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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m.

Chaplain Marc Unger, California State Military Reserve, attached to the 1–184th Infantry, California Army National Guard, Exeter, California, offered the following prayer:

O God, You have been our refuge in every generation. I thank You, Lord, for granting truths self-evident, and endowing us, our Creator, with certain unalienable rights: Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, our freedom.

Help this body, O Lord, to remember that our freedom was bought with a price, the blood of our heroes. And defense of our freedom comes at the same terrible price.

Grant the Members of this body: Wisdom as they legislate; freedom from partisan politics; unity, not division; and remembrance that they serve ''of the people, by the people, and for the people'' under God.

Help each Representative, Lord, to represent the people, not politics; morality, not mores; sacrifice, not self-interest; right, not flight; defense, not defeat.

Lord, please comfort the families of our fallen. Grant the troops defending our precious freedoms would: Live under the protection of the Most High, be Your servant for good, and be granted overwhelming victory in the global war on terror.

For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.

Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. ALTMIRE) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. ALTMIRE 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.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. 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.

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 bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 2080. An act to amend the District of Columbia Home Rule Act to conform the District charter to revisions made by the Council of the District of Columbia relating to public education.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed bills of the following titles in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 33. An act to redesignate the Office for Vocational and Adult Education as the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education.

S. 375. An act to waive application of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act to a specific parcel of real property transferred by the United States to 2 Indian tribes in the State of Oregon, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that pursuant to the provisions of S. Res. 105 (adopted April 13, 1989), as amended by S. Res. 149 (adopted October 5, 1993), as amended by Public Law 105–275 (adopted October 21, 1998), further amended by S. Res. 75 (adopted March 25, 1999), amended by S. Res. 383 (adopted October 27, 2000), and amended by S. Res. 355 (adopted November 13, 2002), and further amended by S. Res. 480 (adopted November 20, 2004), the Chair, on behalf of the Majority Leader, announces the appointment of the following Senators to serve as members of the Senate National Security Working Group for the One Hundred Tenth Congress:

The Senator from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN) (Democratic Co-Chairman).

The Senator from Delaware (Mr. BIDEN) (Democratic Co-Chairman).

The Senator from New Jersey (Mr. LAUTENBERG) (Democratic Co-Chairman).

The Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KENNEDY).

The Senator from North Dakota (Mr. DORGAN).

The Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN).

The Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON).

The Senator from Connecticut (Mr. LIEBERMAN).

The Senator from West Virginia (Mr. BYRD) (Majority Administrative Co-Chairman).

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO BOARD OF VISITORS TO UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 4355(a), the Chair appoints the following Members of the House to the Board of Visitors to the United States Military Academy:

Mr. HINCHEY, New York
Mr. HALL, New York
Mr. MCHUGH, New York
Mr. TIAHRT, Kansas

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

IT'S TIME TO STOP PRICE GOUGING BY BIG OIL

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Madam Speaker, while Memorial Day is the traditional beginning of the summer vacation and travel season for all Americans, it's going to

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be a gloomy day across America. No, I'm not a weather forecaster. It's going to be a gloomy day because of record extortionate and manipulated prices at the pump. Guess what? Crude oil prices are down over a year ago, but somehow gas is up 50 cents a gallon at the pump. How is that? The refineries are making four times, four times their normal margin on refining. Why is that? They said, oh, well, gosh, we couldn't have known people were going to start buying gas around Memorial Day. We had to close down some of the refineries to maintain them and to clean them. Does Exxon translate into Enron? Remember when Enron was doing the same thing in California? High demand, shut down the generating plants. Exxon, high demand, shut down the refineries.

It's time to stop the price gouging by Big Oil. Break them up. They aren't competitive, they're colluding.

LEADERSHIP IS NOT AS IT APPEARS, IT'S AS IT PERFORMS

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

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, you know, leadership is not as it appears; leadership is as it performs. And what the American people want to see is us performing and solving problems for them, addressing the issues that affect them, not window dressing. And window dressing is a lot of what we've done since the Democrats took control of the Chamber, brought forward their ''Six for '06,'' and by the way, not one single bill has been signed into law.

A few other things. We've named a lot of post offices. Today we are going to have a supposed price-gouging bill. But you know, the harder thing would be to really address production, exploration, distribution, innovation in the oil and energy industry to make certain that we have a sustainable supply.

And by the way, it's been 106 days since the President sent us a request for emergency spending, and finally we are going to get a bill that can be signed into law.

Leadership is not as it appears, it is as it performs. Let's solve problems for the American people.

CHANGING THE WAY CONGRESS DOES BUSINESS

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

Mr. ALTMIRE. Mr. Speaker, Democrats continue to demonstrate that they are changing the way Congress does business. We reach across the aisle to pass bipartisan legislation that puts the American people first. Just last week Republicans and Democrats came together to provide a much-deserved pay increase for our troops serving bravely overseas. We joined together to fight crime by adding 50,000 cops to the street, and we passed an affordable housing bill that keeps the people of the gulf coast on the road to recovering after Hurricane Katrina.

We also accomplished something last week that 3 of the last 5 years Congress was unable to do: come to an agreement on a sensible budget with the Senate. It is a budget that prioritizes our Nation's veterans and achieves balance without raising a penny of taxes.

THE DEMOCRATS' FAILURE TO GOVERN

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

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, does it not seem ironic that the week in which we are scheduled to vote on a lobbying and ethics reform bill, that I might add is largely a carbon copy of a Republican bill from last year, we are faced with the behavior of a high-ranking Member of the Democrat leadership who made a threatening comment to another Member?

What are the American people supposed to make of the failure of the majority to keep their promises? Instead of delivering real reform, the Democrats march in lockstep behind one of their own, despite this clear violation of House ethics rules. Not only has the majority failed to deliver on their agenda, they have shown they will tolerate behavior in their ranks which is antithetical to their so-called reform efforts. In so doing, they have forfeited their credibility.

IN SUPPORT OF H.R. 1853

(Ms. WATSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge my colleagues to join me in support of H.R. 1853, the Jose Medina Veterans Affairs Police Training Act.

Mr. Speaker, more than 1.5 million U.S. troops have served in Iraq and Afghanistan, and according to an Army study, 20 percent are showing signs of post-traumatic stress syndrome. But surprisingly, most VA police officers do not receive any training on how to deal with patients suffering from mental illness. That is why we must prepare VA law enforcement officers to deal with the tens of thousands of veterans returning from Iraq that are expected to utilize VA medical centers for mental health services.

H.R. 1853, the Jose Medina Veterans Affairs Police Training Act, will ensure that our veterans are treated with dignity and respect when they seek treatment at VA facilities. Veterans' mental health needs should be one of this Congress' top priorities, and I urge your support.

IT'S STILL AN AMNESTY DEAL

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

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, ''amnesty'' is a trigger word for most Americans. While we as a people disagree on many issues, most Americans oppose the thought of legalization of illegal conduct; in other words, amnesty.

So the special-interest groups and the profiteers from plantation labor have been careful not to call the new, inclusive immigration proposal amnesty. But that's exactly what it is. It legalizes the illegals that are in America, some 12- to 20 million. All they need to do is a few things, including pay a fee, or as I see it, a government kickback, and they get to stay in America. But supporters of this proposal still refuse to accept the obvious: It's amnesty, or pardon for illegal conduct.

If somebody trespasses on your land, when they are caught they usually have to pay a fine, but they also must get off your property. If they pay the fine and are allowed to continue to stay on your property, it is amnesty. This is similar to what the special-interest groups are trying to repackage and sell to the American public and even illegal immigrants. But it seems to me these groups are selling out America. We shall see what the American public think.

And that's just the way it is.

BUSH THREATENS VETO OF STRONG BIPARTISAN DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION BILL

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

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, President Bush says he supports our troops, but his actions last week refute those claims, and his actions speak louder than his words.

