).

Article 24: To see if the voters of the Town will vote to approve the expenditure from the Town Reappraisal Fund for town wide update of values for the real property in Newfane to be completed by May 1, 2007 for an amount not to exceed $50,000.

Article 25: To see if the voters of the Town will vote to raise by taxes the amount of $75,000 to be added to the Capital Reserve Fund to be used for future Capital needs.

Article 26: To see if the voters of the Town will vote to authorize capital fund expenditures in the amount of $357,142 as proposed in the Capital needs plan for Fiscal Year 2007, with $146,642 to be used from the capital reserve funds.

Article 27: To see if the voters of the Town will vote to authorize the Selectmen to borrow up to $148,500 for Capital needs.

Article 28: To see if the voters of the Town will authorize Town and Highway operational expenditures in the amount of $980,658 for the coming year.

Article 29: We the voters of Newfane would like Town Meeting, March 2006, to consider the following resolution:

Whereas George W. Bush has:

1. Misled the nation about Iraq's weapons of mass destruction;

2. Misled the nation about ties between Iraq and Al Quaeda;

3. Used these falsehoods to lead our nation into war unsupported by international law;

4. Not told the truth about American policy with respect to the use of torture; and

5. Has directed the government to engage in domestic spying, in direct contravention of U.S. law.

Therefore, the voters of the town of Newfane ask that our representative to the U.S. House of Representatives file articles of impeachment to remove him from office.

Article 30: To transact any other business that may legally come before the Town.

Board of Selectmen School Directors: Hendrik W. van Loon, Chairman; Johanna Gardner, Co-Chairperson; Priscilla M. Cotton Robert Gunther-Mohr, Co-Chairperson; Daniel DeWalt Mikell Lasch; Patricia Halloran Lyssa Singleton; and Gary M. Katz James Urbaska

Town of Newfane, Vermont Town of Newfane, Vermont, February 1, 2006, February 3, 2006.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. BLACKBURN addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

(Ms. KAPTUR addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

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

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

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

THE OFFICIAL TRUTH SQUAD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. PRICE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I thank the Speaker so very much for the opportunity for presenting once again before the House of Representatives. I want to thank my leadership for allowing me to head up and chair this hour that is a Special Order hour. It is an opportunity for us in the minority party to come and try to shed some light on some issues that frankly don't get a whole lot of attention here on the floor of the House of

Representatives, and so I appreciate that opportunity once again.

Madam Speaker, most of us go home every weekend and visit our district, talk to constituents. It is a wonderful time to be able to go back and get grounded, go back to that touchstone and those people that supported us as we came to Washington, to try to assist in moving our country in the right direction.

And I have been struck over the last couple of months as I go home every weekend and talk to my friends and neighbors and fellow church-goers in my Sixth District of Georgia on the north side of Atlanta, I have been struck by their concern about what appears to be from their standpoint a continuing decrease in the level of civility here in Washington.

I am in my second term, initially elected in 2004, and one of the things that I thought I would hopefully be able to have some effect on would be to affect positively the level of rhetoric and the level of discourse here in Washington, and the level of frustration that my constituents tell me they have regarding what's going on here in Washington continues to increase.

So one of the things that I and some other Members of our conference have tried to do is to come to the floor, try to do it at least once a week, sometimes we're not able to do that, but talk about issues in a light that is hopefully more positive, hopefully respects the history of our Nation in a way that allows us to kind of glean the role that we ought to play as the House of Representatives and as Congress and to hopefully chart out or to define a path that will continue to allow our children and our grandchildren to live in the finest Nation on the face of the Earth.

In so doing, what we have tried to do is to talk about truth, to talk about facts. So often in the world of politics, in fact we have heard it just within the last few moments, Madam Speaker, the issue of politics over policy. So often when folks come to the floor of the House they talk more about politics than they do about policy, and I understand that. People have to get elected and I appreciate that, but when you're talking about things that are so incredibly important to the future of this Nation, it would behoove us as a House of Representatives to endeavor as much as we can to work together and to try to come up with the best solution for our Nation.

All of us come from different backgrounds. I happen to come from a profession of medicine. I practiced medicine for over 20 years, and medicine is a little different endeavor than politics and legislating. In taking care of patients what we try to do is try to work together, all for a common goal, which is to get the patient well obviously. So it is a collegial activity. It tends to be an activity where we share information and support one another.

Would that were the case on the floor of this House of Representatives, Madam Speaker, because I share my constituents' frustration with much of the partisanship that goes on here and much of the sniping and the politics over policy that makes it so very difficult, very difficult to move our Nation forward.

So we have developed a group that we call The Official Truth Squad, and its desire, as I mentioned, is to try to shed some light on issues here before our Nation. We have a number of individuals that we like to point to as heroes over the history of our Nation. Many of our former Presidents were certainly individuals who sought the truth and sought to guide this Nation in a positive and an uplifting direction.

One of the individuals that I like to quote is Daniel Patrick Moynihan. Mr. Moynihan was a Senator from the State of New York, and he had marvelous quips and marvelous phrases that he would use. One of them was this one right here. It says, ''Everyone is entitled to their own opinion but they are not entitled to their own facts.'' Everyone's entitled to their own opinion but they are not entitled to their own facts.

So I was struck by that, Madam Speaker, just last week as I was working here late in the Capitol one evening, happened to run into a couple who was in the hallway, obviously tourists, and they were stopping at some of the statues here in the Capitol. They were interested in finding where the gallery to the House of Representatives was, and so I pointed them in the right direction and happened to see them up in the gallery.

I had some friends from home who were visiting as well, and I got a chance to talk to them in the hallway. This young man was a physician. Come to find out he was a doctor who was serving in our military, and in 2 days or 3 days from last week when I met him, he was on his way to Iraq. He was on his way to try to help our men and women who are standing in harm's way and trying to protect our liberty and our freedom to make certain that they were given the finest care they possibly could be given in a difficult situation. He shared with me his frustration about the lack of not just civility but about the lack of attention to urgent problems.

One of the things that we briefly talked about was the responsibility that this Congress has to make certain that our men and women who are defending liberty, defending us, making certain that our children and our grandchildren can live in this great Nation for generations to come, and the frustration that he had with the inability of this Congress to make certain that the resources, the money that's needed to be able to allow our military men and women to protect themselves and to protect us has not been forthcoming, and I shared my frustration with him about that same event.

Madam Speaker, tomorrow I believe will be 100 days, 100 days since the President of the United States has sent to Congress his request for money, resources, for our fighting men and women in Afghanistan and Iraq, and if there was anything that demonstrated politics over policy, it has been this last 100 days. Very frustrating, Madam Speaker, frustrating for me, and I know that it is concerning and frustrating for our constituents all across this Nation, because what has happened has been a length of time that was played out to just apparently get headlines, it appeared to be.

And then there was a supplemental bill that was brought to the floor of the House, and it had in addition to the money that had been requested to allow our troops to defend themselves, it had in addition to that a peculiar set of directions, benchmarks, timelines, for our men and women and our generals on the ground, so much so that they said, look, there isn't any way that we can accomplish what we need to accomplish if you, Congress, adopt this bill, adopts this piece of legislation.

Many individuals on both sides of the aisle said, well, you're absolutely right, that sounds ridiculous. And so then what happened was that in order for the majority party apparently to pass this piece of legislation, they kept adding money on to it. So money in Washington does not start with an M. It starts with a B. So they kept adding billions and billions and billions, over $20 billion, to the bill in order to allow for folks on either side of the aisle who had concerns, enough of them to be able to say, okay, well, I can justify my vote for that bill if I am going to get those kinds of resources.

And so that bill passed the House with a very slim margin and passed the Senate, was sent to the President, the President promptly vetoed it. It came back to the House of Representatives and was delayed for another 4 or 5 days by this majority, Madam Speaker. The only reason that anybody can determine was for, again, politics over policy.

And just last week, another bill was then adopted which had a peculiar arrangement that would allow for some money to go for a while, and then if the Congress still agreed, within a month or two then there would be more money forthcoming. It was what many of us have called war on the installment plan, which is actually a worse plan than the majority party came up with initially.

□ 1630

Now, those are the facts. So that bill is passed, and we are waiting to see what happens from the Senate.

But I get back to the point of that young man who shared his frustration and his concern with me about why Congress can't act on things that are so pressing for the security of our Nation and for those men and women who are serving in harm's way. It just, it is very, very concerning to men and

women across this Nation, that we, as a legislative body, the United States House of Representatives, can't put politics aside and work for the good of the Nation and work for the benefit and the security of our men and women who are defending our liberty and defending our freedom.

So I just offer that as what I am hearing from home. I suspect it's what many of my colleagues are hearing from home as well. I am hopeful that we will be able to move forward with a clean bill, a bill that provides money for our men and women who are defending liberty and defending themselves in Iraq and Afghanistan.

We have got a number of folks who will be joining us today, I hope. We will talk about a number of issues, the war supplemental, the budget and some other items, I hope.

But I am pleased to be joined by my good friend and colleague from Georgia (Mr. WESTMORELAND) and look forward to your comments. I yield to you.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Thank you, Mr. PRICE. I appreciate you yielding your time to me. I appreciate you coming down here with the Truth Squad.

Sometimes the truth is many things to many people. But at the end of the day, it's still the truth. As you know, sometimes the truth is ugly. I thought one of the comments you were making about the war supplemental bill, the very truth of what took place to get that bill passed was very ugly.

In fact, this new ethical majority that came up, I felt, was pretty interesting, that, you know, one of the things was not leaving the vote held open to change the outcome, which we have seen several times, that it actually happened; the earmark reform, which is another smoke and mirror that has gone along. Then I think one of the other things was this big lobby reform about buying votes, and I think they called it a ''culture of corruption.''

But I think what we have seen since January is actually an in-house culture of corruption and the fact that they had to buy 218 votes. So that's something that's unique to the situation, because, typically, you don't think about using other people's money to buy votes, but that's what they are doing. They are using the taxpayer dollar, and, like you said, Congressman, it's up into the billions now. I believe it was $20 billion that it cost them to get that 218 vote.

Let's talk about something else for a minute, because, I think the new majority party labeled the 109th Congress the do-nothing Congress, and we have labeled this, being the Truth Squad, and the honest people that we are, the smoke-and-mirrors Congress.

So I want to talk about some of the empty promises, some of the smoke and mirrors that we have all been talking about. One of the things we can all relate to is high gas prices. Mr. PRICE, it's hard to believe that we talk about the good old days of gas being $2 a gallon. But we don't have to go back that far to where gas was $2 a gallon.

I want to read a few quotes if I could, for you, to the people and to the Speaker. This was a quote: ''Democrats have a plan to lower gas prices . . . join Democrats who are working to lower gas prices now.'' This was a quote from now-Speaker PELOSI back in April of 2006, and I believe that gas was probably around $2 a gallon then. Now the Americans are paying $3.49 a gallon in California. That doesn't seem like that much of a reduction in the price of gas. In fact, it looks like almost 100 percent increase.

Another quote: ''Democrats believe that we can do more for the American people who are struggling to deal with high gas prices . . . we have offered legislation that would actually do something about the rise in gasoline prices . . . '' This is a quote from Mr. HOYER. That was back in 2005. I don't know what the gas prices were then in Maryland, but I know today in Maryland they are $2.98 a gallon.

So these are some more empty promises; and not only empty promises, we got to see on some of the votes of the leadership, for the majority party, exactly how they vote.

If you look at the ANWR drilling, no, no, no. No, no, no. If you look at the refineries, where we wanted to expand our capability of our refineries, and be able to refine more oil, no, no, no. I am anxious, aren't you, to see what their result is going to be? I am ready for the answer.

They have left us hanging long enough. They have left us hanging for 2 years, and 1 year, as to what their answer is going to be to relieve these gas prices, to lower them. If anything, since the election in 2006, the gas prices have gone straight up.

So, you know, either they don't want to do what it takes to lower the gas prices, they don't know what it will take to lower the gas prices, or the very economic policies they have adopted in this 110th Congress have caused the gas prices to go up.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. I appreciate the gentleman's perspective on the issue of energy, because it's extremely important, because I hear that at home as well. Folks are frustrated by the level of inactivity by this Congress as it relates to many things, and certainly in the area of gas prices.

As you recall, Congressman WESTMORELAND, and I know you appreciate that what we heard out of this new majority was that their bill, earlier this year, their part of their 6 for '06 plan was going to solve a lot of the problems as it related to energy, and what was that plan?

As you will remember, that plan was to increase taxes on American oil companies. Increased taxes on American oil companies was somehow going to be this grand plan that would make it so that those mean and awful oil companies wouldn't be making so much money.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Do you think these are some of the same people that think increasing our taxes by the largest tax increase in the history of this country is going to make our economy better? Could these be the same people that think these economic policies are going to make us better?

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Well, I appreciate that observation as well, because that appears to be what they believe. But we are getting a little ahead of ourselves, because it's important to close the loop on this energy issue.

Because what the majority party offered was this remarkable smoke and mirrors that said, as part of their 6 for '06, that if we just passed this bill, if we just increased taxes on the oil company, then what will happen is that they will, by some miraculous determination, lower the price of oil for folks at the pump.

Well, as you well know, what increases taxes on American oil companies does is make it so that they are less likely to be able to compete in the world so that our reliance on foreign oil gets greater.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Just to interrupt you one more time, because I think this is important to understand that those tax increases on an oil company really come from doing away with the tax credits they were getting for new exploration on finding new oil.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Absolutely, without a doubt. There are some real keys, pivotal keys to the real solution to our energy challenges. One of them is conservation. We can all do more in the area of conservation. We can all probably do more on conservation. Probably the long-term solution is some type of alternative fuel. We have done a lot for that. In fact, most Members of the majority party are on record as opposing rewards for the provision of alternative fuel.

But one of the mainstays, especially in the short-term, is to provide American energy for Americans. So, peculiarly, what this majority party did, and it's perplexing, frankly, because it doesn't solve anything, is to pass a bill to increase taxes on American oil companies, again, which makes us less competitive in the world, makes us more reliant on foreign oil, and, frankly, it means that what we do is finance those folks who like us less to a greater degree. That doesn't seem to make a whole lot of sense.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. I found two more quotes I found interesting: ''House Democrats have a plan to help curb rising gas prices.'' Now, this is Mr. JIM CLYBURN from South Carolina who said that on July 6 of 2006. Gas prices in South Carolina are now $2.81.

There is another one that says: ''With gasoline and other prices rising, America's middle-class families deserve better . . . Nobody thinks $2.50 a gallon is cheap; it's still expensive.'' Now that came from the Democratic Caucus Chairman RAHM EMANUEL on June 2 of 2006. So, evidently, gas prices

were around $2.50 then. Now, in Illinois, they are $3.23.

So, do you think, being the Truth Squad, that this could just be smoke and mirrors to get people to believe that they had some kind of answer to reduce these gas prices to make Americans make it easier for us to meet our energy needs here within this country, without going to foreign imports?

So that seems to be the indication that this is just more smoke and mirrors that the 110th Congress, then the minority, was telling the American public to become the majority. It's kind of like a barking dog behind the fence. As long as that dog is behind the fence, he is going to bark and say and do things to make you think he is going to get out and get something done. But when you open that gate he becomes a little whimpering Chihuahua, does nothing. I think that's what we see in here, a bunch of little Chihuahuas whimpering around.

I do thank you. I thank you for your time. I think the gentlelady from Tennessee may want to add something to that. I appreciate the opportunity.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. I appreciate your comments so much. I think it's important. It's called smoke and mirrors; I think that's an apt title. I talk about politics over policy, which is what frustrates me, frustrates so many of our constituents at home.

I am so pleased to be joined by my friend from Tennessee, Congresswoman MARSHA BLACKBURN, who is a strong leader on the Energy and Commerce Committee. I look forward to your comments on this issue and others.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. I thank the gentleman so very much. I am pleased that we are talking about the issue that so many Americans are talking about right now, and that is the energy needs of our country.

One thing that you touched on, I think, that is just so vitally important to see, the solutions that we work toward are going to be American solutions, and it is not going to be something that is simple, or you can't change it with the stroke of a pen. This is something we are going to have to work our way out of, things we can do right now. Right now, through conservation efforts, things that we can do over the next decade, through exploration, through the innovation, things that we can work over the next 25, 30 years toward, as we look at diversification of our supplies, and commercialization of new technologies and new forms of fuel.

But the thing is, when you look at all of that diversity, and having a wide, broad answer, a sustainable American energy policy, we know, it is American solutions that will lead us to being free of the influx of foreign oil and foreign energy sources into our country. I think that what we have to do is look at the steps we are going to take over the next couple of years and the next couple of decades as being more or less next level steps to the building blocks that we have put in place.

Our party has had a tremendously strong record of conservation. You can go back to Teddy Roosevelt and look at the efforts that he had toward conserving this Nation's natural resources and the legacy that was put in place there, and how we have moved forward through the decades now to where we look at our environment and energy and, say, you know, we passed a good bill in 2005. It brought forward, moved forward, a lot of our alternative energy sources, our renewable resources, and allowed for additional exploration of those natural resources that we have here.

Now it is time for us to push it a little bit further down the pike. That's what the American people want to see. They know that fuel prices are high. They understand that. They know that our electricity use is going to increase over the next couple of decades. They understand that. They accept that.

What they want us to do is to get the costs down, to be certain that we have access to an ample supply of affordable energy.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. I appreciate your passion about this and the information that you bring. I suspect you see what I see at home, and you hear what I hear at home, that is, that Americans want us to be working towards solutions. They want us to come up with solutions and make certain that we are working together to put those solutions on the table and move them forward so that we can work to get that American energy.

What they are concerned about is the lack of solutions that they see being put on the table by the current majority party.

□ 1645

Mrs. BLACKBURN. If the gentleman will yield. That is indeed one of their frustrations.

And one of my constituents this past weekend said to me, you know, I appreciate all the talk that's out there about the environment. I appreciate the talk that is out there about energy.

But, let me tell you something. Global warming is not a national security issue. And what I don't like is the fact that the liberal left is taking money out of homeland security. They're taking money out of intelligence. They're diverting funds from all sorts of budgets up here to study their fascination with global warming. And that is something that our constituents are not happy with. And as one of my constituents said to me, I don't think global warming had one single thing to do with September 11.

They want us to focus on what should be our priorities. And as we're talking about the budget and the priorities of the House, one of the things we have continued to hear so much about is a tremendous amount of concern from the small business people that are in our district, all of our small business owners, especially our female-owned small businesses who are extremely concerned about the budget that the Democrat leadership has brought forward that would be the single largest tax increase in history.

These are women who have stepped forward. They are taking a risk. They are taking the responsibility of running a company, and now they are getting ready to be hit with the single largest tax increase in history by a leadership that I guess does not understand the necessity of being a small business owner and looking at those books, being a single mom and wanting deductibility for that child tax credit; small business owners that are sharing in the ownership of this; married couples that are looking for marriage penalty relief that want to continue small business expensing. And every time they turn around, the government is wanting to take more of their pay check.

My constituents want to know that they've got first right of refusal on that pay check, not the Federal Government. They know government has a spending problem. It doesn't have a revenue problem.

And as I've said many times on this floor, a lot of my constituents believe if 10 percent is good enough for God, 10 percent is good enough for the government. And they feel like we should do a better job of managing the people's money, and they are exactly right.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Will the gentlelady yield?

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Indeed, I will.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. I appreciate you bringing up the issue of the largest tax increase in American history that was passed by this majority on this floor. And folks at home say, well that can't be true. That just can't be true. We can't allow that to happen. What are they doing?

And what they're doing is displayed in this chart right here, as you well know, because all of these tax rates, all of these tax rates, given the budget that has been adopted by this House, will increase to significant levels in relatively short order. Ordinary income going from the top rate of 35 percent to 39.6, capital gains going from 15 percent to 20 percent, dividends going from 15 percent to 39.6 percent, estate tax goes from 0 percent in 2010 to 55 percent. That's the death tax. It goes to 55 percent in 2011. The child tax credit cut in half. And the lowest tax bracket, amazingly enough, goes from 10 to 15 percent, which is a 50 percent increase.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. If the gentleman would yield, that is their projections for right now. We are just a few months into the new majority, and it took them just a couple of days to increase regulations and increase spending. It took them a couple of months to start raising taxes, and look at where they've gotten. They already are spending so much more than they should be that at this point this is where they are. And we haven't even gotten through the first year of this.

We haven't even gotten through the first budget. And we would see those rates on ordinary income tax go from 35 to 39.6 percent on January 1, 2011. That's 1/1/11. And that is when they would raise that. We would see that child tax credit cut in half. We would see cap gains go back up, and we're just a few months into this. This is the Hold on to Your Wallet Congress, and I would recommend that people hold on to that wallet because they want to get their hand on your pay check. And I yield back.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. I appreciate the gentlelady's perspective on that because it is so true. And when folks think about the ordinary income going up from 35 to 39.6 percent they say, well, that, you know, that's just all those folks who are at the top, all those rich folks. Well, as you mentioned and so clearly stated, that includes all the small businesses, and what that means is jobs for America. And so the largest tax increase in the history of our Nation is what has been passed on the floor of this House. Very frustrating. And when you talk with reasonable folks on the other side of the aisle about this, they say, oh, well, we're not going to do all that. We're going to change some of those numbers. We're going to make it so that the lowest rate isn't 15 percent, it comes back down to 10.

But the problem is that their budget has spent all of the money that's to come from all of these tax increases. So if they're not going to get that money from one spot, then they've got to get it from another and raise them even more.

So, Madam Speaker, I think that it is clear that this is a real problem that the American people are beginning to appreciate, that the leadership that they thought they were electing in November of 2006 is, in fact, not the leadership that they are getting. Again, politics over appropriate policy.

This is a pie chart, Madam Speaker, that demonstrates who's going to be paying all those new taxes. And it talks about the billions, billions and billions of dollars that will be supposedly raised by those. In fact, what will happen is that it will so depress the economy that it is not likely that you'll see those kinds of revenues. In fact, what will happen is that we'll see fewer jobs, fewer amount of revenue to the Federal Government, and a significant change in what is a relatively good economic picture at the current time.

I am pleased to be joined by my good friend from California (Mr. MCCARTHY), KEVIN MCCARTHY, who is a member, of, I believe a member of the Budget Committee, and has been involved in certainly budgetary aspects and budgetary planning at the State level. And we're pleased to have you join us here in Washington this term as a new Member of the House of Representatives and look forward to your comments this evening.

Mr. MCCARTHY of California. Madam Speaker, I just want to congratulate this Member because I truly believe more people are listening than we've been hearing about. We see Nielsen's ratings out there and we see a number of people that watch C–SPAN. But I must tell you, there must be more because when I was sitting in my office, I was reading headlines, and the headline recently said, Congress has its lowest approval rating to date: 29 percent of the United States approves of what Congress is doing. And that means nothing.

And I believe that a lot is coming from what you're talking about. You're giving people truth and accountability on what's gone on in this new majority and what has happened in this new majority.

And that's really what I want to talk about today. Not much has moved. It's more about doing nothing. You talk about they are talking about putting politics before policies. And what I'd like to talk about today is actually a solution. I'd like to talk about putting people before politics. That's where we have to have a new direction and a new change.

When you look at some of the graphs that are sitting down on that floor, you will see, and it is a direct comparison of what policy the Republicans believe in and the policy the Democrats believe in.

A headline that I read just the other day was the largest amount of money coming in on April 15 in the record of the United States of America. The largest amount. And how did we come about doing that? We lowered taxes. It said, if you let people keep more of what they earn, they will invest. And what happens when they invest? They create more jobs. When you create more jobs, you create more homeowners. When you create more homeowners and more jobs, more people are able to go to college, get a greater education. That's talking about putting the people before politics.

It all goes back to the 2003 tax relief bill, much of what your graph will say. It'll show greater job creation the Republicans went out to do, and it'll show greater investment and, in the end, greater amounts of money to America today.

And what happens? It comes down to tell us that this is not a revenue problem in our deficit. It is a spending problem. But the Democrats look at it all different. They believe they should take more of what you earn. And I know I've said it before on this floor but I want to say it again. When you put people before politics, let's talk about taxes. Let's talk about what the Democrats proposed in their 100 days of increasing taxes which, Madam Speaker, our speaker just said on this floor, increasing taxes in every realm. If you have children, it's going to cost you more. If you're married, it's going to cost you more. If you're elderly, it's going to cost you more. If you're in the lowest tax bracket, it's going to cost you more.

Now, I want to put it in perspective, because this is something that this floor doesn't talk about. What is the day-to-day life of an American? How do they pay taxes? Do they pay enough taxes? Well, I want to give you an average day. A person wakes up, they go in and they take a shower. Do you know, when they turn that water on they are paying a water tax?

They get ready for work. They go out, maybe they stop off at a coffee shop, buy a cup of coffee. They pay a tax on that coffee.

They look at their gas gauge. They go to the gas station. I am in California, paid $3.49 a gallon. A lot of that was in tax.

Then I go into work. For the first 3 hours of work, I'm just paying State and Federal tax. Lo and behold, maybe I'm like most of Americans, I have to move in my job. I have to be able to go to other places to be able to sell because it's a global economy. I buy an airline ticket, I pay an airline tax. I rent a car when I get there. I pay a rental tax. I go and work part of the day. I come home, turn on the TV maybe to see our good speaker here on television. I pay a cable tax.

And lo and behold that I was able to put a little money away after they tax me from morning till night, and I invest. I invest for my family. I invest for my children to go to college. I invest and take the risk and hopefully I got a little reward. And maybe I invest in some property. Maybe I invest in the stock market. And because the Republicans lowered the tax and more people are paying dividends, so I'm getting a greater income and my kids can go to a maybe more expensive college. Then maybe I can afford to send my kids to Disneyland a little more. Maybe I can afford to spend time with my family a little more, and that's what Americans want.

But lo and behold, if I invested and I got a return on my investment, and I wanted to leave some money for my children and my grandchildren, what do the Democrats answer with? They answer they want 55 percent of that. They don't even want half. They want 55 percent. Because you decided to invest in America, they think you owe the government.

What do Republicans say? Keep it and add on. Why? Because we believe that's your money. We believe the capital is good for America, good for the investment. It helps us to be more competitive in a global economy. Yeah, you're becoming more efficient; that you should, if you owned a small business, invest in new equipment because your employees will be able to be more efficient. America will be more efficient, and that's what this Congress has produced.

There is a direct change in this Congress, and I applaud this individual on the floor, Mr. PRICE, because from the standpoint I believe more people are

listening. If it's rating a 29 percent, your Truth Squad is getting out that accountability is lacking here in Congress today.

And I would like to just talk to you a little longer about this. Maybe you can dwell on a little more, you have a graph down there. Maybe you can talk a little bit about what you see from the 2003 plan to today's plan as well.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. I appreciate the gentleman and the comments that he makes about every single tax that we pay with every single thing we do is so apt because this new majority seems to believe that, well, in everything they do, seem to believe that they have got a better idea. They've got better solutions. They know better than the American people about how they ought to do most anything, and especially how they ought to spend their money.

And when I talk to my good friends on the other side of the aisle who appear to be interested in making certain that America sustains this economic vitality that it has, and you ask them, well, how did that vitality come about, and you point to things like this chart demonstrates, which is where job creation was before the appropriate tax reductions and what happened afterward, it's as clear as the nose on your face or the drawing before you. Before tax cuts were put in place, there was a staggering job growth and mostly negative job creation. But something happened in 2003, as you pointed out. Something happened.

□ 1700

And it resulted in huge, significant job growth, job increase, across this Nation. Literally 49 of the 50 States have increased employment since 2003. And one would think that if you had the responsibility for determining what the economic policies of this Nation ought to be that you would look at that point and you would say, well, it would help me understand what happened then in order to continue the economic growth that we have seen. And it is clear that this job creation, this job growth, was a direct result of allowing Americans to keep more of their hard-earned money. So it is without doubt that we need to continue those policies, in fact, to increase the ability for Americans to keep their own money and, therefore, continue the wonderful growth that we have had.

I am pleased to yield to the gentleman.

Mr. McCARTHY of California. You make a great point. Numbers don't lie. You see it in a graph. You see it in the facts. You see it on April 15, the highest revenue ever to come in.

Now, why do we continue to have these deficits? Because it is a spending problem, not a revenue problem. Just as when you live at your own house, you balance your checkbook. If you have got more money coming in, how come you are going further into debt? Because of the management and the lack of accountability here. You see the unemployment rate continue to go down from 2003. Why? Because if people are able to keep more of what they earn, they are able to invest.

We want America to be the most competitive, to be able to be the most productive, and you need capital to do that. And do you know what else you want? You want the creation of small business. You want everybody across the board to have the opportunity for the American dream.

Well, if you are taking a savings account that you maybe want to invest in your family, to invest for them in the next 21st century, to invest them in the ability to have a small business, invest them in taking a risk and a little reward, you don't want to give 55 percent to the government. You want to be able to hand it down.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Exactly right.

Mr. McCARTHY of California. And don't you want your grandchildren to be able to have a greater opportunity, greater education? It is not just the undergraduates we look at.

As I told you before, I have two kids at home: Connor, who is 13; and Meghan, who is 10. And when I look at their education and we sit around our kitchen table, my wife Judy and I, all we do is talk about the future for our children. And I am not worried about our children competing with somebody from another part of California or even somebody in different parts of America. Do you know whom our children are going to compete with? It is a global economy. They are going to compete with the kids in India and China. And I will tell you in India and China they don't have a 55 percent tax rate on the death tax. They don't hold their children back like we are holding ours back. We don't have the opportunity to grow. And this economy is competitive. And for us to stay that way, we need actually a new direction in this Congress where the people are before politics. And the one thing I have seen in these 100 or so days, this November election never ended, that we continue to have politics on this floor in each and every way we go about doing it. We should now start talking about solutions. How do we solve the problems? How do we make America energy independent? Not how we simply fund greater dictators, not that we buy as much oil from Venezuela as we do from America, and you listen to what Mr. Chavez says about America, ''ending the evil empire.'' We want to make America and this world safer, freer, and leave it a better place for our own children. And we are not going to do it with the change in direction in this Congress. We are not going to be able to achieve those goals.

That is why I want to congratulate you on the work you have done because you are bringing accountability to this floor. You are letting the American people see it. And what we want to derive from that are solutions, bringing people back before politics.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman's contributing this afternoon and his perspective.

And it is so appropriate and so uplifting, frankly, to have Members in the House of Representatives who understand and appreciate the connection between cause and effect, the connection between the actions that we take here and then what happens out in the real world. And it is one of those things, Madam Speaker, that frustrates my constituents and I know it frustrates Americans all across this Nation who are concerned that there are fewer and fewer individuals in this House of Representatives that appreciate that connection.

I want to mention just a few more items as it relates to the economy and as it relates to our current situation and, hopefully, what will occur with the policies that are adopted by this House of Representatives and this Congress.

This is a chart, Madam Speaker, that demonstrates the unemployment rate. And as you will recall, at the beginning of this decade, the unemployment rate was increasing significantly and got up to almost 6.5 percent in the early part of 2003. If you were to look at this graph and to believe and appreciate that a low unemployment rate means a vibrant economy, that people are working, that people are being able to support their family, that they are able to change jobs, that they are able to move up in the job market, that is what happens when you have a low unemployment rate. And anything below about 5 percent is considered to be an extremely vibrant economy.

So something happened in 2003 to result in a steady decline in the unemployment rate over the last 3 or 4 years. And what happened in 2003, again, is that we, Congress, and this administration allowed for Americans to keep more of their hard-earned money. Now, when you look at that, it is an important thing to appreciate. It is also important to recognize that cause and effect. But it is also important to look at some other numbers and kind of dig a little deeper into what was the consequence, what happened with the decreases in taxes.

As I mentioned, job growth, 88,000 new jobs were gained in just this past April, with nearly 2 million new jobs being created over the last 12 months. Our Nation has added nearly 8 million new jobs since August of 2003. And, Madam Speaker, sometimes those numbers just kind of get lost. You say 8 million new jobs or nearly 8 million new jobs, and it is tough to know whether or not that is good or bad compared to maybe what the rest of the world is creating. What is happening in the rest of the world?

Well, Madam Speaker, 7.8 million new jobs since August of 2003, that is more new jobs than all other major industrialized countries combined. That is more than all other major industrialized countries combined. That is

more than England plus France plus Spain plus Italy plus Scandinavia plus Japan plus all other industrialized countries combined. That is phenomenal, Madam Speaker. It would behoove us to delve into why that has happened.

Our economy has seen job gains for 44 straight months, and employment has increased in 47 States. I think I should correct myself. I think I said 49 States earlier. It is 47 States within the last year. So the lower unemployment rate that we see, 4.5 percent, among the lowest in the past 6 years. And, Madam Speaker, that rate is lower than the average for the 1960s, for the 1970s, for the 1980s, and for the 1990s. That rate is lower than the average unemployment rate during those periods of time.

Economic growth, this economy that has been in transition has shown a sustainable growth path, an increasing path over a period of time. Real GDP growth is up 1.3 percent in the first quarter of this year and 2.1 percent over the last four quarters. Household spending, what are moms and dads across this Nation spending? Well, their spending is up 3.8 percent, and it remains strong and really is expected to be that kind of firm foundation upon which we continue this positive economic activity. But it will only continue, Madam Speaker, if we are responsible and set appropriate policies that will allow Americans to keep more of their hard-earned money.

By the same token, business investment continues to increase. Capital investment turned up in the first quarter. As my good friend from California mentioned just a moment ago, tax receipts were up. Tax receipts rose 11.8 percent in fiscal year 2006 on top of a 14.6 percent increase in 2005. And so far this year, we have seen growth of 11.5 percent. And that is what is confounding to our good friends on the left who don't seem to appreciate the cause and effect of allowing Americans to keep more of their money. In fact, what they say over and over is, well, the government needs more money in order to X-Y-Z. Even if you believe that all of the things that Washington does are appropriate and even if you believed that there was no waste and that there was no fraud and that there was no abuse that you could squeeze out of the system, even if you believe that, what we see happens when you decrease taxes, when you allow Americans to keep more of their hard-earned money, is that revenue increases. So, Madam Speaker, what we see here on this chart is a chart that demonstrates Federal revenue. That is the amount of money coming into the Federal Government in billions of dollars. And over the first part of this decade, we saw a steady decline in the amount of money coming into the Federal Government. And then once again that magic line, that magic point in time in 2003, when this Congress acted responsibly, along with this administration, and allowed Americans to keep more of their hard-earned money, what happened, Madam Speaker, is a remarkable thing, and that is a significant and huge increase in the amount of money coming into the Federal Government.

It ought not have been a mystery. Many people predicted it. Many people said that is exactly what would happen, and they knew that because that is what happened throughout history. President Reagan knew it when he decreased taxes on the American people and saw increasing revenue to the Federal Government. President Kennedy knew it when he enacted appropriate decreases in taxes on the American people in the early 1960s, and what we saw as a Nation at that time was an increase in revenue to the Federal Government.

So, Madam Speaker, it is important that we look at the cause and effect. What we do here makes a difference in everything. It has consequences for the American people. And so when you have positive activity in our Nation as it relates to the economy, positive job growth, positive numbers coming into the Federal Government, positive business investment, increasing homeownership, low inflation, low unemployment, it behooves us to figure out why that happened. It happened because we allowed more Americans to keep more of their hard-earned money, and we ought to continue those policies.

Now, one of the great concerns that I have, Madam Speaker, is that I don't sense any amount of willingness on the part of our new majority to continue those appropriate policies. And, frankly, I don't sense a whole lot of willingness on the part of a majority of Congress on both sides of the aisle to do what needs to be done in the area of spending. As my good friend said earlier, we don't have a revenue problem here in Washington; we have a spending problem. And it is clear that that spending problem continues regardless of the party in power.

So I am one of those who believes that there needs to be some restraints, some process restraints that ought to be put in place in order to decrease the level of spending appropriately and make certain that we hold people accountable and that we make certain that people are being responsible with the hard-earned money that Americans send to Washington, which is why I support a Federal Taxpayer Bill of Rights.

And I have labeled this chart ''American Values and American Vision'' because, Madam Speaker, I believe that it is an American value to allow individuals to keep the benefits of their labor. I believe that the more we allow individuals to derive the benefits of their labor and their hard work and their entrepreneurship and their ingenuity that what we will do is create more Americans who will strive to do more, who will strive to create more, who will strive to risk more, who will strive to do more in order to succeed. And the more Americans that are willing to do that, I have all the faith in the world that we will continue to be a wonderful and productive and successful Nation.

However, if we as a nation decide, no, we as a government know best, that we ought to tell you what to do, that we ought to tell you where to go, we ought to tell you how much you can make, that we ought to tell you when you make too much, what that does is stifle ingenuity and it stifles creativity and it stifles entrepreneurship and it says, no, we don't want you to be successful. We only want you to do this much, not more. We don't want you to truly reach your full potential. We just want you to do this much. We don't want you to dream big dreams because that wouldn't be a decision that we have made. Your dream may be at odds with some decision that Washington makes.

Madam Speaker, that is not the America that I know. That is not the American value that I was taught. That is not the American vision that I have and that so many of my colleagues have.

So the Taxpayer Bill of Rights that we have introduced in this Congress, Federal Taxpayer Bill of Rights, says a number of things, positively says a number of things. It says that taxpayers across this Nation have a right to a Federal Government that does not grow beyond their ability to pay for it. And what does that mean, Madam Speaker? What that means is that this bill, if enacted, would appropriately reduce the size of government or limit the size in the growth of government to an increase in the population of our Nation plus a cost-of-living adjustment so that the government could rise but no more than the increase in population and the increase in inflation. That is a restraint on the kind of spending that occurs on both sides of the aisle here in Washington. That is the kind of positive solution that I and many people support.

We believe in American values and an American vision and a Taxpayer Bill of Rights that says that taxpayers have a right to receive back every dollar they entrust to the government for their retirement.

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The issue of entitlements, Madam Speaker, we haven't even touched on this afternoon, but it's an important issue. The issue of Social Security is one that is extremely important because it was a program that was put in place a number of decades ago, and it was put in place at a time when there were 15 or 16 workers for every retiree, a wonderful program to have in place to allow for seniors to have some nest egg or some cushion that they could rely on when they retire. It also, curiously, Madam Speaker, as you likely know, was put in place at a time when the average life expectancy in this Nation was less than when the benefits

would begin. That is the kind of program that the Federal Government likes. It means that you don't necessarily get what you put into the program itself.

We believe that American taxpayers have the right to receive every dollar back that they put into the Social Security program. We believe that the Social Security trust fund money ought not be spent on anything but Social Security retirement benefits. We believe that is a right that Americans have. We believe that is a responsibility that this Congress has in a positive way to say we will limit the spending of that money to what it was intended for. We believe in American values and American vision, that Federal taxpayers have a right to a balanced budget without raising taxes.

There are a number of ways that you can get to balancing the budget. You can get to it by increasing taxes. You can tax businesses and you can tax people, successful people and folks all across this Nation who work for a living. You can tax them and take more of their hard-earned money and for the short term you can balance the budget. Yes, you can.

But the way to responsibly balance the budget that embraces American values and that embraces American vision and that allows people to succeed and dream and work hard and have the benefits of their labor, the way to do that responsibly is not to take more of their money. The way to do that responsibly is to decrease spending, is to decrease and restrain the growth of government, and to make it so that the Federal Government does what the Federal Government ought to and ought do only. And that requires, I believe, Madam Speaker, a balanced budget amendment.

As I mentioned, folks on both sides of the aisle have difficulty with spending too much of the American taxpayers' hard-earned money. We believe that a balanced budget amendment is imperative.

We believe also that Federal taxpayers have a right to fundamental and fair tax reform. My good friend from Tennessee mentioned earlier that on January 1, 2011, 1/1/11, that this new majority is destined for the largest tax increase in the history of this Nation. We believe that that's wrong. We believe that the manner in which this Federal Government gains revenue stifles entrepreneurship, stifles vision, hurts dreams, harms success, says to folks who are working hard out there across this Nation, Don't do that. Don't work hard. That's not what you want to do, because if you do that, we will just take more of your money. That is not the America I dream about and I believe in. So we believe that fundamental and fair tax reform is imperative.

And finally, Madam Speaker, the Taxpayer Bill of Rights says that in order to increase taxes in this body, that we must have a supermajority. We must have more than just 50 percent plus one. We must convince a supermajority, a vast number of the individuals who serve in this body from all across this Nation, that a tax increase is absolutely necessary. It is one of the provisions that we had in place for the last 12 years, from 1994 to 2006. It's one of the things that was changed on the very first day of this new Congress, that a supermajority was no longer required. It is one of the reasons, Madam Speaker, why there was no significant tax increase over the last 12 years. One of the reasons, Madam Speaker, that we've seen a significant increase in economic productivity across this Nation over the last 4 years is because of appropriate tax decreases and not allowing increases by just a slim majority.

So, Madam Speaker, I am honored to come to the floor this afternoon and to share an American value, American vision that talks about positive things about our Nation and congratulates the men and women around this Nation who are working hard, who are trying to earn for their families and save for their retirement, who are trying to contribute to their own American Dream.

I believe that it is an incredible honor to serve in this United States House of Representatives. I believe it is incumbent on every single Member of this House to respect and value the hard work that each and every American performs each and every single day, regardless of the job that they're doing. Every single job has merit and worth and is deserving of our respect. And one of the ways that we ought to respect it is to allow men and women across this Nation to keep more of their hard-earned money and to be responsible with the spending that we perform here at the Federal level.

So I am honored to have presented that American vision and that American value to my colleagues today. Madam Speaker, I appreciate that opportunity.

I yield back the balance of my time.

BLUE DOG COALITION DEFICITS AND DEBT BACKGROUND

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. ROSS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. ROSS. Madam Speaker, this evening, as most Tuesday evenings, I rise on behalf of the 43 member strong, fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition. We are 43 fiscally conservative Democrats that are committed to restoring common sense and fiscal discipline to our Nation's government. We are not from one particular region of the country. Members of the Blue Dog Coalition stretch from California and Utah to New York, and we are united in trying to restore fiscal sanity to our Nation's government. Why? Because today, the U.S. national debt is $8,821,563,738,020. And I ran out of room, but right here it should say 12 cents. And for every man, woman and child in America, your share of the national debt is $29,225.95. It is what we refer to as the debt tax, d-e-b-t, which is one tax that cannot be cut; it cannot go away until we get our Nation's fiscal house in order.

It is hard now to believe, but from 1998 to 2001, we had a balanced budget in this country of ours. And now, under the past 6 years of Republican rule, with the Republicans controlling the White House, the House and the Senate, after 6 years we've got the largest debt ever in our Nation's history and the largest deficit ever in our Nation's history. In fiscal year 2004, it was $568 billion. In fiscal year 2005, it was $493.6 billion. In fiscal year 2006 it was $434 billion. Fiscal year 2006 it was $247 billion, and the projected deficit for fiscal year 2007 is $172 billion, but not really. The projected deficit for fiscal year 2007 is $357 billion. When they tell you it's only $172 billion, they're not counting the money they're borrowing from the Social Security trust fund.

When I first came to Congress in 2001, the first bill I wrote was a bill to tell the politicians in Washington to keep their hands off the Social Security trust fund. The Republican leadership refused to give me a hearing or a vote on that bill, and now we know why, because they are using that money to fund our debt. $357 billion deficit projected for fiscal year 2007, and much of that is coming, about half of that is coming from the Social Security trust fund. Where is the rest of it coming from? It's coming from foreigners. In fact, this administration has borrowed more money from foreigners in the past 6 years than the previous 42 Presidents combined. Let me repeat that. This administration has borrowed more money from foreigners in the past 6 years than the previous 42 Presidents combined. My good friend and a founder of the Blue Dogs, JOHN TANNER, put it best when he said, If China decides to invade Taiwan, we will have to borrow more money from China to defend Taiwan.

David Letterman has a top 10 list, and we've got one, too. The U.S. is becoming increasingly dependent on foreign lenders. Foreign lenders currently hold a total of about $2.199 trillion of our public debt. Compare this to only $623.3 billion in foreign holdings back in 1993. Again, this administration in the past 6 years has borrowed more money from foreign central banks and foreign investors than the previous 42 Presidents combined.

Japan, $637.4 billion. The United States of America has borrowed $346.5 billion from China. The United Kingdom, $223.5 billion. OPEC, yes OPEC, and we wonder why gasoline is approaching three bucks a gallon. Our Nation has borrowed $97.1 billion from OPEC to fund tax cuts in this country for folks earning over $400,000 a year.

Korea, $67.7 billion. Taiwan, $63.2 billion. The Caribbean banking centers, $63.6 billion. Hong Kong, $51 billion. Germany, $52.1 billion. And rounding out the top 10 list, and this will surprise some folks, the United States of America's 10th largest loanee to our government is the Government of Mexico and investors in Mexico. Mexico, investors have loaned the United States of America $38.2 billion. That's right, the United States of America has borrowed $38.2 billion from Mexico. And that rounds out the top 10 list of the foreign countries that our Nation is borrowing money from.

We believe this is very critical to our Nation's security. That is why we are trying to restore fiscal discipline and common sense to our Nation's government, put an end to these massive debts and massive deficits. Our Nation is borrowing a billion dollars a day, but before we borrow a billion dollars a day, we're going to spend half a billion paying interest on a debt we've already got. And that's a half a billion that can't go for Social Security, it can't go for health care, it can't go for new roads and fixing roads and infrastructure. It can't go for education, it can't go for homeland security, and it cannot go for veterans benefits. Why? Because we are spending that money, a half a billion dollars a day, simply paying interest on the debt we've already got before we increase it a billion dollars today. I think we need that half a bill to invest in the best and most advanced technology out there when it comes to bullet-proof vests to protect our men and women in uniform, to give them the best and most advanced equipment they need.

I've got a father, John Grant, in Hot Springs, Arkansas, that's very concerned about his son going back for a second tour of duty in Iraq and not having the most advanced body armor that's on the market today. A half a billion a day going to pay interest on the national debt, how many modern, state-of-the-art body armor vests could we buy with just the amount of money we're spending today paying interest on the national debt?

I am joined this evening by a number of fellow Blue Dogs, and I am grateful they have come down to spend some time with me on the House floor this evening.

At this time I would like to yield to a fellow Blue Dog, someone that's very active on the Blue Dog Coalition, someone that serves on the Armed Services Committee, among other important committees, and that is my friend from neighboring Oklahoma, DAN BOREN.

Mr. BOREN. Thank you. My colleague from Arkansas, Mr. ROSS, is a great leader for us on the Blue Dog Coalition. I am now in my second term, and I tell you there is no better organization than the Blue Dog Coalition.

When I was elected, and actually when I was running for Congress, I was able to sit down with a lot of the Blue Dog members. We had a lot of common interests, and one of those was fiscal responsibility.

Many of us that serve in Congress are former members of State legislatures. I can tell you, I can remember being a freshman State legislator and dealing with a State budget. When I was elected, we had a $700 million shortfall. That doesn't sound like big numbers here in Washington, DC, but they're big numbers in Oklahoma. And we were able to balance our budget because we basically had an amendment to our State constitution saying you will balance that budget. You're going to have to cut services; you're going to have to do something to rein in that spending. In Washington we don't have that. That's why it is so important that we have groups like the Blue Dogs who are focused on fiscal responsibility.

I can tell you, since this Democratic majority has taken hold, the Blue Dogs have been a key player in making sure that we have things like the PAYGO rules, PAYGO rules that make sure that whenever there is a new government program, we find a way to pay for it. We don't just write a hot check for it. So that is why I am proud to be a member.

My friend from Arkansas has been on this floor many, many times talking about the waste, fraud and abuse. And we will make sure that in this defense authorization bill we cut out any unwarranted spending that is not going to the warfighter. That is something that I have been working very hard with Chairman SKELTON on each and every day, and I appreciate his leadership. We've got many Blue Dogs on the Armed Services Committee, and we are going to keep working to make sure that we spend those tax dollars wisely.

□ 1730

We are joined also by our friend here, a new member who sits actually next to me on the Armed Services Committee, Mr. BRAD ELLSWORTH from Indiana. I would like to turn it over to him for any of his thoughts on the Blue Dogs or what is going on in the defense authorization bill or any other topics he wants to discuss.

Mr. ELLSWORTH. Madam Speaker, it is an honor for me to join you and the members of the Blue Dog Coalition in their mission to bring fiscal responsibility back to this House.

As my friend from Oklahoma said, I am a new member. I have been up here approximately 5 months now, so it is easy for me to remember what the people of the Eighth District of Indiana said, their marching orders when they sent me here and elected me to the people's House. They told me to stay honest. They told me, don't let Washington change you. They said, in fact, you need to go and change the way Washington works. And they said ''spend my money wisely.''

They have probably seen Mr. ROSS on TV and saw the poster that showed that every person in this country, their portion of the national debt was $29,000, and it recently had to be added to. Over $29,000. Every man, woman, child, living person in this country, owes $29,000 of that debt. That is too much. Why are we strapping our children and grandchildren with that kind of debt?

The people in Indiana are pretty smart. Nobody likes taxes, but they realize that taxes are a necessary, I might go as far and say, evil, if they want the services that the government provides. So they don't mind paying those taxes if they know that their Congress people are spending those taxes wisely.

So when they hear about ''bridges to nowhere'' and fish museums and teapot museums in North Carolina, or maybe more serious than that, things like $38 million worth of weapons in Iraq and Afghanistan that have gone on the missing-in-action list, weapons that probably have fallen into our enemy's hands, or $9 billion in $100 bills on pallets that is gone. It is missing, and our great country, with all of our accounting, cannot account for $9 billion in cash that has gone over there on skids.

That is not what the people of Indiana expect of this Congress. It is not what they expect of me, and I don't think they will tolerate it.

That is why when I came to Congress, when I heard about the Blue Dog Coalition, the Blue Dog Caucus, that it was a pretty easy group to join. When I checked on them, and I assume they checked on me, we had those same values and ideals. We were fiscally conservative. We want to spend the people's money wisely. We weren't going to waste it. We actually worked to balance the budget, that we wouldn't spend money we didn't have.