Last Thursday, this House voted overwhelmingly, by 397–27, to support a defense authorization bill that gives our troops a much-deserved 3.5 percent raise, a lot less than the contractors from Halliburton are getting, contractors that the President has farmed out much of the war in Iraq to, but still a 3.5 percent raise.

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Incredibly, the President has threatened to veto the bill. Two of the reasons he gave for his opposition are the pay raise and benefits to survivors. By threatening to veto this bill, how exactly is our President supporting our troops? Well, he is not.

Over the last 5 years, the President has asked much of our military. Extended deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan have strained our Active military and National Guard and their families. This Congress overwhelmingly said we should reward our troops. If the President really wants to support our troops, he will sign the bill.

STOPPING TERRORISM OVERSEAS

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, on Sunday, a homicide bomber in Gardez, Afghanistan, mass-murdered 14 civilians and injured 36 others, including five members of the 218th brigade of the South Carolina National Guard. This affects me personally, as I was a member of the 218th for over 20 years. In July 2000, we trained together in the Mojave Desert at Fort Irwin to face this very evil, and now our courageous troops are stopping terrorists overseas.

Chuck Crumbo of The State newspaper reported the suicide bomber followed the Guard convoy and detonated himself in the midst of innocent women and children on a crowded street. This act of cowardice confirms why we must stop the terrorists overseas or they will return to America. In the past 96 hours, there was an attack in Baghdad, terrorists acted in Lebanon, and a shopping mall was blown up in Turkey.

I know my comrades, ably led by General Bob Livingston, are ready to face al Qaeda's boast of Afghanistan and Iraq as the central front in the global war on terrorism. This is how we can best protect American families. I have never been prouder of the Guard's service.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September 11.

HONORING AND REWARDING OUR TROOPS FOR THEIR VALOR AND SACRIFICE

(Mr. BISHOP of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BISHOP of New York. Mr. Speaker, last week the White House recommended a veto of the defense authorization bill and said Congress wants to pay our troops too much for defending America. It is unconscionable to suggest our troops aren't worth a half percent more in pay, while many of their families scrape by on food stamps or pay for their own body armor.

Paying our troops what they deserve should go hand in hand with relieving them of taxes they don't deserve. That is why the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. DAVIS) and I introduced a bill last week to eliminate Federal taxation of student loan reimbursements to military personnel and Federal civilian employees.

Our bill, H.R. 2363, eliminates this tax and creates an incentive to help our Armed Forces compete with private sector recruitment and retention by lowering the soaring debt faced by college graduates.

Mr. Speaker, as we salute our troops and honor our fallen this Memorial Day, let's give them the pay raise they deserve.

EMPHASIZING PREVENTIVE CARE IN MEDICARE PROGRAM

(Mrs. CAPITO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight the importance of preventive care in the Medicare program.

As we all know, the Medicare Modernization Act of 2003 made many important and much-needed changes to the Medicare program. The creation of the Medicare prescription drug benefit was a critically important modernization of the program and has been especially successful in my home State of West Virginia, with 287,000 beneficiaries.

But the prescription drug benefit is just one component of the overall changes in Medicare. If we can encourage more seniors to actually use the preventive benefits, we can help them prevent more costly procedures and longer stays in the hospital.

That is why the ''Welcome to Medicare'' screening is so vitally important. Many of the elements that seniors face today can be effectively managed with prescription medicine and regular visits to their physicians. However, disease management is only effective if we catch the disease early.

I would like to encourage my colleagues to educate their constituents about these important modernizations to the Medicare program so we can all better serve our senior citizens.

DEMOCRATS WORKING TO ESTABLISH A NEW, SMART AND FAIR ENERGY POLICY

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

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. Speaker, as Americans across the country begin planning their summer vacations, one major constraint they will have to face is the severely high price of gas. We are once again seeing record gas prices this Memorial Day, making the prospect of travel daunting for many families. Why is this trend continuing? For 6 years, President Bush and the Republican Congress failed to enact a comprehensive energy strategy to provide relief from these skyrocketing costs.

This Democratic Congress is ready to act and move our Nation in a new direction on energy. Already we have voted to roll back billions of dollars in subsidies to Big Oil and instead reinvest those funds in renewable energy. And now this week we will take up the issue of price gouging by the oil industry. We have seen the first quarter reports. The oil companies are making record profits, and it is time they were held accountable.

Mr. Speaker, this Democratic Congress will work hard to pass legislation that can establish a new, smart, and fair energy policy for the American people.

HONORING VERA WERNER ON HER 105TH BIRTHDAY

(Mrs. BACHMANN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. BACHMANN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a great American and a woman from my district, Mrs. Vera Werner, on the occasion of her 105th birthday. It is a goal to which we all aspire but very few of us ever achieve.

Vera was born in 1902 in Melrose, Minnesota, on May 31, a great day. She is an unassuming Minnesotan, Mr. Speaker. She married, and 2 years later she moved to the big city of St. Cloud, Minnesota. During her time there, she touched many people's lives. Like so many Americans, she had numerous friends. She was on a bowling league for 40 years and she worked in the local department store.

But, Mr. Speaker, Vera Werner accomplished the most important work of any American: She was a mother to four children, she was a grandmother to 21, a great-grandmother to more than 40, and she has so many great-great-grandchildren that people can't keep count. There is no more important function as an American, Mr. Speaker, than to be a good mother or a good father.

Today, Vera, our Nation salutes you, and we wish you happy 105th birthday.

HOW EXACTLY IS PRESIDENT SUPPORTING OUR TROOPS WHEN HE THREATENS A VETO OF DOD PAY INCREASE?

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

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, this House on a bipartisan basis overwhelmingly supported our troops last week by giving them a 3.5 percent pay raise over the next year. What is our President's response? A threatened veto. In a statement opposing the higher pay raise, the administration noted that the President's proposal, in their opinion, provided a good quality of life for servicemembers and families.

Mr. President, apparently you have not read the 2004 Kaiser Family Foundation report that indicates that over one in five military families rely on food stamps or WIC for Federal aid. This is simply unacceptable.

The best way we can send a message to our troops that we support the grueling work that they do on a daily basis is by showing it, by putting more money in their pockets so they can better provide for their families.

The bottom line is that men and women fighting in Iraq or Afghanistan should not have to supplement their income through living on food stamps or WIC. We encourage the President to reconsider the veto threat and to support the entire pay raise.

FINDING MIDDLE GROUND ON IMMIGRATION REFORM

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

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, last year, the President of the United States

called on Congress to find a rational middle ground between amnesty and mass deportation in the debate over immigration reform. Then, as now, the Senate is moving legislation that would respond to the President's call by simply granting amnesty to millions of illegal immigrants.

But amnesty is not the middle ground. The true middle ground of this national debate would put border security first; reject amnesty and require that all illegal immigrants leave the country and apply outside the United States for the legal right to live and work here; create a new center built on the private sector that could make that an orderly process; temporary workers returning to America would learn English; and employers hiring illegals would face serious penalties.

That is the true rational middle ground, and after the Senate is done with its work, I hope it is the middle ground that we find in this Chamber on behalf of the American people.

MAKING AMERICA LESS DEPENDENT ON FOREIGN OIL

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

Mr. KAGEN. Mr. Speaker, for too long our Nation has been dependent on foreign oil. Today all of our constituents and all Americans are feeling that lack of independence at the pump. It is time for this Congress to enact realistic and effective energy legislation that will help America become energy independent.

We must begin to invest in the resources we have right here at home. We must work together to create solutions to rely on our own ingenuity rather than the unreliable sources of foreign energy. Some of these solutions begin right on the farm, like in my own district in northeast Wisconsin. Biodiesel, methane digesters, cellulosic ethanol, all of these measures will help us become independent once again. It begins with a $5 million investment in our own family farms, the energy independent family farm program. This provision will be included in the farm bill, and I urge all my colleagues to support it, along with the other positive measures within it.