I have a credit card. Probably most people in the audience here, Madam Speaker, you may have a credit card, I am sure. But I don't run up those totals to the amounts that our country has run up, into foreign countries. My wife and I work hard. We charge things, and then we pay off that card. That is what the people expect us to do here.

So it is going to take tough decisions. It is going to take the tough calls. But we have got that. A group of 43 have that internal fortitude to put those tough decisions on the front. The people understand that. They will let us do that, that we will make wise decisions with their money.

So I stand here tonight, not only in the Armed Services Committee, but in every committee, whether it is Agriculture, Small Business, Armed Services, no matter what the committee is, this Congress, the people's House, has a responsibility to spend their money wisely. I pledge to do that, I know the Blue Dogs pledge to do that, and I think the other 434 Members of Congress need to do that, too.

With that, I yield back to the gentleman from Arkansas.

Mr. ROSS. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Indiana, a new

member of the fiscally conservative, Democratic Blue Dog Coalition, Mr. ELLSWORTH, for joining us for the discussion this evening here on the House floor, as we are every Tuesday night, here talking about restoring fiscal sanity to our national government.

Public opinion polls indicate that the American people really aren't concerned about the debt, which is approaching $9 trillion. But I am here to make the case that every one of us in America should be concerned about the national debt, because despite what some people may believe, despite what the Republicans have believed for the past 6 years, money does not grow on trees in Washington, DC, and we have got to begin to run this government the way that I can assure you Holly Ross makes sure that we run the Ross household in Prescott, Arkansas, and that is living within our means.

We cannot continue to borrow $1 billion a day. We cannot continue to spend half a billion dollars a day paying interest on the debt we have already got.

Why should it matter to every American? Look at this chart right here. Interest payments on the debt dwarf other priorities. For example, in the red you can see the amount of money we are spending of your tax money, Madam Speaker, paying interest on the national debt. You compare that to education in the light blue, compare it to homeland security in the green, compare it to veterans benefits in the blue.

You can see where the priorities lay with this administration for the past 6 years. The majority of our money is being spent paying interest on the national debts, not going to educate our children, not going to keep our homeland safe, not going to fund veterans healthcare.

At this time I yield to the gentleman from Georgia, a fellow Blue Dog member, Mr. SCOTT.

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Thank you very much, Mr. ROSS. As always, it is indeed a pleasure to be with you on this occasion.

I want to talk about two areas, the debt, and, of course the big elephant in the room which all of America is concerned about, the situation in Iraq and Iraq accountability.

I happen to serve on the Financial Services Committee and on the Foreign Affairs Committee, so in terms of foreign policy and in terms of our finances, those are the two major critical cross-sections we are in at this point.

Concerning the debt, it is very important that we point out, Mr. ROSS, that the fastest growing area in our budget is the interest that we are paying on this debt, which is more than what we are spending combined for education, the environment and for veterans affairs.

As we segue that into our international situation, when you look at the debt that we have gotten into as a result of the carelessness and the ineffective, inefficient foreign policy as it relates to our debt; for example, under this President and under this previous Republican-controlled Congress, this country has borrowed more money from foreign governments than all of the preceding past Presidents have done since 1789, since the foundation of this country. It has placed us in a very perilous position. And we are fighting this war in Iraq and Afghanistan on borrowed money that our children will have to pay back and the children of our soldiers will have to pay back.

Mr. ROSS, what is on the minds of the American people is accountability in Iraq. It is very important that we mention two major bills that we are moving in that direction. First is our own troop readiness and Iraqi accountability bill that passed this House, the basic framework of which after the President vetoed the first go around is now in the bill we passed last week, and it is in the conference report that we hope we will be sending back. It is important that the American people understand what the Democrats have put forward in this measure.

Our other bill is the Accountability Act, in terms of financial accountability, that we in the Blue Dog Coalition of Democrats have put forward to bring some fiscal responsibility and soundness and transparency to the moneys that we are spending in Iraq and Afghanistan. We know about the Halliburtons, we know about all the war profiteering. We hear about that in the news accounts.

It is our bill that we are pushing forward that will give some transparency and accountability. Two important facts that I think the American people need to know about that bill is that, one, it will require that the Inspector General from both the Defense Department over at the Pentagon, will have to come before this Congress quarterly to explain and to account for the moneys that are spent on that basis, as well as the Inspector General from the rebuilding program in Iraq, where so much loss of funds, unaccountability, outright stealing and theft is going on of the taxpayers' money. So we are bringing accountability to that.

But we also have got to do more, and that is what is contained in the conference report that we are sending to the President. Not only do we have benchmarks, but there must be accountability to the Iraqi people. They have this opportunity and they must step up to the plate to assume their end of the bargain. There is a government in place, and the benchmarks we have put in, there is no better way to do that.

Now, Mr. ROSS, I think much has been said about Congress and the role that we have to play in foreign policy. Unfortunately, this President has said time and time again that he is in control of foreign policy; that he is the Commander in Chief, and that the Congress is just here to do pretty much as he wants us to do. And for 5 years, for the first 5 years, that happened, where this Congress just rolled over and gave the President everything that he wants.

When we had that change in November and the people went to the polls to put Democrats in charge, they wanted to see a change in direction, and the Democrats are giving the change in direction in the bills that we have sent forward to the President.

You talk about fiscal accountability. Yes, indeed, we have that in there. We have put more money in this budget for our troops, $4 billion more, than the President has asked for. But it is so important also that we have accountability when the money gets over, to make sure that the Iraqi people understand, we don't have an endless supply of money to go down over into Iraq, and most certainly we do not have an endless supply of the precious blood and the lives of our soldiers to continually be going down the pike in the Iraqi situation. The American people are saying this situation has to end. We must get our men and women in uniform out of the middle of the crosshairs of what is a civil war.

Madam Speaker, we realize that we are in this because of mistakes. More importantly, Mr. ROSS, when you talk about accountability, it is important that we realize now that not only have mistakes been made, but we got into Iraq based on not just bad intelligence, but warped intelligence, and we got in there on deceit and lies. All of that is there now.

It is very important for us if we want to effectively be able to determine how to get out of Iraq, we must be honest about how we got into Iraq. So it is very important that we do that.

The American patience is running out on those two measures of Iraqi accountability, in terms of the money we are spending, in terms of the benchmarks we have put into this effort, and for the transparency that we put in our bill. We, as Democrats, are being very responsive.

We do have security in that region. We are not going to abandon our troops, but we are going to get them out of the crosshairs of this civil war and get into a position of containment. That is the direction that we have to go in as we formulate a new, much more effective foreign policy in the Middle East.

Mr. ROSS. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Georgia for his work with the Blue Dog Coalition, 43 of us, fiscally conservative Democrats. I welcome the gentleman from Georgia, Mr. SCOTT, to remain on the floor with me, if time will permit for him, for a discussion more in depth over the next 40 minutes as we talk about restoring not only fiscal sanity, but also accountability to our government, not only here at home but to the money being spent in Iraq.

We all support our troops, Democrats and Republicans alike. Up until now,

the President would have you believe that we are sending $12 million an hour to Iraq, and if you question how any of it is being spent, he would tell you you are unpatriotic.

Well, the Blue Dogs have said enough is enough. It is time to demand accountability for how that money is being spent, to ensure it is being spent to provide the very best equipment and the best of the best for our brave men and women in uniform serving us abroad today, not only in Iraq but also Afghanistan.

I am joined this evening by the gentleman from North Dakota, Mr. EARL POMEROY, and a fellow Blue Dog member. Welcome.

Mr. POMEROY. Thank you very much for allowing me to participate in this Special Order. I want to congratulate you and all who have impacted the national defense authorization bill we will be voting on towards the end of the week.

You know, the principles of sound budgeting have got to apply to the administration of our government, and that means all facets of our government. We have had leadership at the White House that has basically said we can have a war, and we are going to have it off budget. We don't have to account for it in terms of our efforts toward reaching a balanced budget, our efforts in terms of reducing the deficit. We are going to have it off budget.

□ 1745

All it means is our kids are picking up every nickel of this war, as it goes straight on the national debt. That is why I appreciate the principles advanced by the Blue Dogs in H. Res. 97, the Operation Iraqi Freedom Cost Accountability Act, and I applaud you and all who worked so hard to get major portions of it included in the Defense Authorization Act.

The four significant provisions of the bill: transparency in how the war funds are being spent. This isn't a black-box proposition. The money is appropriated; the money flows. Where does it flow?

I believe we have at the rate of $2 billion per-week burn rate, we are entitled to know. We are entitled to know in much greater detail than we have had before. The Blue Dogs would go so far as to have a Truman Commission looking at war profiteering.

If in the depths of World War II, the face-down with Hitler, we could recognize that there were inappropriate funds being spent and worked to get a handle around them, as Senator Truman led with his committee, certainly the same holds true with the war on terror and with Operation Iraqi Freedom.

There is a book that I recommend and bring to your attention, ''Imperial Life in the Emerald City.'' It is an outstanding inside account of the administration of the Green Zone in the early days after the conflict and into this postwar period in Iraq. It will raise in your mind, as it has raised in mine, any number of deep and troubling questions about how this whole matter has been administered, and that goes to war contracting, and that means we need to take a thorough look at all of that.

Part three of H. Res. 97, running the future funding of this war through the regular appropriations process, a principle adopted now both in the budget and the Defense Authorization Act, and the fourth essential component of this bill, moving greater Iraqi responsibility for their policing and security.

Now we have a unanimous vote of the Armed Services Committee with the defense authorization bill, and I believe the Blue Dogs can be very happy that the principle of funding this war through the normal appropriations process and greater transparency in how the funds are spent will be the policy of this House, a policy adopted I am happy to say with bipartisan measures.

The essential management goals for this war will have to be established by the Department of Defense, and the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction will have a much greater say in bringing information on the expenditure of these dollars to this body. There have been efforts, frankly, to hamstring the Inspector General. We make clear in this legislation that the Inspector General's authority goes towards reconstruction funding regardless of the source or the fiscal year. We need to expand our efforts to get a handle on how in the world we have spent to date nearly $400 billion, and the tab flowing just as fast as ever.

I think that this represents an important Blue Dog accomplishment. I look forward to voting on the defense authorization bill. Rather than take further time, I ask that JIM MARSHALL, a member of the Ranger Hall of Fame, a member of the defense authorization committee, be one that might further expand in this area. Obviously, his credentials are extremely well established.

I would just conclude by saying that the Blue Dogs have stood for accounting principles and solid budgeting in the administration of this war, and we have prevailed with the bill coming out of the Armed Services Committee.

Mr. ROSS. I thank Mr. POMEROY for his active participation within the fiscally conservative Blue Dog Coalition and for his insight this evening.

The gentleman is referring to H. Res. 97, which is the Blue Dog bill providing for Operation Iraqi Freedom Cost Accountability; and today, Chairman SKELTON, chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, announced that key provisions of that bill demanding accountability on how your tax money is being spent in Iraq, Madam Speaker, will be included in the defense authorization bill that is scheduled to come to the floor.

A leader within the Armed Services Committee, someone who is a member of the Ranger Hall of Fame, who served our country in the Vietnam War, Mr. MARSHALL, is here, and I yield to you at this time.

Mr. MARSHALL. Mr. ROSS, you are wonderful to do these hour-long Blue Dog sessions here to give people an idea what Blue Dogs are all about as far as fiscal responsibility is concerned.

I think you and Mr. POMEROY give me a little too much credit. If you label somebody a Ranger, it reminds me of the joke about the Ranger library down in Eglin Air Force Base having burned down. That was the bad news. The good news was that both books were already colored in. We don't expect our Rangers to be particularly good at math or education subjects, but it doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out there has been an awful lot of waste in Iraq. It is not just waste on our side; we excessively rely upon contractors. I think we have moved too far in that direction, and we limit our capacity within our own military forces to provide services that ought to be provided by military folks and could be provided by military folks at a much lesser expense to the taxpayer.

Spending less, stretching your dollars means you are going to be more effective at whatever you are doing, and that includes an effort like Iraq. I think we have inappropriately moved too far in the direction of relying upon contractors. That is one thing. The other place where we have seen dramatic waste is on the Iraqi side.

The American taxpayers and the American people with their sons and their daughters who are in this war and in harm's way at risk of being killed or being severely harmed expect that the Iraqi people and the Iraqi Government will step up and do its part. We all know that this is something that cannot be won by an American conventional force. We are not simply going to go in and raze whole villages to force people to comply with us and our view of the way things ought to be.

The local population has to deal with the security situation in Iraq. We can help and we must help or they will be unsuccessful, but we can't succeed without them.

Our Iraq accountability legislation specifically provides that further assistance and support to the Iraqi people should be conditioned upon the Iraqi Government stepping up and meeting its share of the partnership. If the Iraqi people choose to do that, and obviously they have problems among themselves, far greater problems than Democrats and Republicans have here in the United States House of Representatives, and we often have a hard time coming together here in the House of Representatives, so it is not surprising that Sunni and Shiite and Kurds in Iraq are having a similarly difficult time, a more difficult time coming together and reconciling with one another so they can appropriately organize to address the internal security threats that they face. We can't force

them to reconcile. We can't force them to build the institutions that they need to spend their oil money effectively and addressing the security threat. We can't force them to address the security threat.

So in the partnership here in many ways we can help them, but there are things they must be doing. And as part of the financial accountability picture that Blue Dogs feel so strongly about, we have to add accountability of our partners. The Iraqi people are our partners. The Iraqi Government is our partner, and our partners need to be accountable for their side of the deal here or this is not going to come out well for the Iraqi people, the Middle East, or the United States.

I appreciate the opportunity to voice my opinion with regard to that particular issue. I appreciate what the Blue Dogs do as far as debt is concerned and highlighting something our country should be very concerned about.

They say that if there is a moral or ethical obligation one generation has to the next generation, it is to leave the world in at least as good a state as that generation found it when we pass it to the next generation. What we ought to be trying to do is make it a better world; and in so many different ways this generation is failing that ethical or moral responsibility to the next generation, and the amount of debt that we are adding to their shoulders is one of those ways.

Mr. ROSS, I appreciate what you do for the Blue Dogs and for the Congress of the United States.

Mr. ROSS. I appreciate the gentleman and his leadership within the Blue Dog Coalition and his work on the House Armed Services Committee and for his insight this evening.

We all support our troops, Republicans and Democrats alike. As members of the Blue Dog Coalition, we want accountability for how your tax money is being spent. In 2001 and 2002, $2.5 billion was being spent in Iraq. In 2003, $51 billion. In 2004, $77.3 billion. In 2005, $87.3 billion. In 2006, $100.4 billion. And 2007 to date, $60 billion, for a total of $378.5 billion.

We are currently spending about $10 billion a month, about $2.5 billion a week. You do the math. It is about $12 million an hour of your tax money we are sending to Iraq. What are they doing with it? Number one, they ought to be ensuring that our brave men and women in uniform get the best body armor available to them. There are reports out that indicate maybe that is not exactly the case.

This was brought to my attention by John Grant from Pearcy, Arkansas, just outside of Hot Springs, in Garland County. His son is getting ready to go back for a second tour of duty. He visited a National Guard Armory where he actually saw body armor that was stamped ''Fragile, Handle With Care.'' It is time we did right by our brave men and women in uniform and provide them with the resources they need.

The Blue Dogs have written a bill with the help of Captain PATRICK MURPHY, a veteran of the Iraq war and fellow Blue Dog member, and JANE HARMAN, former ranking member of the House Intelligence Committee, among others, and our bill demands accountability on how our tax money, your tax money, is being spent in Iraq.

One of the reasons that we decided to do this bill was because of reports like this: Washington Post, Monday, April 30, a story by Dana Hedgpeth, entitled, ''U.S. Rebuilding in Iraq is Missing Key Goals, Report Finds.'' Less than a third of Iraq's 3.5 million students attend class. In the medical field, for example, only 15 of 141 primary health care centers have been completed, and only eight of those are open to the public. The list goes on, and we will talk more about this in a little bit.

At this time I yield to a former cochair of the Blue Dogs and an active member of the fiscally conservative Blue Dog Coalition, the gentleman from Utah (Mr. MATHESON).

Mr. MATHESON. Well, I thank my colleague from Arkansas for conducting this Special Order tonight. That list, that article that you just were referring to is not a one-time deal. I think we all have a sense after over 4 years of the Iraqi operation having taken place, I think we have all heard stories, and those news articles seem to come out more and more often where money has been spent and we haven't gotten result in terms of rebuilding the infrastructure. That is a cause of concern and that is one of the motivations behind the Blue Dogs coming together with legislation in this Congress called the Operation Iraqi Freedom Cost Accountability Act.

The Blue Dogs have come up with this bill which has been given the number H. Res. 97, and I want to take a brief moment to walk through what this legislation does.

Now, quite frankly, before we go through the specifics, I should say it puts forth tangible and commonsense proposals to ensure future transparency and the accountability in the funding of Operation Iraqi Freedom. This is a first step. There is more we probably need to do, but this is an important first step to make sure that resources are getting to our troops in the field in a reasonable manner.

There are four crucial points in this legislation demanding for fiscal accountability in Iraq.

First, it calls for transparency on how Iraq war funds are spent.

Second, it calls for the creation of a Truman Commission to investigate the awarding of contracts.

And, third, it calls for the need to fund the Iraqi war through the normal appropriations process and not through emergency supplemental appropriations processes.

Fourth, it calls for using American resources to improve the Iraqi assumption of internal policing operations.

Now, the resolution also calls for the Iraqi Government and its people to progress towards full responsibility for internal policing of the country because ultimately that is where we need to go.

Now recently, and I know other speakers have mentioned this, a significant accomplishment took place in terms of the Blue Dogs working with the Armed Services Committee to include key provisions of the Blue Dog accountability legislation in the Department of Defense authorization bill that we are going to be voting on here in the House of Representatives later on this week.

□ 1800

In doing so, I think it's an important first step toward ensuring greater fiscal transparency in the funding of the war in Iraq.

The American people deserve to know that their tax dollars are being spent wisely and that our troops have the resources they need to succeed. The Blue Dogs are committed to passing legislation that accomplishes that goal.

Now, members of the Blue Dog Coalition also believe strongly that funding requests should come through the normal appropriations process, as I said, rather than through these multiple emergency supplemental requests. Let's make it part of our overall budget so we can plan accordingly.

I think that again with the Defense authorization bill coming up this week and with key components of the Blue Dog legislation included in that bill, I think that's a significant step forward for this country. I am proud that the Blue Dogs were able to play an important role in moving this legislation forward.

Mr. ROSS. I thank the gentleman from Utah, and the gentleman's right, the Blue Dog Coalition, we want to thank Chairman SKELTON for including key provisions of our bill, H. Res. 97, in the Defense authorization bill.

H. Res. 97 was previously introduced by Blue Dog members and calls for transparency in how Iraq War funds are spent. Specifically, the Defense authorization bill addresses the lack of oversight and accountability in the war by requiring that the Government Accountability Office, commonly referred to as the GAO, report every 6 months on the handling of contracts in Iraq.

In addition, Blue Dog members applaud the inclusion of measures in the Defense authorization bill which establish essential management goals for the Department of Defense and expand the authority of the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction to include all reconstruction funding, regardless of source or fiscal year.

Again, we're all about providing the funding our troops need. We want to make sure that funding gets to them and that this administration's accountable for it and that the Iraqi people are accountable for how the money is being spent that we send to them.

Mr. Speaker, if you have got any comments or questions or concerns for

us, you can e-mail us at bluedogs@mail.house.gov. Again, that's bluedogs@mail.house.gov.

I yield to my fellow Blue Dog member all the way from California (Mr. COSTA).

Mr. COSTA. Madam Speaker, I thank very much Congressman ROSS, the gentleman from Arkansas, who does an excellent job each week in helping convey the message of the Blue Dogs, the fiscally conservative Democrats who are focused on accountability, not just at home but abroad as well.

Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to once again echo strong support for the Blue Dog Accountability War Act, and I, too, am pleased that Congressman SKELTON, because of his focus and his desire to see the same sort of accountability that I think all Americans want to see, this is a bipartisan issue, chose to include provisions of the Blue Dog War Accountability Act within the new authorization for Defense.

Four years ago, we all remember very clearly when this war effort was brought to America. We were told that 4 years ago it would cost $60 billion and that the oil revenue from Iraq, which has tremendous reserves, would go to pay for the reconstruction. I think many Americans thought that that might be a reasonable price to pay, notwithstanding the fact that you can never, ever put a price on the cost of American lives that have been lost nor those that have been injured. Nonetheless, we were told that 4 years ago in monetary costs, it would be $60 billion and the oil revenues would go to pay for the reconstruction costs.

Many of you saw the reports this week by a number of press agencies that indicated over the last 2 years billions and billions of dollars have been lost from revenues from the Iraqi oil reserves, but while it was a new story this week, it comes as no surprise to many of us who have been briefed in Congress.

I was in Iraq last May, spent time in Mosul, city of Mosul, with a number of our commanders. As we were getting our briefings, as all congressional delegations receive when you go to Iraq, we were told of the problems of getting the oil from the oil field, from the wellheads to refinery because there's only one, and then getting the refined products to where the Iraqis could use the gasoline and the other oil products. They told us as recently as a year ago that every step of the way from when the oil was taken out of the wellhead, put in the truck, on the truck, mind you, because you can't use pipelines because the insurgents keep blowing the pipelines up, that every step of the way, every province, there is graft, there is corruption, there's other types of lost revenue, and those moneys go too often into the hands of these same insurgents that are battling our troops, making side profits off the revenue that was supposed to go to reconstruction, going to pay for insurgents and for bombs that come in the form of IEDs, that end up killing and maiming so many of our American men and women who are trying to fight this battle on behalf of the Iraqis.

So this is well-known, and yet 2 years as we look at the problems with trying to get this oil out of the ground and to the refineries, we still have made little progress in terms of eliminating that graft and corruption that currently takes place or the profits from that graft and corruption that go into the hands of the insurgents.

And yes, unfortunately, the oil revenues today are still at or below the levels during pre-Saddam Hussein years when, in fact, there were restrictions on the amount of oil they could drill. That's how much progress unfortunately we have not made in the 4 years that we've been engaged in this effort.

The fiscal accountability under the Blue Dog War Act for this effort, as it's being included in other aspects of our budget, are critical. The reforms the Americans expected here at home, they're the reforms that Americans expect on a bipartisan basis as we try to change the direction and the course of this war in Iraq.

Let me conclude by saying that it's important that we keep our eyes focused on the situation at hand. Many of us have had briefings on a weekly basis with the top generals who are engaged in this effort trying to implement this surge. Just last week in speaking with one of those generals, I told him, I said, you know, we're doubtful on the surge, many of us, not because we don't think American men and women are successful; we know that they will do the absolute best job possible, but we're doubtful on the credibility of the leadership of this administration to effectively carry out what they say, and that's a loss of confidence. If this were a parliamentary system, there would be a vote of no confidence after all that has transpired over the last 4 years.

Having said that, I, like most Americans, hope that this surge is successful, for all the right reasons, for all the right reasons, but let me tell you tonight what I told the American general last week. If this surge by this summer is not successful, I hope you will tell the Congress and the American public that it's not working. He responded in the affirmative that he would respond by August on whether or not this was working or not. So I told the general, I said I hope it's successful, but I hope if it's not, you will tell us that it is not and that currently you are engaged in an effort that looks at a plan B. As I told Secretary of State that we needed to be thinking about doing in February of this year, a plan B that would protect our men and women who are at the front lines, look at protecting the borders between Iraq and Iran and Syria, look at redeployment, looking at beefing up our efforts in Afghanistan, in a way that protects our interests in the Middle East but quits trying to convince ourselves that if we want democracy more than the Iraqis it will happen.

At the end of the day, Iraq will have to stand up for itself and indicate that they want to make a success out of this effort of democracy.

So I want to yield back to my colleagues and I thank my friend, the gentleman from Arkansas, for providing this opportunity for fellow Blue Dogs to come and talk about why we are so concerned that, in fact, a new day has come and why we have to make new changes in direction that will fit the accountability of American men and women, that American taxpayers and that most importantly our American soldiers demand and deserve.

Mr. ROSS. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California, and as we have been discussing this hour, Mr. Speaker, H. Res. 97 demands accountability for how the money is being spent in Iraq.

We all support our brave men and women in uniform. We all support our troops. We are all Americans first and foremost, but just as when a small town in America receives a grant they must be held accountable for how that grant money is spent, so should the Iraqi government.

Again, Washington Post, Monday, April 30, by Dana Hedgpeth, entitled U.S. Rebuilding in Iraq Is Missing Key Goals, Report Finds. ''Before the U.S.-led invasion, Iraq's power system produced 4,500 megawatts a day with an aging infrastructure in which 85 percent of power plants were at least 20 years old, the report said. Reconstruction officials initially hoped to increase daily output to 6,750 megawatts by the summer of 2004, a target later lowered to 6,000 megawatts. But in the most recent quarter, Iraq generated only 3,832 megawatts a day.''

What does that mean? The story goes on to say, ''The shortage was particularly acute in Baghdad. Before the war, the city received an average of 16 to 24 hours of power a day. Last spring, Baghdad averaged 8 hours of electricity a day.'' That was last spring. ''This year, during the last week of March, the city received only 6.5 hours of electricity a day. The rest of the country, however, received an average of 14 hours of power a day.''

At this time, I yield to the gentleman that helped write H. Res. 97, which is of course the Blue Dog bill, to provide for Operation Iraqi Freedom cost accountability, to provide an accounting for how this $12 million an hour of your tax money is being spent in Iraq, the gentleman who helped white the bill, an active member of the Blue Dog Coalition, the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMPSON).

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Madam Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman from Arkansas, and I thank the gentleman from Arkansas and I appreciate your leadership on this issue.

I don't come to the floor often on Special Orders, but I think today this issue is so critically important not

only for the American taxpayers but for the men and women who are serving so bravely in Iraq, and this is such a long overdue issue, as the gentleman mentioned, I helped write this bill but this came about after two Congresses of my own bill, the Iraq War Funding Accountability Act, that in the last Congress, as you know, was a Blue Dog-endorsed measure. That was an attempt to bring about accountability in Iraq in regard to the moneys that are spent by contractors in the reconstruction areas taking place in Iraq.

Unfortunately, we were not allowed under the last Congress or the last majority to bring this measure forward so we could debate it, so we could discuss it, so we could vote on it. But fortunately, with the new leadership in Congress, this has become an issue that has not only been discussed and debated but an issue that is going to be included in the bill that we have before us this week. And it's just so long overdue on the part of the American taxpayers and the men and women who are serving who, because this money is misspent, misdirected, sometimes lost, are going without the equipment that they need.

Every Member in this House has heard from family members and friends about their loved ones serving in Iraq who require supplies purchased by family members and friends and sent to them, everything from boots to protective gear, to the proper sunglasses, to supplies. It's absolutely inappropriate, and as long as we continue to misappropriate money and allow this to fall into the area of waste, fraud and abuse, and in sometimes criminal neglect or criminal negligence, this issue is only going to be exacerbated and the stories are just far too numerous.

We've heard the little stories that, in fact, some of these contractors are selling soda pop at $45 a case to the men and women who are serving in Iraq to the same contractors who are charging $100 to do a 15-pound bag of laundry, to the bigger issue, such as trucks, trucks that are burned in place because there's minor repair problems needed, to even bigger issues such as pallets of money, I think it was $12 billion that just disappeared in Iraq. And we have been trying to get a handle on this for a long time, and every effort that we have made has been short-stopped in this Congress, and finally, we are going to be able to get it out.

Mr. Speaker, I have here a Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction Report. This is a report that's issued quarterly to Congress.

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It tells us very, very little about what's happening. It will tell us by contractor name how much we are obligated to them. It will tell us by contractor name how much they have expended. It will tell us by contractor name the percentage of increase in these expenditures, but it doesn't tell us how the contract was let, why the contract was necessary, and, if, in fact, the work being done was, in fact, completed.

This report represents a snapshot from 30,000 feet, no attempt at all to drill down and find the answers that the taxpayers and the servicemembers deserve. I have another report here about the construction by a contractor of the Baghdad police academy, obviously built in Baghdad. These pictures are worth 1,000 words. They show the fact that the work was done, shoddy workmanship. They show, in fact, that the supplies that were used by these contractors were inappropriate supplies, faulty, substandard supplies. This isn't pointed out in the quarterly report.

These are the things that we need to know, and I am just proud to be a member of the Blue Dogs who exist for one reason and one reason only, the one common thread that runs through the entire Blue Dog organization, and that's fiscal responsibility. It's fiscally irresponsible to continue to ignore these very real problems. It's fiscally improper to adopt this measure, to insist on accountability by those who are being paid just gross sums of money to do, in some instances, inappropriate, ineffective, substandard work.

I thank the gentleman from Arkansas for yielding, and I appreciate your leadership in helping get this measure signed into law and bringing accountability to these outrageous incidents that are taking place in Iraq today.

Mr. ROSS. I thank the gentleman from California for his work within the fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition to write and craft this Iraq war accountability bill known as House Resolution 97.

In the remaining 3 minutes or so we have left, I am going to yield to my friend, fellow Blue Dog member from the State of Georgia, Mr. DAVID SCOTT.

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Thank you, Mr. ROSS.

I will try to sum up what we have done this evening. It is very important, as the American people have followed this process, have seen us with the legislative process at work, not only in terms of debating the issue, but they have also witnessed how we are putting this, hopefully, this final piece together that the President will sign.

First of all, just to wrap up, we have made concessions with the President on the issues that he was concerned about. The timelines, have, indeed, been removed. Those were his major objections on it. So we have compromised on that point.

But we also had, then, accountability, and that's what the American people want. They want to make sure that we have accountability in this. Mr. THOMPSON from California has played a very leading role in this, and it was so good to have him on the floor talking about it. Mr. IKE SKELTON, who is the chairman of our Armed Services Committee, has incorporated all of the major points of financial accountability to get out fraud and waste, to bring in the Defense Department's investigators to report to us on each of these areas, on a 6-month basis, to show us how the money is being spent.

All of those things are now in this package, and the benchmarks are in, the benchmarks. So we can hold the Iraqi people to, and say, these are things that must be accomplished, as we go forward. If you don't hold their feet to the fire, if you don't put pressure there, there is no accountability. So we are going to have them on security.

We are going to have them where they are going to reach the deal of how, which is at the bottom of the whole situation, is oil, and how they are to divide the oil revenue between the Kurds, between the Sunnis and between the Shias. We have got this in there for benchmarks.

The other thing we have in there is funds for the troops, the Humvee protection, the body armor production. Never again will they go in Humvees and have to write back to mom and dad to give them the metals. They are over there fighting for the United States of America. It is our constitutional responsibility as the Congress of the United States to raise and support the military. That's in article 1, section 6 of the Constitution for our duty. This Congress is able to do that in this.

Finally, what is so important, we are having in this measure true emergency measures like the children's health program, in which we have $349 million now for that shortfall to help with the SCHIP program, for that lower-income program.

Many of those children, incidentally, Mr. ROSS, are children of some of these servicemen who are serving in Iraq, because their income level falls too low for Medicaid, yet not high enough to be able to afford the regular practice. The money is in here for the veterans to make sure the Walter Reed situation doesn't happen again. That's what's so important. That's what the American people want.

In this measure we have got that, and then plus $2.4 billion more than what the President asks for the troops. But we have got the accountability in, and it's geared to moving us in a way to get us out of the crosshairs of this civil war and in this occupation in Iraq so that we can strengthen our military and put the resources in Afghanistan and Pakistan where we know al Qaeda is and allow the Iraqi people to manifest themselves and solve this civil war among themselves.

Thank you. It has been wonderful being with you and being a part of our Blue Dog coalition this evening.

DELIVERY OF HEALTH CARE IN THE UNITED STATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIRES). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BURGESS) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I want to come to the floor tonight and continue on a theme that we were discussing last night, and that theme revolves around delivery of health care in this country.

Some of the discussion last night dealt with the future of medical care in this country, whether we expand the public sector involvement, whether we encourage and continue the private sector involvement in the delivery of health care in this country; and those are extremely important questions, and questions that I suspect that this Congress will be debating at length over the coming 18 months and well into the next Congress, the 111th Congress that convenes in 2009.

If we don't pay attention to the physician workforce that is going to be providing that health care, those discussions may be all for naught. We are obligated, in this Congress, to pay attention to access for our patients, patients in Medicare. You heard reference to the SCHIP program; patients in the SCHIP program are all going to need access to physicians. It doesn't matter whether a patient is a participant in the Medicare system, the SCHIP system, private insurance, pays cash for their care, they need access to a doctor, and that access will be unavailable if we don't preserve and protect our physician workforce going forward.

This really came home to me about a year and a half ago in a conversation with Alan Greenspan. He commented on the concern for the future viability and stability of the Medicare program, of the system as a whole, is it ultimately sustainable. He felt that it would be. But his greater concern was is there going to be anyone there to deliver the services when you require them? Of course, he is talking about our physician workforce, our nursing workforce, the ancillary health care personnel, all of whom we depend upon to deliver health care in this country.

We have an overburgeoning and overregulated governmental system that continues to sort of move along. We have got the other aspect of ever-increasing liability costs. If we have time tonight, I do want to touch on that just a little bit.

But not just the cost of medical liability insurance, but also the aggravation of dealing with a system that, on its face, sets doctors and patients against each other. We do have to deal with that.

The consequence of this is we have physicians who are my age who are leaving the profession early, earlier than the generation before them. It was very common for a physician to practice into their 60s and 70s and not at all uncommon to continue to read about physicians who continue to practice right up until the time that they no longer could.

You don't see that as much any more. Physicians are making plans to leave the practice of medicine at an earlier point now than, I believe, ever before in our Nation's history. At the same time, at the other end, are we having any problems filling our residency programs? The answer is yes.

Are we, in fact, encouraging the young people of this country to look upon health care as a career, as a profession? The answer to that question may not be affirmative either.

So we have got an increasing number of physicians who are making early retirement plans. We are not sure it's difficult to measure the number, but it doesn't seem that the younger generation is showing up in the numbers that we would expect. Both of those pose a significant concern nationally, because we have got a society that's aging. We have a society with the so-called baby boom generation coming up, and the demand for services is going to be ever-increasing during that time.

Suffice it to say, whether it's, again, the Medicare, SCHIP program, Medicaid, private insurance, cash on the barrel head, patients are going to need doctors; and it is incumbent upon this Congress to make certain that we do the things necessary to preserve the physician workforce in this country. The patients who need care, maybe a patient is in a city, or they may be a patient in a rural area, they may be a patient in an area that has been devastated by gulf coast hurricanes in the past couple of years. The reasons are complex, and we debate them at some length up here in Washington in the various ways that we can seek to improve our health care system.

But even as we engage in these issue, our physician workforce is crumbling. In order to keep this scenario from becoming worse, I am proposing a series of physician workforce pieces of legislation that will consist, essentially, of three different parts.

I would just draw your attention to the cover of Texas Medicine. This is a periodical put out by the Texas Medical Association every month. This is the cover of the March issue. The title is, ''Running Out of Doctors: Medical Schools Unable to Keep Residents in Texas.'' This is one of the things that we really do have to focus on.

When you look at the Medicare system, one of the biggest problems we have is the formula under which physicians are paid, and addressing the declining Medicare physician payment issue has almost become an annual rite here in Washington, DC. But every time we do that, we actually make it harder to ultimately reform the system. Every time we come in at the end game, at the end of the year, to try to prevent further cuts to the physician reimbursement system and the Medicare system, we actually make the overall solution to that problem harder and harder. The chance, then, for real reform, the opportunities for real reform, become smaller and smaller with each succeeding year.

The current payment system in the Medicare system, the current payment system rewards ordering labs and performing procedures, necessary or not. In fact, not often are the questions asked, if those services, not even if they are necessary, but are they, perhaps, overvalued. Is Medicare getting its best value for its dollar?

The current system is indifferent to the fact that the procedures or the tests ordered may be questionable or may have significant merit, may, in fact, be critical for a patient's well-being. The fact is that the system doesn't work. It doesn't work for doctors, it doesn't work for patients, and certainly not working for the American taxpayer. Yet, year in and year out, Congress allows it to persist.

Well, if we continue to allow this condition to stagnate, there will be fewer and fewer physicians accepting Medicare payments. This will result in reduced access for beneficiaries and a restriction in the physician workforce pipeline over a period when the demand for medical service is projected to explode.

Fewer students are pursuing a career in medicine. More and more doctors are retiring early. Even fewer will choose primary care fields in their study of medicine, and all of this happens against a backdrop of more and more Americans growing older. As Americans grow older, they do face greater and greater health challenges. So, arguably, our sickest and most complex patients are going to need to rely on an ever-dwindling physician workforce.

Now, if, indeed, we do nothing, the picture I have just painted may, indeed, become a reality.

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But again, the three pieces of legislation that I plan to introduce will start with one that will ensure stability of the physician work force by ensuring stability of the payment system within Medicare. There is a formula under which physicians are paid in Medicare, and I'm going to talk about this in a little bit more detail in just a few minutes, but it's called the sustainable growth rate. And the net effect of the sustainable growth rate formula is really anything but growth. It, in fact, results in a reduction over time, 5 to 10 percent reduction in physician payments year in and year out. And that number is brought to us every year by the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services out of the Department of Health and Human Services. We'll actually receive data on that, what that number of that percentage cut will be this summer, sometime in July.

The first bill that I'm proposing would, in fact, eliminate that sustainable growth rate formula and replace it with a different formula. It's called the Medicare Economic Index, really not so important what it's called, but it is a cost of living update, if you will, a market basket update based upon the cost of input. What does it cost the doctor to run their office, to run their practice? And if they're going to be

able to sustain that over time, obviously, the Medicare reimbursement rates are going to have to keep up with the cost of living adjustment, or keep up with inflation. It only makes sense. We do it in almost every other aspect of Medicare. And again, I want to discuss that in some detail in just a moment.

One of the other things that happened in 2003 was we reset the SGR baseline to reduce the level of those cuts, and, in fact, that's a budgetary maneuver that may well be available to us again this year and, in fact, is one that I think we should take advantage of.

So this legislation does, in addition to repealing the SGR, it does so in the year 2010. In the 2 years prior to that time, reset the baseline so that the depth of those cuts are not so significant. In order to protect physician practices against a reduction in income and, hence, encouraging physicians to leave the Medicare system, in order to protect during that 2 years time, allow bonus payment of 3 percent for voluntary reporting on quality measures and 3 percent for those practices that choose to increase or improve their health information technology that almost every practice will be relying on with greater and greater need in the years to come.

So in aggregate, those bonus payments are 6 percent. And by resetting the baseline, the reduction in payment will be in the 5 percent range. So the net effect will be either a 0 percent update or possibly even a 1 percent update, which I think would be welcomed by most physicians in practice. And that's a temporary situation.

What is the reason to delay the SGR repeal? Why not just do it straight up? The reason is because of the projected cost by the Congressional Budget Office, and that projected cost makes it almost impossible to do that without making some significant adjustments in other aspects of payments for medical care that, quite frankly, I don't know that Congress has the will to do.

But the reality is, we are saving money year over year in Medicare by providing services in a more timely fashion. The Medicare prescription drug benefit passed in 2003, a case in point. The trustees, the Medicare trustees report released just a few weeks ago said that in 2005 there were 600,000 hospital beds that weren't filled in Medicare. This was a savings to part A in Medicare, which really should accrue to part B and go to offset the cost of repealing the SGR formula.

We are not allowed, under the rules of the Congressional Budget Office, we are not allowed to look ahead and say well, we are going to get savings in this system because of changes that we've made. But what we can do is sequester and aggregate those savings over the next 2 years, and then use those actual dollars to buy down or reduce the amount of dollars that it's going to cost to repeal the SGR.

Again, a small bonus update for beginning in the year 2008 for some health information technology implementation. These measures are in a large part well overdue. And this Congress, the last Congress was unable to come to an agreement, the House and the Senate, over the type of health information technology that we wanted doctors offices to pursue.

But the reality is, delaying that implementation further only tends to cost more money to the system. So we do need to get on about the business of encouraging physicians' offices to do this work. Not only is it necessary, I think, to provide that bonus payment, but it's also necessary to provide some safe harbor provisions in laws that are known as the Stark clause, the anti-kickback, and anti-compete laws that we know in aggregate as Stark 1 and Stark 2.

Additionally, if physicians voluntarily report quality data, that additional bonus payment will be there for them as well. So collect an aggregate. All of that data within the Center for Medicare and Medicaid services, money to save from part A, part C and part D as well. Aggregate, sequester those savings and use that to offset the cost of the ultimate repeal of the SGR.

And in addition to that, there is the Inspector General in Health and Human Services, along with the Department of Justice, have gotten very aggressive about going after areas where health care monies are spent inappropriately, the so-called fraud and abuse that exists within some aspects of the Medicare system.

And a recent newspaper article disclosed a significant amount of money that was recovered by eliminating an episode of fraud and abuse that was occurring I believe in the State of Florida.

Well, those monies need to be, again, reallocated back to the part B part of Medicare again to pay down or buy down the cost of that SGR appeal when the time comes.

Now, one of the issues that was addressed in the Texas Medical Association article is that because of the lack of residency programs within the State of Texas, Texas is doing a good job with, they've expanded medical schools and they're doing a good job with medical instruction, but the doctors that they're educating in Texas are having to leave Texas to get their specialty training or their residency training. And the fact is that most physicians practice within 100 miles of where they did their residency training. So to be able to increase the amount of residency programs that are available in rural areas, in midsize or small urban areas, it is going to take some effort by this Congress for that to happen.

The United States does have good residency programs. They're the envy of the world, and people come from all over the world to participate in our postgraduate education in our academic medical centers. But that's just the point. A lot of residencies do exist in conjunction with large academic medical centers and, as of a consequence, that's in a large urban area.

Again, doctors are more likely to practice close to where they train and in similar environments. So most American trained doctors, as you would imagine, stay in urban areas and practice specialty or subspecialty medicine, which is not a bad thing. And that's not to say that that is necessarily wrong, but we do need more physicians who are going to set up their practices in primary care in more of the generalist theme rather than the specialty theme.

The second bill that would be introduced would be the Physician Work Force and Graduate Education Enhancement Act. And it establishes an interest free loan program for eligible hospitals in rural, small and urban areas to attract residency programs in specialties like family medicine, internal medicine, pediatrics, emergency medicine, OB/GYN or general surgery. This would require an authorization of $25 million over 10 years from 2008 to 2018. And of course the Secretary of HHS would report back to Congress on how the program is doing with achieving its stated goals.

Well, let me talk for just a moment about the Medicare payment formula, because this is an important point, and it is difficult to understand. It's a program that obviously was created by Congress and Federal agencies and one that is understandable by perhaps very few.

But looking at this graph, the colored bars on this graph represent the years, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, I'm sorry, 2007, 2006 does not appear on this graph because it was actually a 0 percent, 2006 is the blue bar on the graph.

If you look at the four parts of Medicare, the hospitals representing Medicare part A, doctors, Medicare part B, Medicare Advantage, part C, including nursing homes on this graph as well, and you look at the Medicare Advantage plans, the hospitals and the nursing homes, and each of those year over year receive a market basket or a cost of living upgrade year over year. You can see for hospitals, for example, it's ranged about 3 percent a year, sometimes a little bit lower, sometimes a little bit higher. The Medicare Advantage plans have done a little bit better. Nursing homes very similar to hospitals.

But look over at the physician reimbursement. In the year 2002 there was about a 4½ percent reduction in physician reimbursement. Then, in 2003, 2004, 2005, very, very modest, 1.8, 1.7 percent cost of living updates. Lower, I would point out, than hospitals, nursing homes or certainly the Medicare Advantage plans.

In 2005, this was actually part of the Deficit Reduction Act that was passed in 2005 and held physicians at a 0 percent update.

Projection for 2007 was for a significant reduction, but the reality was,

again, we made an adjustment at the end of last year to once again hold that at a 0 percent update.

But you would have to ask yourself, how long, at running a small business, could you continue without any attention being paid to what does it cost to run the business? At some point, if this line stays flat or continues to diminish, at some point you don't have to have an MBA from an elite Eastern institution to figure out that you cannot continue to sustain that. Again, physician offices, in the main, are small businesses and as a consequence, a continued reduction in payment or even a flattening of payment which when everyone else is seeing a cost of living adjustment of between 2 and 4 percent, that's indicative of the inflation rate for medical offices. And they in fact are on a significant downward trajectory, one that ultimately is not likely to be sustainable.

Now, last year, in an attempt to deal with this, I introduced legislation that was a little bit different from the bill that I've introduced this year. It was H.R. 5866, and it was aimed at tackling this problem with the sustainable growth rate formula and replacing it with a cost of living update, a cost of living adjustment update. The primary focus was to ensure that seniors have better access to the health care that they need, that, acknowledging that the SGR reductions of 5 percent every year, year over year, makes it less likely for doctors to continue to see Medicare patients.

The plan then had four main goals. Ensure that physicians receive a full and fair payment for services rendered; secondly, to create quality performance measures to keep consumers informed. Are you, in fact, getting value for your dollar when you purchase medical care. We have well established, in fact, they've been around for 20 years or so, institutions in each State called quality improvement organizations.

Well, I wanted to, in fact, embellish or augment the quality improvement organizations and increase their accountability and flexibility so that they would be able to provide the feedback to physicians and to patients as to how they are doing; are they able to provide the services for a reasonable amount of money? Are they able to provide the services in a timely fashion? Do they provide the services that people in fact want?

Well, the problem with 5866 is that once again there was a significant number of dollars that would need to be identified to offset the cost of going from the sustainable growth rate formula to the cost of living update formula. That figure last year was about $218 billion. And that is a significant amount of money to come up with over 1 year's time. Hence, the reason that this year the trajectory that I have introduced has lengthened that timeline out a little bit longer in order to identify where some of those pay fors may be found.

The other option, following along the lines of 5866 from last year, would just simply be to take the money from other aspects of Medicare and other parts of the Federal payment for health care in this country. The problem is that each of those areas finds great difficulty if indeed a proposal is made to restrict or reduce the Federal expenditures that come their way and, as a consequence, 5866 never enjoyed very widespread support because of the fact that, like so many things here in Washington, DC, you end up having to pick winners and losers.

□ 1845

That is the reason that I have taken the approach that I have for this year to expand out the timeline for the elimination of the SGR, to identify pay-fors in advance that are going to be going on anyway, but we just simply sequester them, collect them, attribute them to the part B part of Medicare. Savings that occur in hospitals, if you fill 600,000 hospital beds a year fewer than was intended, that is going to be a significant savings to the part A part of Medicare. But the reality is that savings occurs because of work that is done in part B. More doctors doing more procedures in their offices, doctors treating disease in a timely fashion so that fewer hospitalizations are required, doctors doing procedures in ambulatory care centers so that the high expense item of a hospital expenditure is, therefore, avoided. But all of those expenses come back to part B. It is only fair, then, that the savings that result to the system, the integrated Medicare system, those savings that come to the Medicare system, need to be attributed to the part B, especially when we have got this large price tag for repealing the SGR that confronts us.

Well, again, this year I want to approach things a little differently. But, again, first and foremost if you are talking about preserving the physician workforce, you have got to protect those men and women who are on the ground, in the trenches, delivering care right now. If they get dispirited and walk off the job or say, I am no longer going to care for Medicare patients or I am going to restrict Medicare patients from my practice or begin restricting the procedures that I offer to Medicare patients, we don't get good value for our dollar that way.

So getting that Medicare payment policy right has to be the first aspect of this physicians workforce consortium that will preserve our medical workforce for the future. Paying physicians fairly will extend the careers of many doctors who otherwise will simply opt out of the Medicare program or seek early retirement.

The principles of the new bill: Again, eliminate the SGR. It is critical that the SGR be eliminated, and we can't lose sight of that fact. The problem is right now I don't think there is the savings identified to eliminate the SGR nor am I convinced that the will in Congress is to eliminate the SGR in one chunk. So extend that timeline out a little bit and allow that price tag to be reduced because of the lengthening of the timeline. But eliminating the SGR is the fundamental principle that has to be followed, and the bill that I am going to introduce will eliminate the SGR in the year 2010 and in the meantime provide incentive payments based on quality reporting, technology improvement that could total as much as 6 percent to protect the physicians over these next 2 years where the cuts in the SGR arguably will be about 5 percent.

In both 2008 and 2009, physicians' practices can opt to take advantages of those bonuses and may, in fact, be returning value back to their businesses, and this would be a good thing. If you expand the ability to monitor patient care through health information technology, that is not just for your Medicare patients. That is going to be for all patients. So there would be a general improvement that would permeate throughout a physician's practice. Most physicians in this country don't just see Medicare or don't just see Medicaid. In fact, they see a mix of patients, some Medicare and some Medicaid, some private insurance; but all patients under a doctor's care would benefit from the advances in health information technology.

Let me digress for just a moment and talk a little bit about health information technology because I was a late arrival to the concept of the necessity of improving health information technology, but it really came home to me in October of 2005 when I took a trip to New Orleans. I was invited by several of the hospitals down there to come down to see how their doctors were coping with the after effects of the storm, see what had happened to some of the physical infrastructure. We spent part of the afternoon in Charity Hospital in downtown New Orleans. Charity Hospital, one of the venerable old training hospitals that has been around for generations. In fact, most of my professors at Parkland Hospital had trained a generation before at Charity Hospital in New Orleans.

And here is a picture of the medical records department in Charity Hospital in October of 2005. Katrina, as you recall, came through right at the end of August of 2005. It doesn't show up well, but there is still probably three or four inches of water on the floor. Like many hospitals, Charity's medical records department was in their basement.

The lights that you see overhead were actually pretty dim. I was able to get a good photograph because of a television crew that was following along behind us with their very bright lights. But look at the medical records, and you can see the black mold that has grown on these because of, again, the water on the floor and probably 110 percent humidity in this hot, damp basement. The records had been flooded.

And then after the water had been mostly evacuated, of course, the water damage has already happened and now you have the growth of the black mold on the records. And, really, I don't think anyone would be too interested in handling those records.