By investing and creating energy independence on the farm, we will take the first step in becoming less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

PRESIDENT PROPOSING TOO LITTLE TOO LATE

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, for 6 years President Bush and Republican Congresses ignored the record gas prices that seemed to pop up every year just before Memorial Day. Once again this year, American consumers are paying for their inaction.

Finally, last week President Bush announced an executive order addressing this growing problem. Unfortunately, his plan doesn't call for any action until the weeks before he leaves office in 2009, and this is far too little and years too late.

Since taking control of Congress this year, Democrats have already passed measures to reduce the price of gas in this country and invest in renewable energy. We are dedicated to curbing our Nation's addiction to foreign oil and investing in our resources in the Midwest, instead of buying more from the Middle East.

Mr. Speaker, Democrats refuse to stand idly by while gas prices rise across the country. This week we will fight price gouging, something that the past Republican Congresses were unwilling to do.

American consumers need help now, not in 2009, and this new Democratic Congress is going to deliver.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ANDREWS). 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.

FEDERAL PRICE GOUGING PREVENTION ACT

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1252) to protect consumers from price-gouging of gasoline and other fuels, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1252

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 ''Federal Price Gouging Prevention Act''.

SEC. 2. UNCONSCIONABLE PRICING OF GASOLINE AND OTHER PETROLEUM DISTILLATES DURING EMERGENCIES.

(a) UNCONSCIONABLE PRICING.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—It shall be unlawful for any person to sell, at wholesale or at retail in an area and during a period of an energy emergency, gasoline or any other petroleum distillate covered by a proclamation issued under paragraph (2) at a price that—

(A) is unconscionably excessive; and

(B) indicates the seller is taking unfair advantage of the circumstances related to an energy emergency to increase prices unreasonably.

(2) ENERGY EMERGENCY PROCLAMATION.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The President may issue an energy emergency proclamation for any area within the jurisdiction of the United States, during which the prohibition in paragraph (1) shall apply. The proclamation shall state the geographic area covered, the gasoline or other petroleum distillate covered, and the time period that such proclamation shall be in effect.

(B) DURATION.—The proclamation—

(i) may not apply for a period of more than 30 consecutive days, but may be renewed for such consecutive periods, each not to exceed 30 days, as the President determines appropriate; and

(ii) may include a period of time not to exceed 1 week preceding a reasonably foreseeable emergency.

(3) FACTORS CONSIDERED.—In determining whether a person has violated paragraph (1), there shall be taken into account, among other factors—

(A) whether the amount charged by such person for the applicable gasoline or other petroleum distillate at a particular location in an area covered by a proclamation issued under paragraph (2) during the period such proclamation is in effect—

(i) grossly exceeds the average price at which the applicable gasoline or other petroleum distillate was offered for sale by that person during the 30 days prior to such proclamation;

(ii) grossly exceeds the price at which the same or similar gasoline or other petroleum distillate was readily obtainable in the same area from other competing sellers during the same period;

(iii) reasonably reflected additional costs, not within the control of that person, that were paid, incurred, or reasonably anticipated by that person, or reflected additional risks taken by that person to produce, distribute, obtain, or sell such product under the circumstances; and

(iv) was substantially attributable to local, regional, national, or international market conditions; and

(B) whether the quantity of gasoline or other petroleum distillate the person produced, distributed, or sold in an area covered by a proclamation issued under paragraph (2) during a 30-day period following the issuance of such proclamation increased over the quantity that that person produced, distributed, or sold during the 30 days prior to such proclamation, taking into account usual seasonal demand variations.

(b) FALSE PRICING INFORMATION.—It shall be unlawful for any person to report to a Federal agency information related to the wholesale price of gasoline or other petroleum distillates with actual knowledge or knowledge fairly implied on the basis of objective circumstances that such information is false or misleading.

(c) DEFINITIONS.—As used in this section—

(1) the term ''wholesale'', with respect to sales of gasoline or other petroleum distillates, means either truckload or smaller sales of gasoline or petroleum distillates where title transfers at a product terminal or a refinery, and dealer tank wagon sales of gasoline or petroleum distillates priced on a delivered basis to retail outlets; and

(2) the term ''retail'', with respect to sales of gasoline or other petroleum distillates, includes all sales to end users such as motorists as well as all direct sales to other end users such as agriculture, industry, residential, and commercial consumers.

(d) CONSTRUCTION.—As described in this section, a sale of gasoline or other petroleum distillate does not include a transaction on a futures market.

SEC. 3. ENFORCEMENT BY THE FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION.

(a) ENFORCEMENT BY FTC.—A violation of section 2 shall be treated as a violation of a rule defining an unfair or deceptive act or practice prescribed under section 18(a)(1)(B) of the Federal Trade Commission Act (15 U.S.C. 57a(a)(1)(B)). The Federal Trade Commission shall enforce this Act in the same

manner, by the same means, and with the same jurisdiction as though all applicable terms and provisions of the Federal Trade Commission Act were incorporated into and made a part of this Act. In enforcing section 2(a) of this Act, the Commission shall give priority to enforcement actions concerning companies with total United States wholesale or retail sales of gasoline and other petroleum distillates in excess of $500,000,000 per year.

(b) CIVIL PENALTIES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding the penalties set forth under the Federal Trade Commission Act, any person who violates this Act with actual knowledge or knowledge fairly implied on the basis of objective circumstances shall be subject to the following penalties:

(A) PRICE GOUGING; UNJUST PROFITS.—Any person who violates section 2(a) shall be subject to—

(i) a fine of not more than 3 times the amount of profits gained by such person through such violation; or

(ii) a fine of not more than $3,000,000.

(B) FALSE INFORMATION.—Any person who violates section 2(b) shall be subject to a civil penalty of not more than $1,000,000.

(2) METHOD.—The penalties provided by paragraph (1) shall be obtained in the same manner as civil penalties obtained under section 5 of the Federal Trade Commission Act (15 U.S.C. 45).

(3) MULTIPLE OFFENSES; MITIGATING FACTORS.—In assessing the penalty provided by subsection (a)—

(A) each day of a continuing violation shall be considered a separate violation; and

(B) the court shall take into consideration, among other factors, the seriousness of the violation and the efforts of the person committing the violation to remedy the harm caused by the violation in a timely manner.

SEC. 4. CRIMINAL PENALTIES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—In addition to any penalty applicable under section 3, any person who violates section 2 shall be fined under title 18, United States Code—

(1) if a corporation, not to exceed $150,000,000; and

(2) if an individual not to exceed $2,000,000, or imprisoned for not more than 10 years, or both.

(b) ENFORCEMENT.—The criminal penalty provided by subsection (a) may be imposed only pursuant to a criminal action brought by the Attorney General or other officer of the Department of Justice.

SEC. 5. ENFORCEMENT AT RETAIL LEVEL BY STATE ATTORNEYS GENERAL.

(a) IN GENERAL.—A State, as parens patriae, may bring a civil action on behalf of its residents in an appropriate district court of the United States to enforce the provisions of section 2(a) of this Act, or to impose the civil penalties authorized by section 3(b)(1)(B), whenever the attorney general of the State has reason to believe that the interests of the residents of the State have been or are being threatened or adversely affected by a violation of this Act or a regulation under this Act, involving a retail sale.

(b) NOTICE.—The State shall serve written notice to the Federal Trade Commission of any civil action under subsection (a) prior to initiating such civil action. The notice shall include a copy of the complaint to be filed to initiate such civil action, except that if it is not feasible for the State to provide such prior notice, the State shall provide such notice immediately upon instituting such civil action.

(c) AUTHORITY TO INTERVENE.—Upon receiving the notice required by subsection (b), the Federal Trade Commission may intervene in such civil action and upon intervening—

(1) be heard on all matters arising in such civil action; and

(2) file petitions for appeal of a decision in such civil action.