And even if you just look at the overall arrangement of this medical records department, you can see some records stuffed in on their sides up there. Some others have fallen down over there. It just makes you wonder about how good this paper system is if everything goes well. And if things go badly, as you can see, they can go very badly indeed.

Well, another aspect that clarified in my mind the importance in upgrades of health information technology, a couple of months ago, of course, when all of the newspaper stories were going on out at Walter Reed Hospital, I took a trip out there to visit with the soldiers and see for myself firsthand what the situation was in Building 18. And, correct, Building 18 was an old building and it really wasn't that nice. And I think we are all better served by the fact that our soldiers who are on medical hold are no longer being housed in Building 18.

But the bigger problem, Master Sergeant Blade was kind enough to explain to me what he saw as a greater degree of difficulty for our soldiers who were on medical hold waiting to see if they could rejoin their units or if they were going to be discharged from the service on a disability. And you see this rather large stack of papers that he has in front of him. That is his medical record. He is going through it with a yellow highlighter to make his case in regards to a particular disability claim. And his largest concern was, after spending hour after hour after hour going through his medical record and documenting the points that he thought were critical for him to receive the proper consideration from the Disability Board, he said it wasn't uncommon for that medical record to go sit on someone's desk for a couple of weeks and then ultimately be lost. So he was advising the men in his unit. In fact, I think it was either the second or third copy of his medical record that he was marking up in this manner so that he wouldn't run the risk of putting all his time and effort into documenting the issues surrounding his disability only to have the medical record disappear because the system really wasn't well suited to handle that.

And that really brought home for me the fact that, well, of course, the VA system has a relatively forward thinking electronic medical record, but the problem is the record produced by the Department of Defense doesn't talk to the VA record system, and as a consequence, the poor soldier in the middle has to spend the time and the effort going through their individual record to make certain that, again, their case gets the proper disability consideration that it deserves.

So just two reasons why I have become a believer in the past couple years that improving the information technology aspect of medical practice, true in hospitals but also true in physicians' offices as well, why I have become a believer that that is, indeed, something we do need to be devoting time and resources to. There are certainly problems with some of the systems that are out there, but ultimately the payoff is going to be that we will be able to deliver care faster, cheaper, smarter, and as a consequence, deliver more care and more value for our patients.

One of the other things that again I think is important in this endeavor and the reason I have included part of the bonus payment for quality reporting is that you can't change a system if you don't know what is going on within the system. Now, again, I would stress that this would be voluntary quality reporting, that no physician or physician's office would be required to provide quality reporting. The risk to run there is that the SGR reduction would affect that physician's bottom line in 2008 and 2009. But if a physician or medical practice opted not to do quality reporting or improvements of health information technology, beginning in the year 2010, they would indeed see a repeal of the SGR, replacing that with the Medicare Economic Index. So beginning a series of positive updates of about 2 to 2½ percent in the year 2010, but, again, to forestall the pain that would go on in the years 2008 and 2009, reset that SGR baseline so the cuts are not so deep, and then provide protection for voluntary reporting measures on quality, voluntary improvements in an office's health information technology, and make these things so that they are generally available, which CMS would be tasked with making the quality reporting measures generally available, and really sort of zero in on the top 10 conditions or diagnoses where the bulk of the money is spent in the Medicare system. Not so much to emphasize quality reporting measures for esoteric diseases or diseases that are encountered once in a career but those things that are encountered over and over and over again: hypertension, diabetes, congestive heart failure. These are the types of things where the concentration of dollars is going to be located, and these are the areas where the quality reporting really needs to be focused.

The part of the issue there is that the quality reporting measures do have to be generally available to physicians in all specialties and all practices. We certainly don't want to see someone who is not able to participate because their particular specialty does not have an identified quality reporting mechanism. CMS and some of the specialty organizations are already pretty far down the road on this, and really at this point it has not been identified to me that there is a problem or would be a problem for a particular specialty with not having a mechanism to report quality.

Well, dealing with the other aspects of the physician workforce, the other two aspects of the three pieces of legislation, one would deal with physicians in residency and one would deal with those individuals who are looking to become physicians or those individuals who are in medical school.

The Physician Workforce Graduate Medical Education Enhancement Act of 2007 would acknowledge that it is costly to educate medical students and it is costly to get medical students through a residency program. The big programs are in more heavily populated areas that tend to attract more residencies, but we need to get the physicians out into the smaller and rural communities where the medically underserved populations actually exist and get them out there in high-needs specialties. So developing a program that would permit hospitals that do not traditionally operate a residency training program would be the second aspect of establishing and protecting the future physician workforce. So this bill would create a loan fund available to hospitals to create residency training programs where none have operated in the past. And, again, that is a critical aspect to this. This is not something that is to go in and layer on top of existing programs, but this would be to create residency programs where none has existed previously. Communities like the community of Denton, Texas, that I represent, a community like the community of Lewisville, Texas, that I represent, smaller community hospitals, 150 to 200 beds, no residency program has ever existed in those communities. These would be the types of targeted communities that perhaps we could look to for establishing residencies in primary care, OB/GYN, pediatrics, general surgery.

□ 1900

On average, it cost $100,000 a year to train a resident, and that cost for some institutions can be prohibitive. In addition, the Balanced Budget amendment, passed 10 years ago in this Congress, has a residency cap that limits resources to hospitals, such as smaller community hospitals. The loan amounts available under this bill would not exceed $1 million, and the loan would constitute start-up funding, again, for new residency programs.

The start-up money is essential. Since medical graduate, medical education funding can be obtained only once a residency program is established, the cost to start a training program for a smaller, more rural and/or small urban hospital can be cost prohibitive because these hospitals do operate on much narrower margins.

Identifying high-need physician specialties and getting young people to consider medical school, to getting young medical students to consider going into a primary care specialty, to going into one of those medically underserved areas, again, going back to the Texas Medical Association article,

the Texas Medicine article, most physicians practice close by where they did their residency. And as a consequence, there are areas in the country that do lack medical care by trained professionals. So the third aspect of this three-part health workforce, physician workforce trio of bills, the third part would ensure the availability of the adequacy of the future physician workforce in providing medical students with incentives and assistance to practice in shortage areas and shortage specialties in those shortage areas.

So the third bill would be to establish a mix of scholarships, loan repayment funds, and tax incentives to entice more students into medical school in the first place, and then create incentives for those students, those newly minted doctors, to become the family physicians, the general surgeons, the OB/GYNs, the pediatricians, the gerontologists, to become those practitioners of the future that are going to more likely stay in shortage areas, such as rural and small urban areas.

There is no question that the issues in front of us as far as the physician workforce are serious, they are significant. But the feeling is that once you have established measures that will allow the medical workforce of the future, then you can begin to refine other aspects of the health care system. And, again, as I stressed last night, we are going to have that tension between what is public and what is private. What is paid for by the government, what is paid for by insurance, what is paid for by people who wish to pay cash. Is it better to have a health savings account or rely on SCHIP or Medicaid? Those arguments we are going to have, but those arguments are going to diminish in importance if we don't do the things necessary to create and retain the physician workforce that is going to be necessary to take care of people in the future.

One of the greatest frustrations that I hear all the time from medical professionals, and since we are on the subject of medical professionals and how to keep physicians engaged in practicing medicine and how to get more people to consider health care as a career, obviously medical liability plays a big part in that. My home State of Texas has done an excellent job of dealing with the medical liability issue. We, on the floor of this House in Congress, in fact for the last two Congresses over the previous 4 years have passed several medical liability bills that have had at their heart a cap on noneconomic damages patterned after the Medical Injury Compensation Reform Act of 1975 out in California that has been so effective in keeping the cost of providing liability insurance within reason.

Now, my home State of Texas, the year that I ran for Congress the first time in 2002, was in a crisis situation. We were losing insurers from the State liability. Insurers were leaving Texas because the climate was so pernicious. Rates were going up for physicians. For those companies that stayed behind, their rates were going up, doubling and sometimes tripling.

The State of Texas and the State legislature passed a bill in the summer of 2003 that actually again was patterned after that Medical Injury Compensation Reform Act of 1975 out in California that capped noneconomic damages. The Texas approach was a little different from the approach that we took in Congress. The approach we took in Congress had a $250,000 flat cap for noneconomic damages. The Texas solution actually took that cap and spread it out three ways; a $250,000 cap for the physician, a $250,000 cap for the hospital and a $250,000 cap for a nursing home or a second hospital, if indeed there was a second hospital involved. That required a constitutional amendment in order to become law. And that constitutional amendment was passed in September of 2003. It was not passed by a very large margin. It was essentially the grass-roots efforts of physicians, their families and their patients that got the constitutional amendment passed that allowed the Texas law to take effect.

But the effect of the Texas law over the ensuing 3 or 4 years has been significant. Medical liability premiums have now fallen 20–22 percent. My last insurer of record, Texas Liability Trust, has reduced insurance rates by 20 to 22 percent, depending upon the length of time that the doctor has been with the company.

More importantly, insurance companies have come back, liability carriers have come back to the State of Texas. We diminished from about 17 carriers to 2 in 2002. Now there are 13 or 14 carriers back in the State. And most importantly, they have come back to the State without an overall increase in their premiums.

One of the big beneficiaries of the law that was passed in Texas has been the smaller community-based not-for-profit hospital. The money that they were previously having to—these hospitals largely self-insured and the dollars that they were having to put in escrow against possible claims was significant. And now these hospitals have been able to put more of that capital back to work for them: capital expansions, hiring nurses, paying nurses' salaries. Exactly the kinds of things you would want your smaller community hospitals to be able to do they have now been able to do under the legislation passed in Texas.

Well, if Texas is in such good shape from its liability reform, is it still important to consider passing a law at this level, at the Federal level, to deal with our medical justice system? And the answer still is yes. Legislation in draft form that I had scored by the Congressional Budget Office right before we did our Republican budget a few months ago, at the request of the Budget Committee ranking member, we put forth that legislation, the Congressional Budget Office scored it as savings of $3 billion over 5 years. Well, we are already talking about other areas in the Federal expenditure of health care funds where that money is needed. And that $3 billion, in fact, it's wrong, it is unconscionable to leave that money on the table and not provide that money to other areas of the Federal expenditure for health care where it might come in handy.

And the bigger aspect for me, the more important aspect for me in dealing with the problem of the medical justice system at the Federal level is the dollars that are spent on defensive medicine in the Medicare system, in the Medicaid system. A study from 1996, so that is 10 years ago, over 10 years ago, out in Stanford, California, estimated the cost of defensive medicine in the Medicare system, just in the Medicare system, not in the entire health care system, but just in the Medicare system, amounted to about $28 billion a year. Again, that is money we can scarcely afford to leave on the table. If those savings are available to us, indeed, we do need to be getting those dollars back.

But it is not just a dollars-and-cents issue. Nome, Alaska. I happened to be through there in the summer of 2003, stopping in Nome, Alaska, with a group of other Congressmen. You can imagine the Chamber of Commerce wanted to have a big lunch, so they invited us all there. And of course being a physician who was also a Member of Congress, about the entire medical staff from their hospital, all 19 physicians turned out to talk to me during the course of our stopover in Nome, Alaska. And one of the points that they wanted made was that they needed help because they couldn't afford the medical liability cost for having an anesthesiologist in their hospital. And the doctor who was telling me this story, I asked, well, what is your specialty, sir? And he said, well, I am an OB/GYN doctor just like you. And I said wait a minute, you're an OB/GYN doctor and you work in a hospital that doesn't provide anesthesia services. How do you do that? Ignore for a moment the woman who may need an epidural during child birth, what do you do if you're faced with having to do a C-section? He said, well, we get that patient and put her on an airplane and take her to Anchorage. Anchorage, probably 3 hours away. I am given to understand that they sometimes have bad weather in Nome, Alaska. It just makes no sense that we would allow a system like that to continue. We are doing nothing to enhance patient safety; we are doing nothing to enhance the ability to deliver care by allowing a system like that to continue.

Again, we are talking about the workforce issues. Talking to a residency director from one of the large residencies up in New York City a couple of years ago, I asked her what effect the medical liability problem was

having on attracting young physicians into their residency program. And she replied to me that we are now taking people into our residency program that 5 years ago we wouldn't even have interviewed. So these are our children's doctors. We are driving away some of the best and brightest from the desirability of the practice of health care, and we need to do better.

So once again I would add that, while the three bills that will establish and encourage and protect and preserve and defend the existing physician workforce and the physician workforce of the future in this country, we also need to pay attention to the medical justice system in this country.

We have had a number of hearings in my committee, the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and our health subcommittee on this issue. There are some other suggestions out there in addition to or instead of the caps on noneconomic damages. I am willing to listen to other philosophies, but the reality is in my home State of Texas. Caps on noneconomic damages again are working. They are delivering lower premium rates for physicians. They are delivering on the promise of more flexibility for capital expenditures for small community-size hospitals because of the dollars they don't have to tie up in escrow because of the way their self-insurance plans are constructed.

And, again, we've seen the insurance companies come back to Texas. And I do from time to time hear people say, well, it's just the insurance companies wanting to make more money. The reality is, my old insurer in Texas was a physician-owned company, a physician-run company. It was essentially a company where all of the profits were returned back to the insurance company. We have several of those in Texas. So I don't believe it is all just a question of a profit-driven motive from the liability insurer.

One of the things that I think we lose sight of, and there was an article in one of the papers today that talked about the fact that America was not the premier as far as the delivery of health care. We can have a lot of arguments around that thought, around that philosophy. The American health care system in general, and certainly the Medicare program in particular, has no shortage of critics here at home and certainly abroad. But it is the American system that stands at the forefront of innovation and new technology, precisely the types of system-wide changes that are going to be necessary to efficiently and effectively provide care for Americans, and particularly for America's seniors in the future.

There was an article, and please don't tell anyone back in my home State of Texas that I read the New York Times, but there was a New York Times article published last October, October 5, by Tyler Cowan who writes: When it comes to medical innovation, the United States is the world leader. In the past 10 years, for instance, 12 Nobel Prizes in medicine have gone to American-born scientists working in the United States, three have gone to foreign-born scientists working in the United States, and seven have gone to researchers outside of the country.

□ 1915

He goes on to point out that five of the six most important medical innovations in the past 25 years have been developed within and because of the American system.

The fact is the United States is not Europe. American patients are accustomed to wide choices when it comes to hospitals, wide choices when it comes to physicians, and choices in their pharmaceuticals. Because our experience is unique and different from other countries, this difference should be acknowledged and certainly expanded when reforming either the public or the private aspect of healthcare delivery in this country.

Mr. Speaker, in the time that I have remaining, let me just recap again the three aspects of physician workforce that I am going to be introducing.

This will be a bill to repeal the so-called sustainable growth rate expenditure and replace that with a Medicare Economic Index or cost of living index for physicians beginning in the year 2010; protections in the year 2008 and 2009 for voluntary reporting and voluntary compliance with improvements in health information technology.

The second bill will deal with the physician workforce and graduate medical education. This will establish an interest-free loan program for eligible hospitals in rural and small urban areas to establish residency training programs for primary care, family medicine, internal medicine, pediatrics, emergency medicine, general surgeon and OB/GYN. The authorization for this will be $25 million over 10 years, those 10 years being 2008 through 2018 inclusive. Of course, the Secretary of HHS will report to Congress on the efficacy of the programs and how they are going about achieving their stated goals.

Finally, and interestingly enough, we voted on a bill on the floor of this House just a few hours ago that would be a loan forgiveness package for lawyers who graduate from law school with large student loans and are willing to practice as prosecutors in high need areas. This would be a very similar structured bill that would establish a scholarship program for physicians who are wanting to practice in primary care in high need areas to alleviate shortages in the fields of family medicine, internal medicine, pediatrics, emergency medicine, general surgeon and OB/GYN, again the so-called generalist physicians.

This authorization would be for $5 million for each of 5 years, fiscal year 2008 through 2015, a $25 million total authorization that would establish a loan repayment program for generalist physicians who agree to serve in medically underserved areas. A second authorization for an additional $25 million total would make grants to States to provide financial aid to physicians agreeing to serve in medically underserved areas and to support patient-centered coordinated care in qualified medical homes.

There would be additional authorizations to make grants for board certified entities to establish or expand geriatric program fellowships in rural, suburban or medically underserved communities, and, finally, a report to Congress on the efficacy of the program.

Then lastly, but certainly not least, amend the Internal Revenue Code so that gross income does not include compensation received by a physician from a local government for a qualified medical service that is performed in a medically underserved community and under contract with the local government for 4 years. This compensation will be taken into account as wages and must still be reported, but it just won't count toward that individual's adjusted gross income.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate very much the time allotted to me this evening. These are important issues. Again, whether one comes down on the side of increased governmental control of medical care or continuation of some aspect of the private practice of medicine in this country, the critical thing is that we have the doctors there who are willing and able and trained to provide the services that we all want.

Additionally, for those individuals who would say expansion of the government program, the government-funded side of medical care is the only way to adequately cover people in this country, I think we have to look at how good a job we are doing right now with about the 50 percent that is devoted to the public sector in the practice of medicine. About 50 cents out of every health care dollar spent in this country has as part of its origin the United States Congress at some point or other.

So we have to ask ourselves, are we doing a good enough job there? And I would suggest, particularly when you look at things like the sustainable growth rate formula under which physicians are paid, I think the answer to that question would have to be no, we can do a better job with that.

So certainly before any consideration for expanding any part of the public part of paying for medical care in this country, we have got to be sure that we have our figures straight. We have to be certain that we are willing to tackle the tough problems of paying for those things, and certainly the SGR formula needs to be sunsetted and needs to be no longer part of the parlance and discussion on the floor of this House of Representatives.

CERTIFICATION REGARDING EXPORT OF CERTAIN ITEMS TO THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 110–34)

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, without objection, referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and ordered to be printed:

To the Congress of the United States:

In accordance with the provisions of section 1512 of the Strom Thurmond National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1999 (Public Law 105–261), I hereby certify that the export to the People's Republic of China of the following items is not detrimental to the U.S. space launch industry, and that the material and equipment, including any indirect technical benefit that could be derived from such exports, will not measurably improve the missile or space launch capabilities of the People's Republic of China:

A four-axis filament winding machine for production of spare parts for China's water purification and treatment industries;

A computer control system upgrade to a three-axis filament winding machine for production of spare parts for China's water purification and treatment industries;

An isostatic press for manufacturing automotive spare parts; and

A four-axis filament winding machine to be used in production of graphite or glass composite golf clubs.

GEORGE W. BUSH.

THE WHITE HOUSE, *May 15, 2007.*

RESIGNATION AS MEMBER OF COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET AND COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following resignation as a member of the Committee on the Budget and the Committee on Foreign Affairs:

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, May 15, 2007.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
House of Representatives, Office of the Speaker, Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER PELOSI: In light of my election to the Committee on Financial Services through passage of H. Res. 393 and pursuant to House Republican Conference rules regarding service on certain standing committees, I am compelled to and do hereby resign from service on the following committees: Committee on the Budget and the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

Sincerely,

THADDEUS G. MCCOTTER,
Member of Congress.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the resignation is accepted.

There was no objection.

VOTE BY HOUSE ON WHETHER TO GO TO WAR WITH IRAN IS NEEDED NOW

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

Mr. MCDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, we need a vote on whether this country is going to go to war with Iran. We have talked to the Speaker about it. She has promised it. But the time is getting short. Every day that we wait, we allow people down at the White House to continue to talk about this.

The vote we gave in 2002 to allow the President to deal with the problems of 9/11 was not a blank check to attack any country in the world. This war on terror began with some sense in Afghanistan, and then moved to Iraq to the absolute chaos we have today. It is a quagmire from which we can't get ourselves. And, unfortunately, the President and his Vice President are leading us, it appears, toward a war with Iran.

Ask why the urgency? Why do you want to come out here and talk about that tonight? Well, there was an article that appeared today in the Al-Quds Al-Arabi, which is an Arabic paper published in London. It is a very respectable paper, and it is one that most people in this body, in fact most people in this country, never heard of, nor do they understand and will never know about it because our press won't pick it up.

But I read the Middle Eastern press every day. I have some in my office who read Arabic, and they translate it for me, and I get a summary every day in my office of what is going on. This article I think deserves to be quoted a little bit, because people may not get the Congressional Quarterly or the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD and read it.

The article says this: ''Vice President Dick Cheney yesterday ended his tour of the Arab world that started with Iraq and ended in the capitals of four other Arab countries, Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. High ranking Arab diplomatic sources close to the talks with Cheney confirmed to the newspaper that the probability of war became more likely than peace in the region.''

This is Arabs listening to the Vice President of the United States talk.

''The same sources indicated that Cheney was talking to Gulf leaders he met in a very confident and self-assured way, stressing that the involvement of this country in Iraq does not mean it is in a weak situation and cannot launch another war.''

Think about that. The Vice President is telling the Arab leaders, because we are in this mess in Iraq, just ignore that. We still can go to Iran and have a war.

Cheney went and talked to soldiers and sailors on one of the aircraft carriers, ''announcing to them,'' and this again is a quote, ''in a decisive manner that the U.S. will not allow Iran to possess nuclear weapons and that the option of a military attack is not excluded.''

Now, he said, again quoting, ''Cheney expressed his conviction that striking Iran may be the best solution for the situation in Iraq.''

Think about it. We are going to solve our problems in Iraq by attacking Iran. He says, ''because Tehran,'' the capital of Iran, ''has the biggest influence in the country and is the source of the arms of the militia.''

Now, this is from a man who sent to Iraq a guy named Bremer who took down all the guards and all the barriers at the border between Iran and Iraq, and Iran, of course, has been coming into Iraq. This administration set it up, or else they were ignorant. You can take your choice on that.

He said, ''They do not expect that there will be any retaliation by Iraq's Shiite militias. Quite the contrary, the Sunni groups and militias will take the opportunity to settle accounts with the ruling government in Baghdad under American support.''

So what he is saying is that the United States is shifting its support from the Maliki government, which is Shiite, and they are now over there telling people, well, we are going to now be supporting the Sunni elements so that they can get—Mr. Speaker, I include the translation of the Al-Quds Al-Arabi article for the RECORD.

Vice-President Dick Cheney yesterday ended his tour of the Arab world that started with Iraq and included the capitals of four other Arab countries, Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates, amidst a war of words with the Iranian President Ahamdi Nijad, who launched a diplomatic counter-attack in the form of two sudden visits to the Emirates and to Oman.

High-ranking Arab diplomatic sources close to the talks with Cheney confirmed to Al-Quds Al-Arabi that the probability of war became more likely than peace in the region after the round of meetings of the vice-president, and that the expected meetings between the Iranian and American sides in Baghdad might be the last chance to avoid military confrontation.

The same sources indicated that Cheney was talking to Gulf leaders he met in a very confident and self-assured tone, stressing that the involvement of his country in Iraq does not mean that it is in a weak situation and cannot launch another war, against Iran. Cheney, who visited the troops of his country in Iraq and the Gulf during his last round, made sure that he met American soldiers on an airplane carrier announcing to them in a decisive manner that the US will not allow Iran to possess nuclear weapons, and that the option of a military attack is not excluded. The Iranian President replied against that with severe threats in a press conference in Abu Dhabi, assuring that if they (Americans) make that mistake, the reply of Iran will be very strong and they will regret it. [Amedinejad said] ''All the world knows that they cannot beat us and Iran is capable of defending herself, and that the superpowers cannot stop us from possessing nuclear energy.''

It was observed that Gulf states have begun searching for alternatives to the Gulf straits to export their oil abroad. There were suggestions to build pipelines to the Red Sea

or the Arab Sea across Yemen, due to fears of closing the Strait of Hormuz through which 18 million barrels pass daily. Western analysts expect that Iranian retaliation will include closing the Strait of Hormuz, bombing American bases, and burning down oil wells in the Gulf, in addition to bombing Israel with rockets from Iran directly, through Hezbollah in Lebanon or both.

Cheney expressed his conviction that striking Iran may be the best solution for the situation in Iraq, because Tehran has the biggest influence in the country and is the source of arms for militias. The source added that American estimates do not expect Iraqi Shiite retaliation against American troops in case war breaks out. Quite the contrary, the Sunni groups and militias will take the opportunity to settle accounts with the ruling government in Baghdad under America's support and protection. The same source indicated that Cheney asked his allies (Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan and the United Arab Emirates) to reassure Sunni groups in Iraq and win them to the American side, passing a message that the U.S. has lost confidence completely in Al-Maliki government because of its failure to control the security situation and to achieve national reconciliation, including giving the Sunnis a bigger role in the decision-making process.

Cheney assured Gulf leaders that the Iranian nuclear reactor of Bushahr that lies on the other side of the Gulf will not be a target for strikes because it has no value and due to the presence of Russian experts at the reactor, and that even if it became a target of strikes, it would not cause pollution to the Gulf waters because it does not have depleted plutonium. Gulf states that obtain 90% of their water from treatment stations on the Gulf shores expressed to American officials their concerns and fears in the face of a water crisis which would be caused if a nuclear leak pollutes the Gulf waters in case of war with Iran.