(d) CONSTRUCTION.—For purposes of bringing any civil action under subsection (a), nothing in this section shall prevent the attorney general of a State from exercising the powers conferred on the attorney general by the laws of such State to conduct investigations or to administer oaths or affirmations or to compel the attendance of witnesses or the production of documentary and other evidence.

(e) VENUE; SERVICE OF PROCESS.—In a civil action brought under subsection (a)—

(1) the venue shall be a judicial district in which—

(A) the defendant operates;

(B) the defendant was authorized to do business; or

(C) the defendant in the civil action is found;

(2) process may be served without regard to the territorial limits of the district or of the State in which the civil action is instituted; and

(3) a person who participated with the defendant in an alleged violation that is being litigated in the civil action may be joined in the civil action without regard to the residence of the person.

(f) LIMITATION ON STATE ACTION WHILE FEDERAL ACTION IS PENDING.—If the Federal Trade Commission has instituted a civil action or an administrative action for violation of this Act, no State attorney general, or official or agency of a State, may bring an action under this subsection during the pendency of that action against any defendant named in the complaint of the Federal Trade Commission or the other agency for any violation of this Act alleged in the complaint.

(g) ENFORCEMENT OF STATE LAW.—Nothing contained in this section shall prohibit an authorized State official from proceeding in State court to enforce a civil or criminal statute of such State.

SEC. 6. LOW INCOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE.

Amounts collected in fines and penalties under section 3 of this Act shall be deposited in a separate fund in the treasury to be known as the Consumer Relief Trust Fund. To the extent provided for in advance in appropriations Acts, the fund shall be used to provide assistance under the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program administered by the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

SEC. 7. EFFECT ON OTHER LAWS.

(a) OTHER AUTHORITY OF FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION.—Nothing in this Act shall be construed to limit or affect in any way the Federal Trade Commission's authority to bring enforcement actions or take any other measure under the Federal Trade Commission Act (15 U.S.C. 41 et seq.) or any other provision of law.

(b) STATE LAW.—Nothing in this Act preempts any State law.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. RUSH) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BARTON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. RUSH. 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 gentleman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

□ 1030

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

Mr. Speaker, gasoline prices are now at record highs. The average price of gas is $3.19 nationwide, with my home State of Illinois having higher prices than any other at $3.46 a gallon. Now, rising gas prices are one thing, and I fully recognize the reality of global oil markets, the current state of our refinery capacity, and the basic laws of supply and demand. But the gouging of American consumers is another matter entirely, and the bill on the floor, H.R. 1252, the Federal Price Gouging Protection Act, ensures that American consumers are protected from companies that will prey on them during emergencies when they are most vulnerable.

I want to commend the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. STUPAK) for a fine piece of legislation that is both thoughtful and careful in its scope. On the one hand, the bill is tough and decisive. It gives the Federal Trade Commission the tools to crack down on and punish those companies that would price-gouge American consumers by unscrupulously taking advantage of unique energy shortages and unconscionably raising the price of gasoline on the American consumer.

On the other hand, the bill explicitly takes into account the totality of market forces, both domestic and international. H.R. 1252 preserves the ability of companies to mitigate against legitimate risks and raise prices as necessary. Simply put, the bill is carefully written such that if a company is found liable of price gouging under this act, then they are in fact price gouging. It is very difficult to argue that we are overreaching or too vague in this bill.

As chairman of the Subcommittee on Commerce, Trade, and Consumer Protection, I fully support Mr. STUPAK's bill and its expeditious treatment on the suspension calendar. It is important for the American people to know we are on the ball, and that this ball is moving quickly to address their concerns. I urge Members of the House to pass the legislation.

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

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to control the time of the gentleman from Texas.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. PENCE. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. KAGEN).

Mr. KAGEN. Mr. Speaker, yesterday in my hometown of Appleton, Wisconsin, the price for a gallon of gas hit

$3.45. Since President Bush assumed office, the price for gas has nearly doubled. Higher prices for gas punish all Americans, punish small businesses, students, senior citizens, farmers, and even our local, State and Federal Governments as well.

Everybody is asking, why? Why did the price at the pump go up even when the cost per barrel went down? The most likely answer is price gouging somewhere along the supply line, from the oil company to the refinery to the speculators in the options markets who buy and hold the oil for only a nanosecond.

People everywhere want answers, and here is what we can do. Today the House will consider the Federal Price Gouging Prevention Act. And along with Congressman STUPAK and Congressman RUSH and others, we will put a cop back on the block. What we need is effective and active oversight, not hide-and-seek politics.

Let's take this step together in the right direction. This bill defines what price gouging is. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 1252.

Mrs. BACHMANN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time for our side.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Minnesota?

There was no objection.

Mrs. BACHMANN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. BOUSTANY).

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to oppose this bill. Let's make no mistake about this. The last-minute changes don't improve this legislation. The revisions are simply figleaf changes to provide cover for oil patch Democratic Members who are being strong-armed into voting for this bill.

No matter how much you dress this up, this bill is still about price controls. We tried price controls in the 1970s, and they didn't work. It resulted in mass rationing, long lines at the pump, and consumer outrage. History is quite clear on this.

George Mason University economist Walter Williams has said: ''Politicians of both parties have rushed in to exploit public ignorance and emotion. But there's an important downside to these political attacks on producers.

''What about the next disaster? How much sense does it make for producers to make the extra effort to provide goods and services if they know they risk prosecution for charging what might be seen as 'unconscionable prices'?''

Mr. Williams is right.

The American public deserves better. Congress has the responsibility to pass a balanced, comprehensive energy program that uses innovative technology to explore and expand our domestic energy supply, to move us towards energy independence. The last thing we need to do is to turn back the clock to the failed energy policies of the 1970s. For those reasons, I urge my colleagues to oppose this bill.

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. COURTNEY).

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, I strongly support passage of the Price Gouging Prevention Act, and I commend Congressman STUPAK for his leadership on this issue.

In eastern Connecticut, where I come from, the price of gas has reached its highest level in history, $3.26 today, up 31 cents from a month ago, and more than $1 since February.

The Government Accountability Office reported on Tuesday that the increasing gasoline prices have cost consumers an extra $20 billion this year, and we are only in May. That is a tax on consumers. It is a tax on small businesses. It has a ripple effect all throughout our economy.

And this is not just about driving over Memorial Day weekend. This is about whether or not energy prices are going to cripple the ability of this economy to grow and thrive and prosper.

It is time to put accountability into the system. The Stupak bill is not price controls, it is a system to make sure that the price is a fair one and is justifiable according to market conditions. Those are the tools that we are giving to the Federal Trade Commission.

Mrs. BACHMANN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 30 seconds to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. BOUSTANY).

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Speaker, I just want to respond to that. We are dealing with a world energy market, a world energy market. This bill basically doesn't seem to understand that prices are set on world markets. Clearly what we need to do is understand that aspect of this to craft a meaningful energy policy.

That is why investment in technology to come up with a broad range of alternative energy sources is the appropriate way to approach this. We don't want to go back to the price controls of the 1970s.

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. KENNEDY).

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. Speaker, setting new records in the United States is generally associated with achievements and innovation.

Unfortunately, this week our Nation hit a new record that most consumers are not celebrating. Gasoline prices were reported to reach nationwide averages of $3.20 or higher.

It is not hard to understand these prices if you look at the Republican-controlled Congress' Energy Policy Act of 2005, which provided billions of dollars to the oil and gas companies while spending only pennies on renewable efforts for fuel that would allow us to get ourselves off the dependency on foreign oil.

As Americans, we do not have a history of shying away from a challenge, and there is no reason to step down from the challenge that is ahead of us because of these Republicans. I think we can do better, and our history as Americans show that we will do better if we have the right leadership.

I urge my colleagues to support the Federal Price Gouging Protection Act because it fulfills America's promise to do what Americans can do if they put their mind to it, and that is to do better and get off this dependency on foreign oil.