The same source also confirmed that Cheney's talks in the four capitals focused on Iraq and Iran only and never dealt with the Arab-Israeli conflict. This was explained by a change of roles between Cheney and Rice, with the latter's role confined to the Israeli-Palestinian issue.

In Abu Dhabi, there are currently rumors about Mr. Nijad's asking the Emirates for mediation with Washington in the current nuclear crisis, and that he brought forth new ideas that an Emirate delegation will present to Washington in the next 2 days. The delegation is headed by crown-price and commander-in-chief of the armed forces, Sheikh Muhammad bin Zaid. The delegation left for Washington, D.C. already and has among its members the foreign minister of the Emirates.

□ 1930

IMPORTANT STEP TAKEN ON ISSUE OF DOMESTIC NATIONAL SECURITY

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

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, we still hope to bring a 30-something hour to the floor this evening, but we may have to wait for another evening, Mr. Speaker.

I wanted to briefly rise for a few minutes, potentially in replacement of our normal 30-something hour this evening, to talk about what I think is a very important step forward that this Congress took today when it comes to the issue of domestic national security.

We hear a lot and have heard a lot from our President and from this Congress over the past several months about trying to change our course in Iraq, trying to do the right thing to make sure that our troops, that our soldiers there are not put in harm's way in the middle of a religious civil war.

For those of us who have been calling for a new direction in Iraq, we do so in part based on what our own intelligence community has told us, through the National Intelligence Estimate, that the war in Iraq, which has become what they call a cause celeb for the terrorist communities, is in fact making this country less safe, not more safe, by creating a breeding ground, a training ground for terrorists and in fact by growing the undeserved derision for this country across the world.

It points us to, I think, a misplaced allocation of resources. While we have been fighting a misguided and bungled war in Iraq, we have been leaving our own borders, leaving our own homeland unsecured.

We know that the National Guard and the Reserve troops are stretched to their limit. I have a GAO report from January of this year stating the high use of National Guard for Federal overseas missions has reduced equipment available for its State-led domestic missions.

Governor after Governor is telling us that their National Guards are not ready to respond to the national emergencies that may confront States. The Governor of North Carolina says, ''We rely on the National Guard to respond to natural disasters, a pandemic or terrorist attack. Currently, we do not have the manpower or the equipment to perform that dual role,'' of responding to both State and Federal needs.

We know that our National Guard is stretched thin. We also know that over a period of time our local law enforcement personnel have been stretched thin as well.

For those of us that watched from State legislatures or from our place in the private citizenry, we were very proud of this Congress in conjunction with former President Clinton when they instituted the COPS program. Over 117,000 additional community police officers were put on the streets of this country. Every State of the Union was a beneficiary of this program.

That program was put by the wayside by this Republican Congress and this President. Today a lot of Republicans got up and spoke in favor of the bill today which basically reinvigorated that community policing program. But it was a Republican Congress that cut that program to the bone.

During the Clinton administration during the 1990s, the COPS program was funded at $1 billion a year. By 2003, the Republican-led Congress had scaled back COPS to $198 million. And by 2005, to $10 million. By 2006, the Congress had completely eliminated COPS funding.

Boots on the street, community police officers on the ground, you want to talk about the first defense against the next terrorist attack on this Nation, it is the community police officers, our law enforcement personnel on the ground.

Today, we made an historic investment in community policing. For my district alone, it means a 50 percent increase in the number of COPS-supported personnel on the ground.

We are going to set a new course in Iraq, and I believe that is going to make this country safer. We are going to put our National Guard and Reserve troops protecting their States. That will make us safer.

But today, this Democratic Congress showed that things changed by investing once again in community policing and the COPS program.

A lot of people wonder whether things really are changing in Washington or whether it is just talk. Today, by making an historic investment in community policing, we did the right thing for our brave law enforcement personnel and national security.

30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to be before the House of Representatives once again with the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY) to share with the American people and our colleagues some of the issues that are facing the United States of America today, and that I think will have ramifications for the future of this country.

The past few weeks here have been very exciting as we continue to try to press the President of the United States to find his way in Iraq and begin the withdrawal of our troops.

I think it is important for the American people to recognize the position of the majority party in the House of Representatives and the position of the majority in the United States Senate represented by Speaker PELOSI and Senate majority leader HARRY REID in which we are trying to begin the process of winding down the war in Iraq and expanding the global war on terrorism.

The war in Iraq does not have anything to do with the war on terrorism, and we hear from the President consistently that if we don't fight them over there, we are going to have to fight them over here. I think it is important for us to recognize that only 2 to 3 percent of the people fighting in Iraq are al Qaeda. We are in the middle of a civil war in a country that 70 percent of the citizens of that country in

Iraq believe it is okay to shoot American soldiers. That is where we are in the middle of this civil war, a religious civil war between religious groups and ethnic factions in which Americans in many instances are the targets of this civil war now.

We have seen in the last 4 months, Mr. Speaker, the deaths of more Americans in that 4-month period than any other 4-month period during the war. It is getting worse by the day. Many of us continue to talk to soldiers who come back and go back and forth, and they are very discrete with us and they share with us information that they are maybe not willing to say publicly. But if I have heard it from one soldier, I have heard it from 15 or 20 from my district and around the country who I have talked with. And they inevitably say: What is winning? What is winning this war?

We ask the President time and time again: What does winning mean? We are beginning to try the process that the President keeps vetoing of winding this war down.

When you have a scenario where you have a couple thousand or 3,000 or 4,000 U.S. and Iraqi soldiers in cities of over 100,000 trying to secure and trying to find out who these insurgents are when they all dress in civilian clothes, they all drive civilian cars. No one has a uniform on. No one is driving a tank. This is a guerrilla war that we are in the middle of. It is becoming very, very difficult for us to secure it. I believe we have missed the opportunity to secure that country because we lack troops.

I don't want to take all of the time up tonight. I know Mr. MURPHY is such a courteous New Englander that he would probably let me, but I think it is important that the citizens of this country know that the Democratic Party is trying to end this war. We want timetables. We want accountability, and the one thing that we are saying to the President of the United States, two things, this is not going to be an open-ended war and you are not getting a blank check.

I yield to my friend.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Thank you, Mr. RYAN. I am nothing if not a fan of New England etiquette. I would let the gentleman speak for as long as he wishes, but he makes great points.

The American people sent this new Congress in order to set a new direction. They didn't imagine on election day that new direction was putting more troops in harm's way in the middle of a civil war. The word ''escalation'' was not in their vocabulary when they conceived of what that new direction would be.

They believed it was about time to start listening to the bipartisan foreign policy community as represented by the Iraq Study Group Report, of the record number of generals coming back and telling us we needed to start setting a new course. They believed that new direction was about redeploying our forces and bringing the National Guard home.

I hope tonight we will talk about how stressed the National Guard is, bringing the troops back home to protect ourselves on our homefront, and being able to respond to the natural disasters and emergencies that are all too frequent on our own shore, and begin to focus on places where we can still win.

Afghanistan, a fight that is taking it right to the insurgency that attacked this country, taking it right to the training ground of al Qaeda, the place where Osama bin Laden trained and prepared his forces to attack this country. Certainly we can win there, but it is time we start recognizing what that new direction has to be.

It was amazing when I listened to the Republican leader say a week or so ago, and I am paraphrasing, but the thought was that the Republicans were willing to hear out the President's plan to escalate the war for a period of time. But, say, by the fall or later this year if it wasn't working, it was time for the President to propose plan B.

I am not sure how anyone who has been watching this play out for the last 4 years could still believe we are on plan A. We are not plan A or B, we are on like plan triple R right now. We have tried everything. And guess what, every new strategy, every new approach that we take based solely on military might alone, which has been essentially our practice so far, has made the situation even more chaotic and has plunged Baghdad and its environs into greatest chaos.

Why? Guess what, because the rest of us, the American public and the Democratic Caucus, the bipartisan Iraq Study Group, retired generals from every stripe, have realized that we cannot win this conflict. And everyone's definition of win is different, I understand, but we cannot prove victorious there on the force of our military might alone.

I got to spend a couple of days on the ground in Baghdad with those soldiers. If anyone can fulfill the mission they have been given, it is the men and women in the Armed Forces that we have put on the ground. They are the bravest and most capable people I have ever been around. But the fact is that we have given them a mission which is nearly impossible.

We are forcing them one day to be soldiers, the next day to be diplomats, and the next day to be civil engineers. The reason why plan A through Z has not worked yet is because it doesn't recognize the very fact that if we can solve this, if we can somehow bring some resolution to Iraq, it will be through diplomatic and political might, not sheer military force.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Just to think about the lack of planning and details for the whole deal, as these Iraqi troops are supposed to stand up, we are supposed to stand down. That is why in our supplemental we said let's work something out. There was no exact formula, but as one brigade of Iraqi troops are trained to the level the President certifies, we bring one home.

If the whole premise of the President's policy was as they stand up, we stand down, he has been saying that for such a long time, and that was in our supplemental bill that we passed a couple of weeks ago.

I know our good friend Steve Israel from New York and Ike Skelton have been promoting this idea for a long time, and that was in there. That is the kind of thing that the Democrats are doing.

But to focus on the lack of planning, not to beat a dead horse, but we now have soldiers over there who are in charge of two, three, 400 Iraqi soldiers. One person that I know who is in charge of 400 Iraqi soldiers, do you know how many interpreters he has to communicate with?

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. How many?

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. One. He has one interpreter to help him communicate with 400 Iraqi soldiers.

Now these are all of the things that were not accounted for before we went into this place. That's what we are saying. There is a time and a place for military action. Afghanistan is the one we all cite, where they were harboring the al Qaeda and Osama bin Laden.

But now we have put these soldiers in a position where they are losing their friends. They are in dangerous situations. They don't know how long they are going to be there. Their tours keep getting extended, and you can't keep doing this to our soldiers.

And then you have a natural disaster in the United States and you don't have enough Guardsmen and -women to address the local problem.

□ 1945

Let's fix this. Let's work together to fix this problem and let's work with the President. Let's work with the members of the minority party in the House and the Senate to say let's start winding this thing down. That's what we want to do, and that's how I think we are going to begin to regain some credibility in the world. We are actually going to be pro-troop, pro-soldier by getting them out of a position that they can't survive in. We see the death tolls going up and we see what's happening at Walter Reed, and when you look at what we were able to do, immediate funding for the troops for the next 60 to 90 days and an evaluation of how we are doing, is that too much to ask?

I yield to my good friend.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, we have been in this fight over timetables, and so many of us believe that we have got to start setting a deadline on when the Iraqis are going to have to stand up for themselves. Okay, so we passed that, and the President vetoed, and we came back and said, all right, let's talk about something a little bit less than that. Let's talk about what you outlined.

Let's give you all the money you want and more for the next several

months for the conduct of this war, and then after that's done, let's see if it's working. That's a revolutionary concept here. Before we authorize the next round of several dozen billion dollars for the conduct of this war, let's just ask some questions. Is it working? Are the Iraqis doing what they need to do to achieve a political settlement? And guess what, the message is to that idea as well, that's not acceptable either; it is going to get a veto just like the first one.

There was a word that was just lost here for a long time. You and the 30-somethings talked about it night after night, but it was a foreign phrase to people and it is accountability. It is accountability.

Guess why the Iraqis consider going home for the summer? Why the parliament thinks it is okay to stand down? Because they know they have a crutch to rely on. They know that the Americans will be there as long as they continue to refuse to stand their military up, to stand their political institutions up, to stand up their ministries.

They know that, in fact, we're going to reward their incompetence. Enough is enough.

I got to spend a couple of days there, and in addition to spending some time with the troops you get to spend a little bit of time with the Iraqi military, and you can see that there's potential there. You can see that they are ready to do this mission but you can also see that there's no incentive there to do it right now.

And so that word ''accountability'' which has been lost here for so long is I think a large reason for why Congress looks a little bit different now, why you have a whole bunch of new Members who were sent here, not just to wrap up this war, not just to bring our troops home but to also instill in this government a sense that if we are going to spend taxpayer dollars, we better have some accounting for how it is done.

The two bills that we have passed, both the first bill that set a timetable to wrap up this war; the second bill, frankly, is as reasonable as you can get in trying to provide some benchmarks for success, they are both about that missing word missing here for a long time. It is accountability.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Absolutely. We have another thing to add to the list of the promises that were made that we rehashed here many, many times. When you look at we are going to be greeted as liberators, we only need $50 billion, we can use the oil for reconstruction, you know, all of these things that were told to us before the war that ended up not being true, we have something that we can add as we have seen this week, May 12 edition of the news, and comparing it to this statement that the President made on the Iraqi government, New York Times, January 28, 2005, ''But asked if, as a matter of principle, the United States would pull out of Iraq at the request of a new (Iraqi) government, he said,'' the President said, '''Absolutely. This is a sovereign government.'''

May 12, 2007, fast forward, majority of Iraq lawmakers seek timetable for U.S. exit. Majority of Iraq's parliament members signed a petition for a timetable governing withdrawal of American troops. The American people want us out. The Iraqi parliament wants us out. Seventy percent of the Iraqi citizens think it is okay to shoot an American soldier. This President is the only one in the world who thinks it's a good idea for us to stay there, and it's the same person who told us this slew of inaccurate data, information, tactic, strategy 5 years ago.

So we are trying to fix this problem, and we are having a heck of a time getting past this President. And he is the President and he does have the veto power, but he needs to recognize we want accountability. He's not getting a blank check, and this is not going to be an open-ended war.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. We talk about the enormous and unconscionable level of American casualties there, and the number that we focus on are the number of men and women who don't come back, and not enough focus gets put on the number of American soldiers who come back with grave, crippling injuries. But we don't talk at all about the number of Iraqis who have been killed, the immense civilian casualties that mount not by the two or three or four a day but mount by the dozens every day.

And so when you see what we are seeing now, which is an Iraqi parliament standing up and saying enough is enough, we need the Americans to go home, what you're hearing is a bunch of people who are realizing that the best way to keep their own people safe is to have the Americans stand down because, on more days than not, we are drawing additional fire into the chaos there.

We went over and asked the generals there, we said, listen, tell us how much of the fire that you are seeing in and around Baghdad is a result of Shia and Sunni violence and tell us how much of the fire is directed at American forces. And the stat was pretty amazing. Ninety percent of the fire there is fire directed from one religious civil group to the next, from one sect to the other. Ten percent of it is directed at American forces. It's an inexcusable 10 percent, but to think that we are asking our men and women to stand in the middle and be a human shield between Shia and Sunni fighting each other, in fact sometimes Shia and Shia, Sunni and Sunni fighting each other, is a miserable way to conduct foreign policy.

And I asked one of those soldiers, I said, you know, you're being asked one day to try to negotiate some political settlement between religious groups, when the day before they were shooting at each other; how on earth do you tell who's shooting at who? And the soldier looked at me inquisitively, sort of shocked that I would ask the question. He said, we don't know who's shooting at us; if they are shooting at us, we shoot back. That's their job. That's their job, to protect them, to protect the people around them.

But as you said, the fact is when you can't tell who it is that's doing the shooting how on earth the next day are you going to be expected to sit down and try to mend the fences that gave rise to that violence in the first place?

Like I said, if anybody can do it, I think that these guys and women can do it. They are the most amazing, capable people that I have ever met in my life, but the fact is that if you don't know who's perpetuating the violence, it's very hard to heal those wounds the next day.

And to my mind, if the Iraqis are telling us that what they believe is necessary to make their country safe is a precipitous withdrawal of American forces, if our own intelligence community is telling us that we are less safe because of what's going on there, the Iraq Study Group, retired generals, American public, Iraqi parliament, intelligence community, there's a wall around Pennsylvania Avenue right now, and none of that seems to be going in there. And if we don't change course sooner or later, we're going to do damage that is not going to be even reversible by this Democratic Congress.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Let's look at what we are just trying to do. All we're saying is we're going to give the President, he wants $100 billion and we're saying we want to give you $30-some billion, and then D.C. lingo, fence the rest of the money in, the other $50 or $60 billion, until he comes back, the President comes back to us in July and is able to articulate to the United States Congress and the American people and the world what exactly the progress has been. And if you have progress, then you will be willing to come and make that argument to us here. And then we will have another vote, and we will decide if we are going to release the rest of the money or do something else, begin winding it down even quicker.

But I find it very disturbing, Mr. Speaker, that the President of the United States is not willing to come to the United States Congress, created by Article I, section 1 of the Constitution, the people's House, and articulate why our soldiers are still in Iraq, why we're not having success, why benchmarks aren't being met, why the Iraqi soldiers aren't being trained. You come back to the United States Congress and you tell us what the situation is, and then we control the money, and if there's progress we will give you more. If it continues like it's been going, we're going to give you enough to get these kids back home.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. This place has been a one-horse show for a real long time. You talk about the Constitution. It's kind of been a document

that's been dead and buried for a long time. People say the United States Congress here is to be an equal branch of the United States Government, to be able to operate within a structure that recognizes that not every single decision gets made by one man sitting in a house up the street; that people go out to elections in record numbers like they did last November and they should think, rightfully so, that what they say and the votes they cast are going to have some impact on what happens down there.

And I understand that the President's version of working together is us agreeing with whatever he asks us to agree with, but that's not what the American people sent us here to do. I certainly didn't get sent here to do this as a new Member, and the sooner that we recognize that you have a Congress for the first time in a long time that is going to stand up and speak for the people that sent us here, the sooner that happens the better.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I appreciate it, and you're absolutely right.

And we have got an obligation to do that, and the ramifications of this war are being felt all over. And one of the regrets that we have had is that we continue to run up this huge budget deficit in order to pay for the war. And it's time for us to start challenging those people who have been doing well, those people that this primarily has been the burden of this war, has primarily been the responsibility of those families and those soldiers who have been fighting in it, and the burden that they have faced has been much greater than anyone had anticipated. And so I think it's important for us to also recognize in our supplemental bill what we have been able to do and what we have tried to do with some of this additional money.

Almost $2 billion for defense health care for those soldiers who are serving their country currently, that we put an extra couple billion dollars in there above the President's request to deal with the health care issue for those who are serving their country right now in this most dangerous time.

We also added an almost additional $2 billion for veterans health care and made sure that we are taking care of our veterans when they come back. We are going to see a tremendous surge in veterans health care when these soldiers get back home, and we want to make sure that they have the resources necessary to do that.

We don't want this to be a country that promises you before you go to war all kinds of Cadillac coverage and then when you get back you're left on your own. The Democratic Party had attempted to fix that through the supplemental process, and again, that bill was vetoed.

$500 million in there for post-traumatic stress disorder, which is going to be a huge problem given the kind of environment that these kids are fighting in.

$500 million in there for brain injuries, again a major problem with those soldiers who are coming back injured.

We're trying to take care of our veterans, and we're doing a good job, but we keep getting this process and these bills vetoed by the President of the United States, and it is very important that we begin to recognize that this can no longer be a stumbling block.

In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, the Democratic-led Congress, in our budget authorization bill several weeks ago, put in there the largest increase for veterans spending in the history of the veterans administration. We are trying to take care of our veterans, and we are doing it in spite of what the President is trying to do by consistently vetoing our bills.

□ 2000

We are putting the money forward, we are asking for some accountability, we are taking care of our veterans, we are taking care of our soldiers, we are making sure that they don't leave to go over to Iraq without the proper body armor, the proper Humvee, up-armored Humvees, and the proper amount of rest.

Our soldiers are getting worn out by continuously extending their tours, by sending them back second, third, fourth tours, their families are having problems, high divorce rates. We are seeing it all over. It's time for us to refocus.

Then, when you look at who else is being affected by this situation that we have in Iraq, you are also seeing the issue with the National Guard readiness. We have seen, unfortunately, over the last couple of weeks, because of the natural disasters and the tornados, especially in places like Kansas, where the National Guard does not have the equipment, in many instances they don't have the manpower to try to deal with the issues that they are facing in their own State. There are so many issues that are being affected.

Let me just share with you some of these problems that we have and what we are trying to do to address that. We put in, in the last supplemental bill, $2 billion not requested by the President for a new strategic reserve readiness fund, of which $1 billion is for Army National Guard equipment shortfalls. We are trying to address it.

The President vetoed that too. So bad enough you are vetoing health care for our soldiers, you are vetoing health care for our veterans to the tune of $2 billion; you are vetoing veterans health care for post-traumatic stress disorder; you are vetoing health care for those soldiers who come back with brain injuries. You are also vetoing an extra $1 billion for Army National Guard equipment.

I mean, come on. We are trying to move this process forward. You know, it's a typical D.C. move, that if it's not your idea, we are against it. You know, if I didn't come up with it, I'm against it. That has been the President's attitude. We can't have it, because it's not us that is suffering; we are in air conditioned quarters. We got offices, cars, nice meals, you know. Our families are here with us.

It's the soldiers who are suffering, and their families who are suffering, bearing the brunt of this war.

This is Lieutenant General Steven Blum, chief of the National Guard Bureau: ''The Governors are rightly concerned that while the personnel part of the Guard has never been better, never been more ready, the equipment piece to the National Guard back here at home has never been less ready, and they are trying to resolve that obvious disconnect. The message is clear what we have, and the budget does not produce the level of readiness that they feel comfortable with.''

Just being admitted. That's being admitted by the chief of the National Guard Bureau. This is the Government Accountability Office report from 2007, just a couple of months ago in January. This is a nonpartisan bureau that we have here: ''The high use of the National Guard for Federal overseas missions has reduced equipment available for its State-led domestic missions. At the same time it faces an expanded array of threats at home.''

Reduced equipment available for our National Guard; our soldiers, not having the proper body armor; our Humvees not properly up-armored; our soldiers not getting the proper rest; our veterans not getting the kind of health care that they deserve; our defense, our soldiers in the Defense Department, not getting the level of health care and attention that they need and that they deserve; and an American public that wants this war to be over. Sixty percent say that it was a mistake to go in the first place.

We have an obligation to respectfully and orderly wind this war down and begin a surge of diplomacy in the Middle East, asking our neighbors in the Middle East, asking the United Nations to take part in a peace-keeping effort in Iraq, making sure that our soldiers are there and the periphery, a certain number, to make sure that we are still in the region to a certain extent to protect against some kind of Iranian influence.

I yield to my good friend, who I know has been very busy tonight. Thank you for taking time out of your schedule to honor your commitments.

I yield to my good friend from Florida.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. RYAN, it's always good to be on the floor with you. It's like old times, like the 108th Congress, TIM RYAN from Niles, Ohio, and KENDRICK MEEK from Miami/Liberty City, Florida.

The good thing I like about doing the work, we are working not only with new Members that appeared in the last Congress, but we have a level of consistency, even in the majority. Mr. RYAN serves on the very powerful Appropriations Committee. I serve on a

committee called the Ways and Means Committee and Armed Services. These are just committees that have an awful lot of work, and there is a lot to do.

But we are here tonight because it's very, very important to the country. I don't have a family member in Iraq. I don't have a family member on their way to Iraq, but I do have constituents that fall within that circle of individuals.

As we move this conference report, hopefully, it will go through the conference session that's going on to the President, and that the President doesn't veto this bill. Now, I am going to say this, because one may say politically, you probably wanted the President to do it, because he will go down further in the polls. It's not about polls, as far as I am concerned. It's about accountability to the men and women in harm's way.

One may think, well, this has nothing really to do with me. We have a volunteer Armed Forces, and they have signed up and they knew full well, some of them knew full well they would be deployed. We have Reservists signed up. Some of them knew this threat would come one day that they would have to be deployed on a third and fourth tour. You have National Guard men and women that signed up, they were going to be federalized. They had to know they would be federalized at some point to go out and fight on behalf of the country.

I just would like to make this point that if one may feel that this has nothing to do with your immediate family, you have to think about what the war in Iraq is doing to our country right now, our financial standing, our financial security. We have an administration in the last Congress, which was the rubber stamp Republican Congress, that passed everything that the Bush White House called for and asked for. Billionaires received tax cuts that they didn't even see coming, but it was a gift to them from the Bush administration.

Now, we have borrowed more from foreign nations than we ever borrowed in the history of the Republic. I am from Florida. For those of you who are Members from Gulf States and along the eastern seaboard, this is your issue. Even those from the Midwest or even from the west coast, this is your issue, making sure that we have the benchmarks in place, making sure that we have the accountability in place, when you look at the dollars we are spending, how about the billions of dollars, trillions of dollars we are spending on this war. It's your issue. To the small-town mayor, to the big-city mayor, to the county commissioner, or parish or State legislature, this is your issue.

Some folks said, well, in Washington, you all talk about Iraq, Iraq and Iraq again, and then that other issue, Iraq. The reason why on this floor Iraq is uttered every day, almost once an hour, two or three times an hour, is how can we deal with a national health care plan for children? How can we deal with an issue as it relates to helping small businesses? How can we prepare ourselves to take on the wave of veteran affairs that we have to take responsibility for, because we promise our veterans that we will stand with them because they stood with us?

How can we do all of those things when we are carrying on the back an Iraqi Government that I must add is looking at going on a 2-month vacation, and the majority members of the Iraqi Parliament have already said they want a timeline on when U.S. troops are going to be out of Iraq.