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

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

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Speaker, parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will state his parliamentary inquiry.

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Speaker, if the other side has no more Members available to speak on this legislation, are they not then required under House rules to yield back the balance of their time?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Illinois will close.

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Speaker, what I asked was if the other side has no more speakers available, can they continue to reserve time, or do they have to yield back the balance of their time?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Illinois may continue to reserve his time.

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to claim the balance of time on our side.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. BARTON of Texas. May I inquire as to how much time I have?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas has 18 minutes remaining. The gentleman from Illinois has 14½ minutes remaining.

Mr. BARTON of Texas. May I further inquire if I am the last speaker? Is Mr. RUSH prepared to close?

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Speaker, we have additional speakers.

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, let me first say that it is appropriate that the House bring this type of legislation in this Congress before the body because gasoline prices are high, and the American public is concerned about those high prices, so it is not inappropriate to consider legislation of this type. We did it twice in the last Congress, passed an anti-price-gouging bill, once as part of a larger energy package and once as a stand-alone piece of legislation. So there is nothing inappropriate about bringing this before the body.

Having said that, I think it is fair to say that it is inappropriate, at least in my opinion, to bring it before the body in the way it has been brought. The bill

that is actually before us, I don't know how many Members of the majority saw this bill as it is currently configured, but nobody in the minority saw it until approximately 2:45 p.m. yesterday afternoon.

When I left the Capitol at approximately 6:15, it had still not been noticed that it was going to be on the suspension calendar this morning. It may have been noticed and I just didn't get that notice, but I was told it was up at 10 a.m. this morning, and now it's 10:45. So those of us in the minority have a certain sense of concern that we've not been contacted. We've not been asked for our input.

□ 1045

We've not been allowed to negotiate, participate in any shape, form or fashion. All we've been allowed to do is come onto the floor, in my case at 10:45, and speak on the bill, and at some point in time, I assume there will be a vote on it.

I did study the bill last evening. I have lots of concerns about this bill. I don't know what ''unconscionably excessive'' means. It's not defined in statute. As far as I can tell, it's not been defined in any case law. Apparently, it's going to be determined on a case-by-case basis.

I also asked my staff to check around, see if there had been price-gouging lawsuits brought in the various States. Over half of the States of our great Union have price-gouging statutes on the books. We're aware of one State, in the State of Kentucky, the Kentucky Attorney General has either filed a suit or prepared to file a lawsuit in Kentucky. There may be others, but that's the only one that I know of.

There's certainly no systemic outbreak of price-gouging lawsuits being filed around the country, and if we really had pandemic price gouging going on, I think the States that have price-gouging statutes would be using their State statues. They're not doing that.

Why is that? Well, again, I'm not a trained economist, but it seems to me that what we have is a case of the chickens coming home to roost. We have not done much, if any, on the supply side for our oil situation in this country in the last 30 years; haven't built a refinery, brand new, from scratch, in almost 35 years. We've put almost every place that has any potential for new oil development off-limits. Can't drill up in ANWR, Alaska; can't drill off the coast of California; can't drill off the coast of Florida; can't drill off the coast of South Carolina, North Carolina; can't drill off a lot of portions of the eastern Gulf of Mexico.

And funny things happen. As we've kind of sat on our supply haunches and not done anything, demand worldwide and domestically has gone up, and as demand goes up, if you don't have some ability to increase the supply, sooner or later that price is going to go up.

Now, I wasn't here to hear Mr. STUPAK's opening statement, and he may not have said this, but he said yesterday in the oversight hearing the price of crude oil has dipped slightly. He doesn't understand why the price of gasoline has gone up. And all you have to do is look at the housing market in northern Virginia to get the answer to that.

I had supper last evening with my son who is working at the Department of Energy. They are living in a home that's probably 35 years old. I don't know what that home cost brand new when it was built, but a good guess would be $30–, $40,000. That price at the time was based on the cost of construction, the cost of the land, fair profit for the builder and real estate agent. So you could say the cost of that property was $30– or $40,000. Well, the people that own the home have just sold it. It wouldn't be appropriate to tell the exact selling price. My son is renting it, but it's over $700,000.

Now, is that price gouging? No. It's what the market demand for housing in northern Virginia is. It's not related to the cost of the property, it's related to the demand for housing in northern Virginia. So those folks have made a nice profit.

Well, the same thing in the oil industry. Demand for oil is going up in China, demand for oil is going up in Europe, demand for oil is going up in Asia, demand for oil is going up in the United States, and if you don't have more of it, price is going to go up. Is that price gouging? No. It is what the market requires to balance limited supply with increasing demand.

The price of gasoline in the United States 3 years ago doubled. Demand actually increased 1 percent. Now, eventually, last time prices got to about $3 a gallon demand did dip slightly, supply increased a little bit, price went back down. Right before the last election, the price in Texas for gasoline got down to about $1.90 a gallon. Since my friends on the other side have won the election and taken over, the price has gone back up to what we see today. Is it their fault? It is not their fault right now. It's not BOBBY RUSH's fault, it's not BART STUPAK's fault, it's not JOHN DINGELL's fault. It's not ED MARKEY's fault over there in the corner. Although I'm tempted to blame Mr. MARKEY, but it wouldn't be fair.

Demand has gone up and supply has not gone up and the price has gone up, and it's going to keep going up until we do something, both on the demand side and the supply side.

So, is this the worst bill that's ever been on the floor of the House of Representatives? No, it's not. Is it the best bill that's ever been on the floor? No, it's not. You know, I think it is a flawed bill. The definitions are not there. The mitigating factors are not there.

We would be well-served, since it's on the Suspension Calendar, to defeat it, get 140, 150 votes, then go back to committee, have some hearings, try to develop a little bipartisanship, bring a different bill to the floor, and probably pass with an overwhelming margin.

So I'm going to vote against this bill, and I'm going to ask that all my colleagues take a serious look at it, vote against it, so we can figure out the right thing to do. And the next time we bring an energy package, don't just bring something that's symbolic to the floor. Let's bring a bill that helps build new refineries. Let's bring a bill that actually increases the supply. Yes, let's bring a bill that might do something to limit demand. I think the time has come to look at some of those bills seriously.

Let's bring a package that actually might do something, other than rhetorical, to bring gasoline prices in the United States back down to levels that we think are more appropriate.

I don't like to pay 3 dollars or more for gas anymore than our constituents do, but this legislation won't do a single thing to keep market prices down or address the reasons gas prices are rising. What it will do is threaten legitimate businesses with huge fines and hard-working people with long jail terms. Furthermore, the bill could quite possibly lead to price controls and 1970s-style gas lines. I oppose the legislation before us today for substantive reasons, as well as based on the process—or lack of process—that has brought this bill to the Floor.

First, Mr. Speaker, I want the American public to understand how the legislative process has broken down in this case. In light of your unprecedented intent to remove the minority's right to a motion to recommit, it should not surprise anyone in this chamber that the bill before us has bypassed the Committee of jurisdiction—The Energy and Commerce Committee—to come straight to the House Floor. The Committee did not hold a legislative hearing. The Committee did not hold a mark up. The only opportunity my Committee Members had to seek input from the Federal regulators with expertise on legislation was yesterday afternoon during an oversight hearing—a hearing in which the Democratic majority did not even have a witness testify who represents the independent gas stations. It's really too bad their voice was not heard, because the little Mom-and-Pop gas store owner who sells 60 percent of the gas in the U.S. could go to jail for up to 10 years under this bill if they price their gas wrong.

On top of my concern for the absence of certain witnesses at our oversight hearing, a new version of this bill was circulated only yesterday afternoon. That's right: we have had less than 24 hours to review the changes, but we are supposed to vote on it. Mr. Speaker, I thought things were going to be fair in this Congress, but I seem to have been mistaken.

The Administration has issued a Statement of Administration Policy Against this bill. It indicates that it will lead to gas shortages and do nothing to help consumers.