When you hear things about building a wall in Iraq, when you hear the reports over the weekend, Mother's Day weekend, as we were celebrating Mother's Day weekend, including myself, on honoring our mothers, my mother and my wife and all, we have to hear the report about our men and women on patrol in Iraq hit by an improvised explosive device as they patrolled at 4-something in the morning, and an Iraqi response team from our military showed up, 40 minutes after that event, and come to find a burning Humvee, burning, and those that died in that explosion, and three of our men that we are still combing the streets of Iraq for right now, along with coalition forces.

These are the very things that we talk about in this bill. We talk about not only the human loss, and, since when I always come to the floor, I just want to say that as of May 15 at 10 a.m., which is the latest, 10 a.m. report, death toll is up 3,393; wounded in action and returned to duty is 13,975; wounded in action and not returned to duty is 11,270. That number continues to go up.

It's very, very important. We pay very close attention to this. So when we have the legislation to make sure the troops have what they need, make sure that our veterans have what they need, making sure we respond to the work that was not done in the last two Congresses, we deal with what happened in the Gulf States in Katrina, doing right by them, doing right by their children, that their health insurance is about to expire, the very children of our country.

Just today I was on the steps talking to an elementary school, Phyllis Ruth Miller Elementary School, in my district. I was talking to over 100 kids that are elementary kids and some of their teachers. They were asking about Iraq, and they were asking about the war. They were concerned, and one of the young men asked, well, Congressman, do you believe when I get of the age that, you know, I would love to be a member, I would love to be a soldier, a member of the Army, do you think I will be deployed to Iraq?

I had to have a discussion with him about how we are trying to work in a diplomatic way. We want a surge in diplomacy. We want a surge as it relates to an escalation and other countries taking part in what we are doing.

If it's about, you know, dropping bombs and all of that, we can do that better than anyone else on the face of the Earth. But when you start putting our men and women into responsibilities when a country should take responsibilities for themselves, then we are talking about another thing.

I think it's also important for us to note that the bouncing ball as it relates to what the President says and what he means are two different things. One minute we listen to the commanders in the field. The next minute we know what's good for the commanders. One minute we say that if the Iraqi Government, and I just happened, I asked staff to pull this up, when the President was asked, and he said, But asked if, as a matter of principle, the United States would pull out of Iraq at the request of a new (Iraqi) Government,'' he said, this is a question that was posed to him, '' Absolutely. This is a sovereign government.''

The elected Parliament, a majority of the elected Parliament have said they want a timeline. Now, in Congress we are saying we want a timeline, and we want benchmarks. The President is saying, I am not going to allow you to do it. We have a Republican minority saying we are standing next to the President. Then we had 11 Members of the Republican side go talk to the President and say, hey, you know something, we can only stand in for so long.

Now, if I was thinking in political terms and thinking about serving on the committees I am serving on and staying in the majority and being a part of leadership meetings and so on and so on, I would say, fine. Let the Republican minority stick with the President. Let the President, let's just sit back, let's be quiet. Let's just let the President talk because as far as I am concerned politically, the gain is going to be to Democrats in Washington, D.C.

But if it wasn't war, if it wasn't the future of our children and our children's children, if it wasn't the amount of debt that has been accumulated with two wars going on and tax cuts that no one asked for, and the super, super wealthy are getting tax cuts, subsidies, the oil companies that Mr. RYAN tried to address in the first wave of alternative energy and alternative fuel.

I am a little glad to see the President talk about an energy plan yesterday, and take our dependency off of foreign oil or energy and focus on America. I am so glad that the President has caught up with the American people and the Democratic Congress and moving in that direction. We have already done that.

So the real issue here is if we just pay attention to what people are saying, I think that we can figure out why they are doing what they are doing. The President, yes, he is going to be President, his term will be up in 2008. We want to support the Commander in Chief as far as we can.

But as a democracy, as a Congress, we owe it to the people of the United States of America to continue to get good and accurate information out to them and to make sure that every Member of Congress knows exactly what he or she is voting on or not voting on.

You heard me say before, it's important that Members of the Congress on both sides of the aisle, that we go see the wizard, that we get a little leadership, get a little courage, okay? Go to the President and say, hey, listen, this is the way it's going to be. This is not going away. The American people are on the side of what's good for America. They are not necessarily saying, you know, we love Democrats or we love Republicans. They just want good government, and good government is making sure we have responsibilities.

Mayors come and speak with me. I had a city commissioner come talk with me today. She was sharing with me about, you know, all of the things that she has to go through to get a Federal grant.

□ 2015

Well, I don't hear the Iraqi Government talking about all the things and the loopholes and accountability measures they have to go through to get the taxpayer dollar. And I think it's important that we pay very, very close attention to that as we move through.

Let me just speak one more second, Mr. RYAN, not one more second, but several seconds.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Take your time.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Thank you, sir.

I mentioned earlier, I'm from Florida. June 1 is a very important date to those of us that are in Hurricane Alley. June 1 is the beginning of hurricane season. Hurricane season will be, this hurricane season has been predicted, Mr. Speaker, to be one of the most active seasons in recent time. And Florida is probably the most prepared State as it relates to response because we've gone through it so much. And the reason why we're able to respond to a number of natural disasters and hurricanes, which we have a number of wild fires that are going on right now in Florida, is that we have one of the best National Guard units on the face of the Earth, period. But 53 percent of the diesel or used equipment that they had to respond to storms, because they're the first responders, they're already staging outside of the hurricane zone to respond as first responders. They don't even have the equipment that they need to respond.

In Kansas, Mr. RYAN, the Governor of Kansas said, you know, our emergency management plan called for a response from the National Guard. Those that are still left in the State of Kansas, but, they're having to use their personal vehicles. They're having to do other things to make up for the equipment that's jammed with sand over in Iraq.

We must have accountability now. We must have benchmarks now. It's almost saying to school age children that it's okay, you can go to school, we won't grade you on anything. There'll never be a test. You just, you know, do your time and everything will work out.

Everything that we strive for to be successful in, even in business or in government, you have to have benchmarks. You have to have accountability. And what the President and some of the Members of the minority side of the aisle, some of them, not all of them, I must add because I know that there are a number of my Republican colleagues that are saying we're headed down the right track and they have voted in the affirmative, in a bipartisan vote to send that message to the White House.

And what the President hasn't come to grips with, including some members of his Cabinet, that this is a democracy, and guess what, the whole cake and ice cream thing, you write it, we just follow you kind of thing is over. It's over. The people of America voted for accountability. They voted for standards. They voted for transparency, and they're going to get it as long as we have the majority here in this Congress to give the American people what they ask for. That's what their vote is all about.

I think it's also important for us to realize that when you look at these States, and this is just Florida, the National Guard was down 500 Humvees, 600 trucks, short 4,000 pair of night vision goggles, and needed 30 more wreckers. This is from Colonel Ron Title, who is brass in our Florida National Guard. He's not talking on behalf of the Democratic Party or Republican Party. Here's a man that said, I'm going to serve in the Florida National Guard, and I'm just talking about preparedness. I'm talking about our ability to be able to respond to a natural disaster.

What are we going to do, turn around and call Georgia? I'm pretty sure Georgia has some of the same issues.

Turn around and call Alabama? Alabama, last I checked, there are a lot of National Guard men and women there, and I guarantee you their equipment, if not more in Iraq, they don't have the ability to come to Florida.

And so when you look at these other States and the response of the National Guard, then you have to get active duty troops involved and you have to fly things in and carry on. If we had accountability in place, and we had proper planning in place, that's what this bill calls for.

Mr. RYAN, this is the last money for Iraq and Afghanistan that will not go through the regular budget process because, Mr. Speaker, when that happens, accountability is paramount. Transparency hearings, everything is accounted for. Not just giving a checkbook to someone in Iraq and say, well, in the early days, giving them cash and just say go to work. That's not good accounting practices and should not be encouraged.

And so the old saying, if we know better, we'll do better, well, you know, by now, 5 years in the war, we should all know better. And we're trying to do better.

We have a majority in place right now, Mr. RYAN and Members, that are willing to do better, have the will and the desire to do it. The good thing that I like about, I was listening to what you were saying before I was recognized. Mr. RYAN, I remember the days that we were on the floor and we used to talk about if we had the opportunity, this is what we'll do. We'll make sure that veterans have what they need to have when they return back, and those that have served in past wars, that we honor their commitment by honoring them, making sure that they have a VA health care system they can be proud of.

We said that we would work to make sure that children have health care in this country, and we've already taken action on that.

We said that we would implement the 9/11 Commission recommendations. We have already done that. Waiting on the President's signature.

We said that we would put rules in place within the House rules to bring about ethics and have an active ethics committee, which has already happened, Mr. Speaker. It's not something that we said, well, if we get around to it. It's already happened.

So when we talk about the functions of good government, those principles are already in place. And so now we just need the help of the President of the United States to work with the Congress and not dictate to the Congress about what we should be doing, how we should be doing it. He's had 5 years. He's had 5 years to say, this is the way it's going to be. So shall it be written, so shall it be done.

And I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, and being a Member of the past two Congresses, serving, Mr. RYAN and I served on the Armed Services Committee. We don't want to leave our men and women without equipment and the things that they need. And supplementals in the past, I didn't like a lot of the language in it, but I voted for it for the greater good, for the greater good.

And we counted on the Defense Department to be accountable with the money. We counted on all of the things that we're being told about the equipment being on the ground when the men and women get there. Now we find out that some of that was not true, a lot of that was not true. And there's been so many things that have been told and so many apologies that have been sent out in press releases.

Those days are over. We must have accountability in place. So when the President, if the President follows through on his threat, Mr. RYAN, to veto it, I'm glad that you talked about the things that he will veto; that he's going to deny the men and women in harm's way. He's going to deny children to have health care. He's going to

deny veterans from getting the veterans services that they deserve, and he's going to deny us being able to hold our head up.

But I'm going to hold my head up because I'm doing my part and I'm doing my part right now on Memorial Day when we commemorate those that paid the ultimate sacrifice. And vetoing the largest increase in the VA history.

I'm just talking about a few things, leave alone the accountability measures at the Department of Defense. They already had the rules in place. They just weren't honoring those rules. We put it in the supplemental, this emergency supplemental. So now, within this law and within the dollars that will be flowing into the field and throughout America, they're going to have accountability measures in it.

So I'm not talking about what the Republican Congress did not do or what they call themselves doing, or what the President did not do or called himself doing. I'm just talking about what we're doing now and the opportunity that's presented before us. And I'm so happy, Mr. RYAN, that we are moving in that direction. I yield back to you, sir.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Well, I appreciate you coming down and articulating that. And it's been consistent since we've gotten in with the first 100 hours as to what we're doing now, what we plan on doing, what we've passed out of this House, what we've passed out of this House sometimes on several different occasions.

And if you look at the two major supplemental votes, you look at, you know, what did we do in the first one is we put timelines in there, deadlines in there, date certain we're going to get out of there.

And you stated, I think, so articulately, that the Iraqi soldiers, if they know we're going to be there, then they're going to continue to rely on us. And if you leave the training wheels on the bike, you're never going to learn how to ride on two wheels. And it's time to take the training wheels off, Mr. MEEK.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. RYAN, I don't remember the last story of a state that continued to receive money, have not been accountable to Federal dollars, I mean, haven't been accountable in spending those Federal dollars. News report comes out that it actually took place, and then we turn around and say, oh, well, we know you didn't spend the last billions of dollars we gave you. We're going to give you some more. As a matter of fact, we're going to come down and help you spend this money, and we're going to come down and be a part of this lack of accountability by your government. And then we're going to reward you with another emergency supplemental that has no strings attached.

You can't reward bad behavior or lack thereof. You cannot say, well, it's okay, Governor. It's okay, mayor. It's okay, county commission or city commission. If you're not accountable with the dollars, we're going to continue to send it to you.

I don't know a police department that received Federal assistance from FEMA, okay, who did not do, did not follow the plan of hiring and training and making sure that they can patrol their own streets, and we sent Federal law enforcement individuals down there to do the everyday calls for service. That doesn't happen in America. It should not happen in Iraq as long as our taxpayer dollars are being spent, and dollars that we've borrowed, Mr. RYAN, I must add, from foreign nations.

This country is in a financial situation as it relates to borrowing from foreign nations unlike any other time in the history of the Republic. So as we move in this majority body here to correct those issues, this is a wonderful opportunity for this government to correct itself on the legislative branch and the executive branch, to do the right thing, to be accountable for the taxpayer dollars, and, Mr. RYAN, the dollars that we've borrowed from other countries, that we have to figure out how we're going to pay them back, and at the same time continue to maintain some sort of financial standing within the world.

Mr. RYAN, it's always a pleasure, sir, coming to the floor and working with you and other members of the 30-something Working Group. I know we'll be back a couple of other times this week before we finish on Friday.

But we have to stay the course. I'm going to use one of the administration's words; stay the course on behalf of those who stood for us to be able to talk here in this air conditioned Chamber, saluting one flag. We have to stand up for those who have sent us here to represent them. And there are people who can vote. There are people who cannot vote. They're Republican. They're Democrats. They're independents. The individuals that are watching what happens now, because as we look back 20 years from now, folks are going to ask, who stood up? Who stood up for them? Who stood up for their children? Who stood up for their grandchildren?

It's not about my family. It's about all of our families. If you want to talk about family values, then let's start doing things on behalf of the American people, and let's make sure that future generations have a better opportunity than we have.

When that kid asked me on the steps of the Capitol, Mr. Congressman, I want to join the Army; I want to be a soldier. Am I going to war? That answer shouldn't have been diplomacy and all that. It should have been, we're doing our job and working with the international community and keeping America safe and, yes, if you want to go into the Army, you should go into the Army and serve our country like so many others have done.

But it's a sad commentary when we're here debating the obvious of what we have to do. Accountability with the taxpayer dollars and accountability to those who woke up hearing mortar, hearing improvised explosive devices going off, looking at these vehicles towed in from the streets of Baghdad because we're doing the job that the Iraqi Government should be doing. And we have to stay the course, and making sure that we stand up for those that don't have the opportunity to walk through this door and put their voting card in these machines and vote on behalf of their future and their families.

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Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I appreciate it.

Use www.Speaker.Gov to access our Web site. E-mail 30somethingdems@mail.house.gov.

Mr. MEEK, as always, it is an honor, a pleasure, and a privilege to just share this floor with you, my friend.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut). Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 8 o'clock and 31 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

□ 2117

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. CASTOR) at 9 o'clock and 17 minutes p.m.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1585, NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2008

Mr. WELCH of Vermont, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 110–151) on the resolution (H. Res. 403) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1585) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2008 for military activities of the Department of Defense, to prescribe military personnel strengths for fiscal year 2008, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1427, FEDERAL HOUSING FINANCE REFORM ACT OF 2007

Mr. WELCH of Vermont, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 110–152) on the resolution (H. Res. 404) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1427) to reform the regulation of certain housing-related Government-sponsored enterprises, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. WELCH of Vermont) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. DEFAZIO, for 5 minutes, today.

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. WELCH of Vermont, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. WOOLSEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. MICHAUD, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. KAPTUR, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. HARE, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. SHERMAN, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. KAGEN, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. MCDERMOTT, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. WESTMORELAND) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DUNCAN, for 5 minutes, today.

Mrs. BLACKBURN, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Member (at his own request) to revise and extend his remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut, for 5 minutes, today.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Madam Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 20 minutes p.m.), the House adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, May 16, 2007, at 10 a.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 8 of rule XII, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

1752. A letter from the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics and Technology, Department of Defense, transmitting the annual status report of the U.S. Chemical Demilitarization Program (CDP) as of September 30, 2006, pursuant to 50 U.S.C. 1521(g); to the Committee on Armed Services.

1753. A letter from the Under Secretary for Personnel and Readiness, Department of Defense, transmitting authorization of the enclosed list of officers to wear the insignia of the grade of brigadier general accordance with title 10, United States Code, section 777; to the Committee on Armed Services.

1754. A letter from the Comptroller, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's quarterly report as of March 31, 2007, entitled, ''Acceptance of contributions for defense programs, projects and activities; Defense Cooperation Account,'' pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 2608; to the Committee on Armed Services.

1755. A letter from the Secretary of the Air Force, Department of Defense, transmitting Notice of the decision to initiate a multi-function standard competition of the Communications-Information Support Flight at Patrick Air Force Base, Florida, pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 2461; to the Committee on Armed Services.

1756. A letter from the Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Personnel and Readiness, Department of Defense, transmitting authorization of the enclosed list of officers to wear the insignia of the grade of major general accordance with title 10, United States Code, section 777; to the Committee on Armed Services.

1757. A letter from the General Counsel, Department of Defense, transmitting a copy of legislative proposals as part of the National Defense Authorization Bill for Fiscal Year 2008; to the Committee on Armed Services.

1758. A letter from the Chairman and President, Export-Import Bank, transmitting a report on transactions involving U.S. exports to India pursuant to Section 2(b)(3) of the Export-Import Bank Act of 1945, as amended; to the Committee on Financial Services.

1759. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Energy, transmitting a legislative proposal that would amend two sections of the Energy Policy and Conservation Act (EPCA); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

1760. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Energy, transmitting a letter to propose legislation to implement the Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage adopted in Vienna on September 12, 1997, by a diplomatic conference convened by the International Atomic Energy Agency, and to which the Senate gave its advice and consent to ratification on August 3, 2006; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

1761. A letter from the Chairman, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting the Commission's report entitled, ''Report to Congress on Abnormal Occurrences: Fiscal Year 2006,'' pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 5848; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

1762. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting pursuant to section 36(d) of the Arms Export Control Act, certification regarding the proposed manufacturing license agreement for the manufacture of significant military equipment in the Government of United Kingdom (Transmittal No. DDTC 002-07); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

1763. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting pursuant to section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act, certification regarding the proposed license for the export of defense articles and services to the Government of Denmark (Transmittal No. DDTC 007-07); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

1764. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting pursuant to section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act, certification regarding the proposed license for the export of defense articles and services to the Government of Turkey (Transmittal No. DDTC 024-07); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

1765. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of the Treasury, transmitting a proposal to extend the authorization of appropriations for the 1998 Tropical Forest Conservation Act (TFCA) through fiscal year 2010; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

1766. A letter from the Secretary, Department of the Treasury, transmitting as required by section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1641(c), and section 204(c) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, 50 U.S.C. 1703(c), a six-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to Syria that was declared in Executive Order 13338 of May 11, 2004; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

1767. A letter from the Chairman, International Fund for Ireland, transmitting a copy of the 2006 Annual Report of the Fund; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

1768. A letter from the Acting Assistant Secretary for Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting a copy of the inventories of commercial and inherently governmental positions in the Department of Transportation, as required by the Federal Activities Inventory Reform Act of 1998; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

1769. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Commerce, transmitting a copy of a draft bill to reauthorize the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000 (CRCA); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

1770. A letter from the Secretary, Department of the Interior, transmitting a copy of a draft bill entitled, ''National Park Centennial Challenge Fund Act''; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

1771. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Boeing Model 747 Airplanes [Docket No. FAA-2004-19755; Directorate Identifier 2004-NM-23-AD; Amendment 39-15003; AD 2007-07-03] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received May 10, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1772. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Hartzell Propeller Inc. Model HC-E4A-3( )/E10950( ) Propellers [Docket No. FAA-2007-27552; Directorate Identifier 2007-NE-11-AD; Amendment 39-15019; AD 2007-08-02] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received May 10, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1773. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; General Electric Company CF34-1A, -3A, -3A1, -3A2, -3B, and -3B1 Turbofan Engines [Docket No. FAA-2007-27687; Directorate Identifier 2000-NE-42-AD; Amendment 39-15012; AD 2007-07-07] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received May 10, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1774. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Raytheon Aircraft Company Beech Models 45 (YT-34), A45 (T-34A, B-45), and D45 (T-34B) Airplanes [Docket No. FAA-2006-25105; Directorate Identifier 2006-CE-33-AD; Amendment 39-15016; AD 2007-06-01 R1] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received May 10, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1775. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Gulfstream Aerospace LP Model Galaxy Airplanes and Model Gulfstream 200 Airplanes [Docket No. FAA-2007-27757; Directorate Identifier 2007-NM-030-AD; Amendment 39-15014; AD 2007-07-13] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received May 10, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1776. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Honeywell Flight Management Systems (FMSs) Served by Honeywell NZ-2000 Navigation Computers Approved Under

Technical Standard Order (TSO) TSO-C115a, and IC-800 Integrated Avionics Computers Approved Under TSOs C9c, C52a, and C115a; as Installed on Various Transport Category Airplanes [Docket No. FAA-2007-27735; Directorate Identifier 2007-NM-027-AD; Amendment 39-15009; AD 2007-07-12] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received May 10, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1777. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Gulfstream Aerospace LP Model Gulfstream 200 Airplanes [Docket No. FAA-2007-27737; Directorate Identifier 2007-NM-029-AD; Amendment 39-15008; AD 2007-07-11] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received May 10, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1778. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Boeing Model 777 Airplanes [Docket No. FAA-2007-27736; Directorate Identifier 2007-NM-001-AD; Amendment 39-15010; AD 2007-07-05] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received May 10, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1779. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Columbia Aircraft Manufacturing (Previously The Lancair Company) Models LC40-550FG, LC41-550FG, and LC42-550FG Airplanes [Docket No. FAA-2007-27628; Directorate Identifier 2007-CE-025-AD; Amendment 39-15011; AD 2007-07-06] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received May 10, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1780. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Model A300 B4-600, B4-600R, and F4-600R Series Airplanes, and Model C4-605R Variant F Airplanes (Collectively Called A300-600 Series Airplanes) [Docket No. FAA-2006-26250; Directorate Identifier 2006-NM-104-AD; Amendment 39-15001; AD 2007-07-01] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received May 10, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1781. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Boeing Model 737-300, -400, -500, -600, -700, -800 and -900 Series Airplanes; and Model 757-200 and -300 Series Airplanes [Docket No. FAA-2006-25336; Directorate Identifier 2006-NM-070-AD; Amendment 39-15002; AD 2007-07-02] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received May 10, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1782. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; McDonnell Douglas Model MD-11 and -11F Airplanes [Docket No. FAA-2006-25850; Directorate Identifier 2006-NM-128-AD; Amendment 39-15004; AD 2007-07-04] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received May 10, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1783. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Bombardier Model DHC-8-102, -103, and -106 Airplanes and Model DHC-8-200 and DHC-8-300 Series Airplanes [Docket No. FAA-2006-26725; Directorate Identifier 2006-NM-161-AD; Amendment 39-15000; AD 2007-06-19] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received May 10, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1784. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Rolls-Royce Deutschland Ltd & Co KG (formerly Rolls-Royce plc) Dart 528, 529, 532, 535, 542, and 552 Series Turboprop Engines [Docket No. FAA-2006-25272; Directorate Identifier 2006-NE-16-AD; Amendment 39-14924; AD 2007-03-13] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received May 10, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1785. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Bombardier Model CL-600-2B16 (CL-604) Airplanes and Model CL-600-2B19 (Regional Jet Series 100 & 440) Airplanes [Docket No. FAA-2006-26378; Directorate Identifier 2006-NM-230-AD; Amendment 39-14972; AD 2007-05-11] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received May 10, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1786. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; REIMS AVIATION S.A. Model F406 Airplanes [Docket No. FAA-2006-26693 Directorate Identifier 2006-CE-90-AD; Amendment 39-14970; AD 2007-05-09] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received May 10, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1787. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; McDonnell Douglas Model 717-200 Airplanes [Docket No. FAA-2006-26048; Directorate Identifier 2006-NM-191-AD; Amendment 39-14967; AD 2007-05-06] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received May 10, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1788. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Fokker Model F.28 Mark 1000, 2000, 3000, and 4000 Airplanes [Docket No. FAA-2006-26044; Directorate Identifier 2006-NM-098-AD; Amendment 39-14960; AD 2007-04-27] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received May 10, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1789. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Fokker Model F.28 Mark 0070 and 0100 Airplanes [Docket No. FAA-2006-26709; Directorate Identifier 2006-NM-202-AD; Amendment 39-14968; AD 2007-05-07] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received May 10, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1790. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Model A330 and A340 Airplanes [Docket No. FAA-2006-26684; Directorate Identifier 2006-NM-193-AD; Amendment 39-14969; AD 2007-05-08] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received May 10, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1791. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Model A330 Airplanes [Docket No. FAA-2006-26324; Directorate Identifier 2006-NM-214-AD; Amendment 39-14993; AD 2007-60-12] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received May 10, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1792. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Boeing Model 737-600, -700, -700C, and -800 Series Airplanes [Docket No. FAA-2006-24369; Directorate Identifier 2006-NM-001-AD; Amendment 39-14990; AD 2007-06-09] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received May 10, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1793. A letter from the Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Affairs, and Climate Change Science Program Acting Director, U.S. Climate Change Science Program, transmitting the annual report of the program entitled, ''Our Changing Planet: The U.S. Climate Change Science Program for Fiscal Year 2007,'' pursuant to Public Law 101-606, section 102; to the Committee on Science and Technology.

1794. A letter from the Administrator, Small Business Administration, transmitting the Annual Report on Minority Small Business and Capital Ownership Development for Fiscal Year 2006; to the Committee on Small Business.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows:

Ms. CASTOR: Committee on Rules. House Resolution 403. Resolution providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1585) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2008 for military activities of the Department of Defense, to prescribe military personnel strengths for fiscal year 2008, and for other purposes (Rept. 110–151). Referred to the House Calendar.

Mr. WELCH: Committee on Rules. House Resolution 404. Resolution providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1427) to reform the regulation of certain housing-related government-sponsored enterprises, and for other purposes (Rept. 110–152). Referred to the House Calendar.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. CANTOR (for himself, Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin, Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania, and Mr. BLUNT):

H.R. 2312. A bill to make permanent the individual income tax rates for capital gains and dividends; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Ms. HOOLEY:

H.R. 2313. A bill to establish research, development, demonstration, and commercial application programs for marine renewable energy technologies; to the Committee on Science and Technology.

By Mr. WELLER:

H.R. 2314. A bill to amend part E of title IV of the Social Security Act to increase payments to States for expenditures for short term training of staff of certain child welfare agencies; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. POMEROY (for himself, Mr. BLUNT, Mrs. BOYDA of Kansas, Mrs. CUBIN, Mr. MORAN of Kansas, Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN, Mr. CONAWAY, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. SOUDER, Mr. PEARCE, Mr. SENSENBRENNER, Mr. PETRI, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. LUCAS, Mr. KING of Iowa, Mr. BONNER, and Mr. SALAZAR):

H.R. 2315. A bill to enhance the State inspection of meat and poultry in the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture.

By Mr. CONYERS (for himself, Mr. EMANUEL, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. HALL

of New York, Mr. KAGEN, and Mr. SHERMAN):

H.R. 2316. A bill to provide more rigorous requirements with respect to disclosure and enforcement of lobbying laws and regulations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committees on Rules, and House Administration, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. VAN HOLLEN (for himself, Mr. MEEHAN, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. EMANUEL, Mr. SHERMAN, Mr. BISHOP of New York, and Mr. WAXMAN):

H.R. 2317. A bill to amend the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 to require registered lobbyists to file quarterly reports on contributions bundled for certain recipients, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. ANDREWS (for himself and Mr. LOBIONDO):

H.R. 2318. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow the deduction for State and local income and property taxes under the alternative minimum tax; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BILIRAKIS:

H.R. 2319. A bill to establish a Mail-Order Pharmacy Pilot Program; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. MARKEY (for himself, Ms. ESHOO, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California, Mrs. MALONEY of New York, Mr. RANGEL, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, and Ms. NORTON):

H.R. 2320. A bill to restore the jurisdiction of the Consumer Product Safety Commission over amusement park rides which are at a fixed site, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. CARDOZA (for himself, Mr. RADANOVICH, Mr. COSTA, and Mr. NUNES):

H.R. 2321. A bill to authorize the designation of the facility under development by the Stanislaus Ag Center Foundation, in Stanislaus County, California, as the National Ag Science Center; to the Committee on Agriculture.

By Mr. DAVIS of Alabama:

H.R. 2322. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to reduce the 35-mile drive requirement for designations of critical access hospitals to 30 miles; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. HOYER:

H.R. 2323. A bill to amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to authorize the Secretary of Education to award grants for the support of full-service community schools, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and Labor.

By Mr. DUNCAN (for himself, Mr. BURTON of Indiana, Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee, Mr. PAUL, and Mr. CONAWAY):

H.R. 2324. A bill to require each Federal agency to include its address and phone number on any agency stationery; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. GOHMERT (for himself, Mr. SMITH of Texas, and Mr. FORBES):

H.R. 2325. A bill to provide adequate penalties for crimes committed against United States judges and Federal law enforcement officers, to provide appropriate security for judges and law enforcement officers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. HELLER:

H.R. 2326. A bill to approve the settlement of the water rights claims of the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes of the Duck Valley Indian Reservation in Nevada, to require the Secretary of the Interior to carry out the settlement, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. INSLEE (for himself, Mr. LOBIONDO, and Mr. DICKS):

H.R. 2327. A bill to amend the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 to strengthen polar bear conservation efforts, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mrs. LOWEY (for herself, Mr. HALL of New York, Mr. ENGEL, and Mr. SHAYS):

H.R. 2328. A bill to amend title 49, United States Code, to exempt certain local restrictions from review under the airport noise and access restriction review program; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York (for herself, Mr. EHLERS, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota, Mr. TERRY, Mr. SENSENBRENNER, Mr. WALSH of New York, Mr. WEXLER, Mr. MCINTYRE, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. LYNCH, Mr. SHAYS, Mr. WU, and Mr. PAUL):

H.R. 2329. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow a credit against income tax for the purchase of hearing aids; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. MCCOTTER (for himself, Mr. CARTER, Mr. PEARCE, Mr. RENZI, Mr. PORTER, Mrs. MILLER of Michigan, Mr. SHUSTER, Mr. JONES of North Carolina, Mr. MANZULLO, Mr. PAUL, and Mrs. MYRICK):

H.R. 2330. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow employers a credit against income tax for hiring veterans; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. MELANCON (for himself and Mr. PICKERING):

H.R. 2331. A bill to amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to support efforts by local or regional television or radio broadcasters to provide essential public information programming in the event of a major disaster, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN (for herself, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. HOEKSTRA, Mr. HUNTER, Mr. CANTOR, Mr. MCCOTTER, Mr. CHABOT, Mr. BURTON of Indiana, Mr. PENCE, Mr. ROHRABACHER, Mr. FORTUÑO, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. MACK, Mr. POE, Mr. MCCAUL of Texas, Mr. BURGESS, Mr. TIBERI, Mrs. MYRICK, Mr. GERLACH, Mr. LATOURETTE, Mr. TERRY, Mr. LAMBORN, Mr. GOODLATTE, Mr. LINDER, Mr. KLINE of Minnesota, Mr. SAXTON, Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida, and Mr. MCHUGH):

H.R. 2332. A bill to strengthen sanctions against the Government of Syria, to enhance multilateral commitment to address the Government of Syria's threatening policies, to establish a program to support a transition to a democratically-elected government in Syria, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committees on Ways and Means, Financial Services, and Oversight and Government Reform, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. STUPAK (for himself, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. ELLSWORTH, Mr. LOEBSACK, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mr. WAXMAN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. WYNN, Mr. YARMUTH, and Mr. LANGEVIN):

H.R. 2333. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to expedite the prompt return of the remains of deceased members of the Armed Forces to their loved ones for burial; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. UDALL of Colorado (for himself and Mrs. MUSGRAVE):

H.R. 2334. A bill to designate as wilderness certain land within the Rocky Mountain National Park and to adjust the boundaries of the Indian Peaks Wilderness and the Arapaho National Recreation Area of the Arapaho National Forest in the State of Colorado; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mrs. WILSON of New Mexico:

H.R. 2335. A bill to prohibit price gouging in the sale of gasoline, diesel fuel, crude oil, and home heating oil, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida (for himself, Mr. MACK, Mr. CRENSHAW, Mr. ORTIZ, Mr. BUCHANAN, Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida, Mr. REYES, Mr. PUTNAM, Mr. MCINTYRE, Mr. EHLERS, Mr. MILLER of Florida, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Mr. PICKERING, Mr. YOUNG of Florida, Mr. ETHERIDGE, Mr. MAHONEY of Florida, Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Mr. FEENEY, Mr. KLEIN of Florida, Mr. KELLER, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Mr. STEARNS, Mr. LAMPSON, Mr. BOUSTANY, Mr. TAYLOR, Mr. WICKER, Mr. JONES of North Carolina, Mr. KING of New York, Mr. BRADY of Texas, Mr. JEFFERSON, Mr. FORTUÑO, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mr. BOYD of Florida, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Mr. MEEK of Florida, and Mr. BONNER):

H. Res. 402. A resolution supporting the goals and ideals of National Hurricane Preparedness Week; to the Committee on Science and Technology.

By Mr. BILIRAKIS (for himself, Mrs. MALONEY of New York, Mr. SPACE, and Mr. SARBANES):

H. Res. 405. A resolution expressing the strong support of the House of Representatives for implementation of the July 8, 2006, United Nations-brokered agreement between President of the Republic of Cyprus Tassos Papadopoulos and Turkish Cypriot leader Mehmet Ali Talat relating to the reunification of Cyprus; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Ms. HIRONO (for herself, Mr. ABERCROMBIE, Mr. ALTMIRE, Mr. ANDREWS, Ms. BALDWIN, Ms. BEAN, Mr. BECERRA, Ms. BERKLEY, Mr. BERMAN, Mrs. BIGGERT, Mrs. BONO, Mr. BOSWELL, Mrs. BOYDA of Kansas, Mr. BRALEY of Iowa, Mrs. CAPPS, Ms. CARSON, Ms. CASTOR, Mrs. CHRISTENSEN, Ms. CLARKE, Mr. COHEN, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. CROWLEY, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Mr. DELAHUNT, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. DINGELL, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. ELLSWORTH, Ms. ESHOO, Mr. ETHERIDGE, Mr. FARR, Mr. FILNER, Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. HARE, Ms. HARMAN, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Mr. HINOJOSA, Mr. HINCHEY, Mr. HODES, Mr. HOLT, Mr. HONDA, Ms. HOOLEY, Mr. HOYER, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. KAGEN, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. KILDEE, Ms. KILPATRICK, Mr. KLEIN of Florida, Mr. LANTOS, Ms. LEE, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Mr. LOEBSACK, Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California, Mrs. LOWEY, Mr. MAHONEY of

Florida, Mrs. MALONEY of New York, Ms. MATSUI, Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York, Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota, Mr. MCDERMOTT, Mr. MICA, Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California, Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin, Mr. MORAN of Virginia, Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut, Mr. PATRICK MURPHY of Pennsylvania, Mr. NADLER, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Ms. NORTON, Mr. OBERSTAR, Mr. OLVER, Mr. ORTIZ, Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. PAYNE, Ms. PELOSI, Mr. PERLMUTTER, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. REYES, Mr. ROTHMAN, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Mr. RUSH, Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California, Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California, Mr. SARBANES, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Mr. SIRES, Mr. SKELTON, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Ms. SOLIS, Mr. STARK, Ms. SUTTON, Mrs. TAUSCHER, Mr. TOWNS, Mr. UDALL of Colorado, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. WALZ of Minnesota, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Ms. WATERS, Ms. WATSON, Mr. WELCH of Vermont, Ms. WOOLSEY, Mr. WU, and Mr. YARMUTH):

H. Res. 406. A resolution celebrating the accomplishments of title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, also known as the Patsy Takemoto Mink Equal Opportunity in Education Act, and recognizing the need to continue pursuing the goal of educational opportunities for women and girls; to the Committee on Education and Labor.

By Mrs. MALONEY of New York (for herself, Mr. BILIRAKIS, and Mr. SPACE):

H. Res. 407. A resolution expressing the strong support of the House of Representatives for the positive actions by the Government of the Republic of Cyprus aimed at opening additional crossing points along the cease-fire line, thereby contributing to efforts for the reunification of the island; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. WELCH of Vermont:

H. Res. 408. A resolution recognizing and honoring the Cathedral Square Corporation on its 30th anniversary; to the Committee on Financial Services.

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS TO PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions as follows:

H.R. 36: Mr. SHULER.

H.R. 37: Mr. SHULER.

H.R. 67: Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida, Mr. DOYLE, Mr. ELLISON, Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York, Ms. SUTTON, Mr. WALZ of Minnesota, Mr. DEFAZIO, and Mr. COBLE.

H.R. 78: Mr. BOOZMAN.

H.R. 111: Mr. RODRIGUEZ, Mrs. LOWEY, Mr. MILLER of North Carolina, Mr. CANNON, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. CARTER, and Mr. WALBERG.

H.R. 154: Mr. GRIJALVA and Mr. HOLT.

H.R. 197: Mrs. CUBIN, Mr. OLVER, Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California, Mr. LOEBSACK, and Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California.

H.R. 370: Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee.

H.R. 406: Mr. FARR, Mr. BERMAN, and Mr. SNYDER.

H.R. 451: Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, Mr. MEEKS of New York, and Mr. UDALL of New Mexico.

H.R. 503: Mr. KLINE of Minnesota, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, and Mr. PASCRELL.

H.R. 506: Mr. WALSH OF NEW YORK.

H.R. 507: Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. PORTER, Mr. HALL of New York, Mr. PLATTS, Mr. ALTMIRE, Mr. WAXMAN, Mr. WALSH of New York, and Mr. LARSEN of Washington.

H.R. 522: Mr. BISHOP of Georgia.

H.R. 524: Mr. YARMUTH.

H.R. 549: Mr. BAKER.

H.R. 550: Mr. WALBERG, Ms. HARMAN, Ms. SCHWARTZ, Mr. DUNCAN, Mr. SMITH of Texas, Mr. MICHAUD, Mr. LOBIONDO, Mr. BECERRA, Mr. INGLIS of South Carolina, Mr. WELDON of Florida, and Mr. ISRAEL.

H.R. 583: Mr. WALSH of New York, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. CLAY, Mr. SHULER, and Mr. DICKS.

H.R. 620: Mr. HIGGINS.

H.R. 698: Mr. WAMP.

H.R. 741: Mr. TOWNS.

H.R. 782: Mr. BISHOP of New York, Mr. ADERHOLT, and Mr. CHABOT.

H.R. 829: Mr. UDALL of New Mexico and Mr. FILNER.

H.R. 897: Mr. LOEBSACK.

H.R. 926: Mr. WALBERG and Mr. KUHL of New York.

H.R. 969: Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin, Mr. NADLER, and Mr. EMANUEL.

H.R. 971: Mr. ELLSWORTH, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Mr. JEFFERSON, Mr. RAMSTAD, Mr. CARTER, Mr. SIMPSON, Mr. CHANDLER, and Mr. MICHAUD.

H.R. 1023: Mr. MORAN of Virginia, Mr. PICKERING, Mr. HOBSON, Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey, Mr. HOEKSTRA, Mrs. MUSGRAVE, Mr. SHAYS, Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California, Mr. PLATTS, and Ms. WATSON.

H.R. 1042: Mr. COLE of Oklahoma, Mr. WELDON of Florida, Mr. CAMPBELL of California, Mr. PEARCE, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. PITTS, Mr. PENCE, Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. WALBERG, Mr. AKIN, Mr. FORTUÑO, Mr. FEENEY, Mr. CARTER, Mr. MARCHANT, and Mr. SMITH of Nebraska.

H.R. 1064: Mr. KAGEN, Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts, Mr. TANNER, Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. PLATTS, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. ELLSWORTH, and Mr. RAHALL.

H.R. 1072: Mr. BISHOP of Georgia and Mr. SCOTT of Virginia.

H.R. 1078: Mr. SCOTT of Virginia.

H.R. 1108: Mr. SARBANES and Mr. POMEROY.

H.R. 1142: Mr. SPACE, Mr. PASTOR, Mr. SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee, Mr. KILDEE, Mr. CLAY, Mr. LYNCH, Mr. MCINTYRE, Mr. MORAN of Virginia, Mr. MARSHALL, Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California, and Mrs. TAUSCHER.

H.R. 1154: Mr. LAMPSON, Ms. FALLIN, Mr. ISRAEL, Mr. LANGEVIN, and Mr. CUMMINGS.

H.R. 1192: Mr. GALLEGLY and Mr. SCOTT of Virginia.

H.R. 1225: Mr. MCDERMOTT and Mr. JEFFERSON.

H.R. 1232: Mr. TOWNS.

H.R. 1236: Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida, Mr. ELLSWORTH, Mr. ROTHMAN, and Mr. RAHALL.

H.R. 1239: Mrs. CHRISTENSEN and Ms. SCHAKOWSKY.

H.R. 1247: Ms. BERKLEY.

H.R. 1261: Mr. SMITH of Texas.

H.R. 1264: Mrs. CAPITO.

H.R. 1283: Mr. SHAYS.

H.R. 1293: Mr. PLATTS, Mr. CAMPBELL of California, Mr. TOWNS, Mr. MCCAUL of Texas, and Mr. MICA.

H.R. 1304: Mr. DUNCAN, Mr. HILL, Mr. HAYES, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mr. GOODE, and Mr. MANZULLO.

H.R. 1330: Mr. NADLER.

H.R. 1343: Mr. SPRATT, Mr. WALSH of New York, Mr. HALL of New York, Mr. GORDON, Ms. ESHOO, Mr. PERLMUTTER, Mrs. EMERSON, Mr. SHERMAN, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Mr. LOEBSACK, Mr. HODES, and Mr. CONAWAY.

H.R. 1354: Ms. KILPATRICK and Mr. PRICE of North Carolina.

H.R. 1369: Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas.

H.R. 1385: Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. MCGOVERN, and Mrs. MALONEY of New York.

H.R. 1386: Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York, Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California, Mr. WALZ of Minnesota, and Mr. DOGGETT.

H.R. 1391: Mrs. CHRISTENSEN.

H.R. 1399: Mr. HERGER, Mr. GARY G. MILLER of California, and Mr. CARNEY.

H.R. 1420: Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota, Mr. SHERMAN, Mr. NADLER, Mr. ELLISON, and Mr. DELAHUNT.

H.R. 1439: Ms. CLARKE and Mr. WALBERG.

H.R. 1461: Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas.

H.R. 1512: Mr. ISSA, Mr. FILNER, Mr. SPACE, Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California, Mr. GONZALEZ, Mr. MCNERNEY, Mr. CLEAVER, and Ms. SLAUGHTER.

H.R. 1532: Mr. HINOJOSA, Mr. PLATTS, and Mr. GRIJALVA.

H.R. 1537: Mrs. JONES of Ohio.

H.R. 1561: Mr. GRIJALVA and Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California.

H.R. 1600: Ms. NORTON, Mr. INSLEE, and Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas.

H.R. 1618: Mr. KIRK.

H.R. 1623: Mr. BISHOP of New York.

H.R. 1627: Mr. WELDON of Florida.

H.R. 1636: Mr. PUTNAM.

H.R. 1645: Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mrs. LOWEY, and Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York.

H.R. 1647: Mr. WELCH of Vermont, Mrs. BIGGERT, Mr. LOEBSACK, Mr. BOSWELL, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. ENGEL, and Mr. TERRY.

H.R. 1655: Ms. MATSUI and Mr. DOYLE.

H.R. 1673: Mr. CLAY.

H.R. 1688: Mr. TOWNS, Mr. MEEKS of New York, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Ms. KILPATRICK, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, and Ms. CARSON.

H.R. 1705: Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. LOEBSACK, and Mr. HODES.

H.R. 1732: Mr. SOUDER.

H.R. 1735: Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida and Mr. MICA.

H.R. 1756: Mr. CRAMER and Mr. WELDON of Florida.

H.R. 1774: Mr. CAMP of Michigan, Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania, and Mr. VAN HOLLEN.

H.R. 1776: Mr. SIRES, Mr. SHERMAN, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. PASCRELL, and Mr. KANJORSKI.

H.R. 1819: Ms. SCHAKOWSKY.

H.R. 1820: Mr. SIRES, Ms. DEGETTE, Ms. BALDWIN, and Mr. PATRICK MURPHY of Pennsylvania.

H.R. 1823: Mr. RAHALL and Mr. WILSON of South Carolina.

H.R. 1851: Mr. DELAHUNT and Mr. PAYNE.

H.R. 1853: Mr. GONZALEZ, Mr. DOGGETT, and Mr. BURTON of Indiana.

H.R. 1881: Mr. REYES, Mr. MCINTYRE, and Mr. EDWARDS.

H.R. 1932: Mr. WYNN and Mr. JINDAL.

H.R. 1947: Mr. ROTHMAN.

H.R. 1954: Mr. MOORE of Kansas and Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota.

H.R. 1957: Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. BERMAN, Mr. MCNULTY, and Mr. BISHOP of New York.

H.R. 1965: Mr. SHIMKUS, Mr. BOSWELL, Mr. PAUL, Mr. GORDON, Mr. HIGGINS, Mr. MCCAUL of Texas, and Mr. KIND.

H.R. 1975: Mr. WYNN.

H.R. 1992: Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. HIGGINS, Mr. CHANDLER, Ms. KILPATRICK, and Mr. KAGEN.

H.R. 2017: Mr. RAHALL and Ms. MATSUI.

H.R. 2036: Mr. VAN HOLLEN and Mr. ROHRABACHER.

H.R. 2038: Mr. COSTA and Mr. CARDOZA.

H.R. 2042: Mr. THOMPSON of California.

H.R. 2060: Mr. RAHALL, Mr. CARDOZA, Mr. MCCAUL of Texas, Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California, Ms. MATSUI, Mr. GILLMOR, Mr. KIND, Mr. KUCINICH, and Mr. SIRES.

H.R. 2084: Mr. SENSENBRENNER, Mr. MARCHANT, and Mr. WALBERG.

H.R. 2086: Mr. ELLSWORTH.

H.R. 2095: Mr. ABERCROMBIE, Mr. NADLER, Mr. CARNEY, Mr. JACKSON of Illinois, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. DOYLE, Mr. FILNER, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. ANDREWS, Mr. HIGGINS, Mr. CAPUANO, Mr. RAHALL, and Mrs. NAPOLITANO.

H.R. 2104: Mr. MCHUGH, Mr. SOUDER, Mr. JONES of North Carolina, and Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee.

H.R. 2108: Mr. KAGEN, Mr. MCNULTY, Mr. BERMAN, and Mr. WEXLER.

H.R. 2109: Mr. POE.

H.R. 2116: Mr. SPACE, Mr. TIBERI, Mr. SHUSTER, and Mr. RAMSTAD.

H.R. 2125: Mr. REHBERG.

H.R. 2126: Ms. HIRONO.

H.R. 2140: Mr. SESSIONS.

H.R. 2144: Mr. BISHOP of New York.

H.R. 2163: Mr. PENCE and Mr. JACKSON of Illinois.

H.R. 2183: Mr. MARSHALL.

H.R. 2187: Mr. BAKER and Mr. JINDAL.

H.R. 2189: Mr. BOSWELL.

H.R. 2210: Mr. STARK, Mr. REYES, Mr. MCHUGH, Mr. KILDEE, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. CLAY, Mr. TERRY, and Mr. ETHERIDGE.

H.R. 2214: Mr. NADLER and Mr. DAVIS of Illinois.

H.R. 2225: Ms. HARMAN.

H.R. 2266: Ms. SCHAKOWSKY.

H.R. 2287: Mr. COHEN, Mr. BOSWELL, Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania, Mr. SHAYS, Mr. PUTNAM, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mrs. EMERSON, and Mr. DENT.

H.R. 2292: Mr. KUCINICH, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Mr. DEFAZIO, Mr. HILL, and Ms. BERKLEY.

H.R. 2295: Ms. ESHOO, Mr. CARNEY, Mr. BOOZMAN, and Mr. HAYES.

H.R. 2302: Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee.

H.R. 2303: Mr. HILL and Mr. BOOZMAN.

H. J. Res. 6: Mr. KNOLLENBERG.

H. Con. Res. 21: Mr. BISHOP of Georgia.

H. Con. Res. 40: Mr. BOOZMAN.

H. Con. Res. 75: Mr. LOEBSACK.

H. Con. Res. 77: Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida.

H. Con. Res. 108: Mr. JOHNSON of Illinois.

H. Con. Res. 115: Mr. MCNULTY.

H. Con. Res. 135: Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania.

H. Con. Res. 142: Ms. SCHAKOWSKY.

H. Res. 111: Mr. SMITH of New Jersey.

H. Res. 123: Mr. PAYNE.

H. Res. 128: Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York and Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas.

H. Res. 146: Mr. LOEBSACK.

H. Res. 226: Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida.

H. Res. 231: Mr. ROSKAM, Mr. MACK, Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee, and Mr. BLUNT.

H. Res. 233: Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, and Mr. CROWLEY.

H. Res. 235: Ms. BERKLEY, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Mr. MCCOTTER, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, and Mr. ROTHMAN.

H. Res. 258: Ms. DELAURO.

H. Res. 295: Mr. FORTUÑO, Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA, Ms. BORDALLO, Mr. CROWLEY, Mr. MCCAUL of Texas, Mrs. MALONEY of New York, and Mr. MEEKS of New York.

H. Res. 341: Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania.

H. Res. 343: Mr. SESSIONS.

H. Res. 351: Mr. JONES of North Carolina and Mrs. BLACKBURN.

H. Res. 362: Mr. BAKER, Mr. JINDAL, Mr. MELANCON, Mr. BOUSTANY, Mr. MCCRERY, Mr. JEFFERSON, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. TOWNS, Mr. SHULER, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Ms. CARSON, and Mr. KUHL of New York.

H. Res. 386: Ms. BORDALLO.

AMENDMENTS

Under clause 8 of rule XVIII, proposed amendments were submitted as follows:

H.R. 1427

OFFERED BY: MS. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON OF TEXAS

AMENDMENT NO. 2: Page 140, line 3, before the semicolon insert the following: ''and a program of financial literacy and education to promote an understanding of consumer, economic, and personal finance issues and concepts, including saving for retirement, managing credit, long-term care, and estate planning and education on predatory lending, identity theft, and financial abuse schemes, that is approved by the Director''.