On the substance of this legislation, I have serious concerns that this won't have the intended effect. The Federal Trade Commission is the expert on competition policy and has conducted several studies and investigations of the oil and gas markets markets. In its most recent investigation, the FTC studied each

segment of the industry after Hurricane Katrina. Guess what they found? No evidence of price manipulation at the refining level. To the contrary, they found a competitive market. Transportation sector? No evidence of manipulation. Inventory levels? Again, no evidence of manipulation. Gasoline futures? You guessed it, Mr. Speaker, no evidence of manipulation.

What the FTC found was a competitive market that responded to the Katrina crisis by changing their priorities and shipping products to the areas that needed it. The FTC has studied the issue repeatedly, and has not found any evidence of price increases that were not a result of a change in market conditions or other factors that may affect the price.

It may surprise Members that the FTC is opposed to a Federal price gouging law. Why? Because they're concerned that it could do more harm to consumers than good. The Secretary of the Department of Energy opposes it, as well as the National Association of Convenience Stores, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the Society of Independent Gas Marketers of America, the American Petroleum Institute, and just about every economist who knows that price controls harm consumers when they cause shortages. What is better, higher-priced gas, or no gas at all?

Mr. Speaker, I agree with the sponsor of this bill that people who take unfair advantage of others should be punished. But we already have laws on the books to address those issues at the Federal and state level. Now we are going to add a Federal standard to the patchwork of state laws for gouging—a term which has no legal or economic meaning. I believe it is unnecessary and fear it will return us to the 1970s gas shortages. No retailer will want to supply the market at a higher price and risk being fined millions and going to jail for years. And what wholesaler will risk $150 million in fines and possible jail time if they raise their price more than a competitor?

Mr. Speaker, I know many here would like to go home to their constituents over Memorial Day recess with a gas price gouging bill rather than address substantive Federal Energy Policy that might actually address the factors causing gasoline prices to rise. Republicans were able to pass many energy-related bills when we were in the Majority, though Democrats in the House and Senate voted against almost every piece of legislation that would have increased our domestic energy supply.

I can understand a visitor to California might suspect they are being gouged at the pump when they fill up in San Francisco for upwards of $4 a gallon, but that is just a result of the Federal, State and Local taxes and other state fuel requirements. If something is broken, Mr. Speaker, it is not the free market. This Congress must act to increase domestic supply of gasoline, not enact feel-good legislation that is ill-conceived and ineffective.

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

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Speaker, I want to remind my friend from Texas that he should take a closer look at the bill. The bill explicitly takes into account market conditions, both domestic and international. The bill has two pages of mitigating factors. If the costs go up, and they are going up, this bill allows companies to capture the costs.

And I would have to just conclude, Mr. Speaker, that my friend from Texas needs to take a closer look at this bill because his arguments are just not true.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. STUPAK).

Mr. STUPAK. I thank Mr. RUSH for yielding me time. I'd like to respond to the gentleman from Texas and some of the claims he made.

First of all, Democrats have only been in the majority for 4 months, and we are looking for ways to end this pain that motorists are feeling every day when they fill up their car at the gas pump, and that is, to bring forth the price-gouging legislation you see before us.

Now, Mr. BARTON says we should not pass this for this reason or that reason. These are just excuses. He complains about the process. With all due respect, we learned the process from Mr. BARTON.

Last year, they brought forth a gas price bill, was introduced on Tuesday, May 2, 2006. Wednesday, May 3, 2006, we voted on it. We never saw it. This bill has been around for over a year. So let's stop the excuses. American people don't want arguments about what process. They want relief at the pump, and that's what we're doing.

Lookit, today Members of the House have a very simple choice. Vote to stand up with consumers, your constituents, who are paying record gasoline prices, nationwide average, record prices, or vote to protect big oil companies' enormous profits.

My bill, H.R. 1252, which has over 120 bipartisan cosponsors, would give the Federal Trade Commission the explicit authority to investigate and punish those who artificially inflate the price of energy. The bill would provide a clear, enforceable definition of price gouging; focus enforcement on the worst offenders, especially companies that sell more than a half billion dollars a year of gasoline. We strengthen penalties, both criminal and civil, with up to triple damage for those who would price-gouge us; and direct the penalties collected to go into the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program.

Congress must pass without any more excuses this legislation. Today's legislation is truly a first step in addressing the outrageous prices we're seeing at the gas pump.

We'll be working to protect consumers from high natural gas prices. We've introduced the Prevent Unfair Manipulation of Prices legislation to improve the oversight of energy trading in this country, and I hope we can move this legislation later this year.

Last year, the House of Representatives actually voted on a weaker bill, on May 3 as I indicated, brought forth by Republicans on price gouging. We passed that bill under suspension, like we are today, 389–34. The Senate didn't do anything with it.

I'm proud to announce that since the Democrats are in charge, the Senate bill, very similar to my bill, has already made it out of committee, and we expect a vote on it next month. So we can actually bring relief to consumers now that the Democrats are in charge.

Today, every Member has a choice. Side with big oil or side with the consumers who are being ripped off at the gas pump.

I'd like to thank Speaker PELOSI for her work and leadership in bringing this legislation to the floor, also Chairman DINGELL of the full Energy and Commerce Committee, and his staff for their help in putting forth a very fine piece of legislation that is much broader in scope than what we voted on last year, has stronger penalties and will truly give the American people relief at the pump.

Before Members leave for the Memorial Day recess, vote to provide your constituents with some relief at the gas pump. Vote for H.R. 1252.

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, how much time do we have on this side?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas has 9 minutes remaining, and the gentleman from Illinois has 11 minutes remaining.

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. SHADEGG), a member of the committee.

Mr. SHADEGG. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding and I rise in opposition to this legislation, but I compliment my colleague, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. STUPAK). He has, in fact, worked diligently on this issue, and I join him in my concern about prices that are charged to the American people. Indeed, he just indicated he would very much like to see relief at the pump, and so would I. I happen to drive a Ford F–250, which does not get good gas mileage, and I, along with others, would like to see relief at the pump. I certainly commend all those who are cosponsors of this legislation as having good intentions.

My concern, however, is that it will not achieve that result. The reality is we do have very high gas prices, and we have prices that have gone up dramatically in just the recent few months. We all want to know the answer for that, and I've spent some time trying to look at it.

Unfortunately, I don't see evidence that there is price gouging and that high gas prices are a result of price gouging. What I see is that they are the result of policies of this government, and it seems to me that we ought to be looking at the policies of this government.

For example, we as a Nation, this Congress, have imposed a tariff on imported ethanol. We could bring in ethanol produced in other countries at a dramatically lower price than the ethanol we're producing in this country today, but instead, we tax that ethanol and make it even higher priced. Last year, when the prices went up, I voted

against price-gouging legislation, but I dropped my own bill to suspend that tariff so that we could take advantage of lower-priced ethanol. Unfortunately, the Congress didn't move in that direction.

Two years ago, I went to the commodities market in New York, and they told me the problem with gasoline prices is refineries. We do have a lack of refineries in this country, and I've dropped legislation to encourage the construction of more refineries. I think there is concern that the refinery industry is holding the capacity of those refineries right at the edge so the prices can be the highest possible.

But one of the issues you hear is that part of the reason gasoline prices are so high right now is because of the conversion from winter gas to summer gas. That conversion is compelled by government regulations which drive up the cost and by government regulations which spell out precisely how it must be done and that they must draw down supplies.

It seems to me, before we start tampering with the free market, which has served us so well, and before we start passing very wide ranging legislation of this type, we have to make a decision. Do we want the government to regulate prices? Do we want a huge new bureaucracy in there looking at a poor mom-and-pop gas station to see if they raise prices? Or do we want to look at the policies of this government which have held down supply and which have not met demand?

It seems to me this is simple and straightforward. I understand the urge to do it, but the problem is, if we empower a massive new government bureaucracy, we will not get relief at the pump which Mr. STUPAK wants and which I'd like to see. We will indeed just create a large bureaucracy.

□ 1100

In my home State of Arizona, we have tried this. We have had attorney general after attorney general, even in my tenure, when I was in the attorney general's office, we investigated price gouging and could not find evidence of it. Let's look at the market forces that are causing these high prices. I urge my colleagues to oppose the bill.

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY).

Mr. MARKEY. I thank the gentleman from Illinois, and for his leadership on this bill, and the gentleman from Michigan. The bill before us today would give the Federal Trade Commission the authority to investigate and punish wholesale or retail sale of gasoline or other petroleum distillates at prices that are unconscionably excessive or take unfair advantage of consumers during any presidentially declared national or regional energy emergency.

Now, we hear from the Republicans, don't interfere in the free market. Don't touch the free market. Don't have the Federal Government getting in on the side of the consumers. It's just a matter of supply and demand. That's what the Republicans are arguing. Don't interfere with the free market, even if it goes up to $3.20 a gallon for gasoline, $3.80 a gallon for gasoline, $4 a gallon for gasoline. Don't let the Federal Government help out the consumer.

You know what? The Republicans are right. It is a matter of supply and demand. Consumers are forced to supply whatever money the oil companies demand from the consumers. The oil companies have the consumer over a barrel, a barrel of oil that the oil companies control and that they price. They price it wherever they want to put it.

They tip the consumer upside down, the oil companies do, and they shake money out of the pockets of consumers at the pump. The Christians had a better chance against the lions than the consumer has against the oil companies at the pumps in the United States today.

All we are saying is let's give the Federal Government a sword to get into the battle in the arena on behalf of the consumers in America. And the Republicans are saying, we don't want to arm the Federal Trade Commission so they can help the consumers so that they are not tipped upside down. It is clear that high gas prices are hitting families hard, but they are also causing our economy to stall and to sputter like a jalopy.

The bill before us today addresses one potential cause of high prices: price gouging by the oil companies. It sends a signal to oil companies that there will now be a regulator out there that has been empowered to take action when unconscionably high prices are being charged.

The free market, I don't think so. I think that when we look at this oil market, we understand that the consumer is at the whim of the oil companies.

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to a member of the committee, Mrs. BLACKBURN of Tennessee.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. I thank the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. Speaker, I do rise today in opposition to this legislation, because I certainly feel that it is going to increase the cost of gasoline to the American people. H.R. 1252 does purport to crack down on price gouging and marketplace manipulation by integrated large oil companies. Yet that is not what this legislation is going to do.

We had a hearing in committee about it yesterday, and I wish, indeed, that we were going to have the bill before us for a markup. What I find in this piece of legislation is that it will put a target on the back of every small business owner who runs and operates a neighborhood convenience store, a filling station or a truck stop. As I said in our hearing yesterday, there are so many of these that are the local gathering spot. These are not people that are going to gouge their neighbors.

You know, I know it is tempting to react to constituents' frustration with high gas prices. We are all frustrated with that. But the way to do it is not passing a hastily drafted price-control legislation. We should be focused on the real problem and work for real results on this issue. That is what our constituents want.

H.R. 1252 is not going to give us the real results. What we are going to see is a turn-back to energy policy, back to the Jimmy Carter era. It is a clumsy attempt, I think, to punish bad actors who take advantage of the public. But the bill adopts some vague language, employs some heavy-handed criminal penalties, some unenforceable civil penalties that no small business owner could afford.

I do think it's a little bit of legislative overkill, and some people would call it unconscionably excessive. They are entitled to that point. It was my hope that Congress would go through regular order, would address some of the issues pertaining to this Nation's energy policy, and look for some real solutions to the root problem.

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Speaker, I yield 10 seconds to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. STUPAK).

Mr. STUPAK. In response to the last speaker, this bill does not target mom-and-pop grocery stores. You have to sell half a billion dollars of gasoline products.

Secondly, the record high prices of oil that we are seeing was not under Jimmy Carter. It was under Ronald Reagan in 1981.

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to Congressman MURPHY of Pennsylvania, a member of the committee.

Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania. I thank the gentleman.

One of the things that's important to keep in mind is why are gasoline prices what they are, and it is not the retailer. When we look at what has happened to prices over all, let's keep in mind that we have become more and more dependent upon other nations. When we look at what's contributed to costs, look at this: Crude oil costs are 56 percent of the price; taxes are 18 percent of the price; refining nearly 17 percent of the price; distribution and marketing, nearly 9 percent of the price.

What has happened with regard to crude oil prices, they have doubled since 2004, they have tripled since 2001, and they have gone up over 600 percent since the 1980s.

But what has happened, as the cost of a barrel of oil has gone from $11 a barrel to over $70 a barrel, is Congress has continually stood in the way of trying to come up with more sources. We have abundant supplies. We have the Atlantic coast, the gulf coast, the Pacific coast, the western States and Alaska. Whenever those come up for a vote, Congress shuts it down. Over 90 percent

of Federal lands are off-limits to exploring for the vast supplies of oil we have there.

We have shut off some of our other sources, and some are still trying to do that with regard to using coal as another energy source. We have not funded fully the things we need to do for hydrogen fuel cell. We have not gone far enough with conservation, with our automobiles, with reducing homeowner uses.

So between these issues of exploration, conservation, diversification, we have not taken the steps we need to do to truly reduce energy costs. It concerns me greatly that we are moving forward to blaming the retailer when we ought to be looking to blame ourselves. After all, if we have supplies of oil in the gulf coast, which we set off-limits to ourselves, and, yet, we let Cuba explore for them, something is terribly wrong.

I hope that what this Congress does is work more towards energy independence and recognize that it's changing the way we explore for oil and making sure that we do much more for diversification of our sources and conserving our huge energy waste in this country. That is what is going to lower the prices of gasoline.

Until we make this commitment as a Nation, and until we make this commitment as a Congress, we will not see these prices go down.

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire how much time we have remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Illinois has 7¾ minutes remaining.

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. KLEIN).

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. I thank the gentleman for the time and thank you for the opportunity to speak to this very important issue.

Mr. Speaker, the rising cost of gasoline is causing huge problems for families throughout south Florida, which I represent, and certainly throughout the whole country. In south Florida a gallon of gasoline is well over $3.25 and rising. In fact, there is gas even at $3.59 per gallon in my local area.

What is the excuse this time? Is it disruptions of oil in the Middle East? Not that I am aware of. I haven't heard. Hurricane damage to refineries? No, again. How about the summer driving season? Seems to me this is May. So, again, no excuses, no excuses, but we just hear more and more excuses from oil companies that it's the drivers, it's this or that.

Yes, there are a lot of answers here, but let's focus on where the market manipulation is going on.

In my area, tourism drives the economy. When gas prices go up, the first thing families do is they stay within their budget and cut back on their vacations, vacations that many times are planned to Florida. When gas prices go up, families and businesses feel it, and it negatively impacts every part of our economy.

That's why I am here today to show my strong support for the Federal Price Gouging Prevention Act. This bill, authored by my friend Mr. STUPAK and others, would give the Federal Trade Commission the authority to crack down on the people who price gouge. This bill is an excellent step in the short term because it protects consumers and gives the government the teeth it needs to go after market manipulators.

In the long term, we are only going to solve this problem by moving towards energy independence. American families can no longer afford to rely exclusively on oil for their energy needs. We all know that investing in alternative fuel sources is vital to our national security and to our economy.

Being energy-independent is a goal that many of us have been talking about and working on for many years. That goal has never been more important than it is right now. But today is the time we need to make changes that will reduce gas prices for American consumers now, and in the future let's work towards energy independence.

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to a member of the committee, Congressman BURGESS of Texas.

Mr. BURGESS. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I have grave concerns about the bill before us today, specifically the lack of clarity in defining ''unconscionable.'' I believe this term to be ambiguous, and, in fact, could lead to severe supply shortages in times of national emergency.

Under this proposal, a gasoline station owner could receive civil and criminal penalties totaling $5 million and 10 years in prison for charging ''unconscionable'' prices. Yet there is no clear definition for what is unconscionable.

To add insult to injury, if a station owner were to charge less than the market price, he could also be subject to charges of undercutting the market. Were I a gasoline station owner in a time of crisis, I likely would shut down my pumps and sell Snickers bars and Coca-Colas and try to make money that way.

I am not defending those who would charge unfairly. I firmly believe, and, in fact, in my home State of Texas, we have a strong antigouging price statute already on the books. If it is determined that illegal pricing has occurred, the individuals should be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

But let's be sure we do not create a climate which causes business owners to stop selling gasoline at a time in crisis when we so clearly will need those resources.

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. STUPAK).

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Speaker, yesterday we had a hearing on gas price gouging, and the Commissioner of the Federal Trade Commission actually came and testified. On page 12 of his testimony, footnote number 24, I would like to quote the following: The statute mandating post-Katrina price investigation effectively defined price gouging as an average price of gasoline available for sale to the public that exceeded its average price in the area for the month before the event, unless the increase was substantially attributable to additional costs in connection with production, transportation, delivery and sale of gasoline in that area, or to national or international markets.

When questioned yesterday, Commissioner Kovacic said, We've used it. We have the definition.

My legislation makes it clear to take these factors into consideration when you determine whether price gouging is going on: How much did it cost delivered at transportation? What was the bill of sale from the supplier. These are factors in the legislation.

The FTC clearly understands it. Members of the House should be able to understand it. Vote ''yes'' on H.R. 1252.

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, we have two speakers. I think we have 2 minutes.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas has 1 minute remaining.

Mr. BARTON of Texas. One minute remaining. Then we have one speaker left.

I yield the balance of the time on the minority side to the distinguished minority whip, who is a member of the committee, on leave, Mr. BLUNT of Missouri.

□ 1115

Mr. BLUNT. I thank the gentleman for yielding and for his hard work on these issues, and I also appreciate my colleagues from the committee. But I am here to say to my friends that, as we look at this bill, I don't know what this bill does because the bill is so unclear. It didn't go through our committee. Like the other legislation we passed in this Congress, it is not likely to become law. I believe we have put around 21 bills on the President's desk so far this year, a dozen of them to name post offices. And the reason for that is all of the bills we passed in the House don't create a result, they don't create law.

Let me just refer to one thing. It says you can't sell fuel in an emergency situation at a price that is, (a), ''unconscionably excessive.'' Of course you shouldn't do that. We shouldn't allow that. But we should define what that means.

One of the supporters of the bill has told me, well, every court will decide what that means. I have got to tell you, the mom-and-pop grocery and gasoline station owner can't wonder what every court is going to decide.

This bill is unclear. It needs work. It puts an undue hardship on people that are trying to make a living running a

service station, and I urge my colleagues to oppose it.

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, the opponents of this bill, my friends on the other side of the aisle, are asking for this Congress to wait until a more perfect time, a more perfect time to help the American consumer out.

Mr. Speaker, I want to remind my friends on the other side of the aisle that the American people are suffering right now, and they are demanding this Congress to take action right now.

There can never be a more perfect time for this Congress to take action. Now is the time to take action. Now is the time, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to just inform my colleagues that scare tactics will not work this time. If they will look at this bill, they will see that scare tactics are nowhere in this bill. This bill is a scalpel, it is not a meat axe. This bill carefully speaks to the issues that the American people face. This bill is carefully crafted to take into account market conditions, explicitly listing those mitigating factors that will spur the FTC into action.

Any company that gouges should be sought out, should be identified, should be brought before justice, should be brought before the American people in the form of the Federal Trade Commission. A company will be found guilty of price gouging under this bill only, and I repeat, only if they engage in unconscionable pricing. We do not suspend free markets nor do we suspend the laws of supply and demand.

Mr. Speaker, again, the American consumers need us to act, they want us to act, they demand that we do act. Now is the time. Now is the time for us to act. I ask Members of this Congress to vote in favor of this bill.

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1252 is intended to stop and punish unscrupulous gasoline price gougers. The bill empowers the Federal Trade Commission to go after gougers at all levels of the gasoline distribution chain and to impose stiff penalties on violators. It also provides authority for the States to go after retail price gougers under Federal law.

The bill is not, however, intended to prohibit all increases in price—only those increases that grossly exceed the supplier's earlier prices and competitors' prices and that do not reflect reasonable responses to an emergency situation.

This bill would not prohibit a seller from raising prices to compensate for extra risks, such as staying open while a hurricane is bearing down, traveling outside an affected area to secure additional supplies and transport them to people in need, or postponing regular maintenance to increase output during an emergency. These are all efforts that ameliorate a dire situation and the bill is not intended to discourage them.

Finally, the bill would permit suppliers to reasonably factor in other local, regional, national, and international market developments in the quickly-changing and uncertain market conditions characteristic of energy emergency situations.

In sum, Mr. Speaker, this bill is intended to prohibit grossly excessive, pernicious, and predatory increases in the price of gasoline during emergencies—but not to prevent or discourage fair and reasonable responses to unusual market conditions.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, as a cosponsor of H.R. 1252, I rise in support of the Federal Price Gouging Prevention Act, and urge its passage by the House.

Gasoline prices are now at record highs. In my home state of Michigan, the average price of regular gas is $3.47 a gallon—a full 66 cents a gallon higher than it was at this time last year. According to the General Accounting Office, the rise in gasoline prices this year has drained consumers of an extra $20 billion. The six largest oil companies announced $30 billion in profits over the first three months of 2007 alone. This is on top of the $125 billion in profits they racked up last year.

The other side says that we should do nothing. They say that it's a world market for oil, and therefore something we cannot control. How then do they explain that the cost of gasoline has been rising even in the face of falling world oil prices? We must face the fact that there is something wrong in the distribution chain, especially during times of energy emergencies such as when Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast. As a first step in attacking the problem, we need to give the Federal Trade Commission the explicit authority to investigate and punish those who artificially inflate the price of gasoline.

The oil companies oppose this bill. The White House also has indicated that the President may veto the bill. With all due resect, we work for our constituents, not the oil companies and not the White House. I urge the House to stand with consumers and vote for this needed legislation.

Mr. HARE Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R 1252, the Federal Price Gouging Prevention Act. I am proud to be an original cosponsor of this important piece of legislation.

Oil prices are continuing to skyrocket, increasing the burden on American families, small businesses, and individuals who rely on their vehicles for their livelihood. Every day I hear from troubled constituents who are paying over $3.00 per gallon at the pump. Constituents like Richard Benefiel, a small business owner who called me yesterday out of desperation explaining he would have to shut down his shipping operation in less than 30 days unless relief was provided. On the other hand, Exxon-Mobil raked in $9.3 billion between January and March—its best first quarter in history. This is unacceptable.

The bill before us today is a much needed step toward addressing market manipulation by Big Oil and the egregious impact it has on the American consumer. The Federal Price Gouging Prevention Act provides the Federal Trade Commission with new authority to investigate and prosecute energy companies who engage in predatory pricing, market manipulation, and other unfair practices, with an emphasis on those who profit most, thereby providing immediate and much needed relief to consumers.

Yet, this is only the first step in bringing down energy costs. Last year, our Nation hit its highest dependence on foreign oil, importing 771,000 barrels daily from Saudi Arabia and other Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, OPEC. This served as a wake-up call for the United States to begin taking measures to decrease our dependence on foreign oil. I refuse to continue to allow OPEC, which accounts for 65 percent of internationally traded oil, to continue to dictate our Nation's gas prices. Antitrust laws must be put into action and greedy oil exporters need to be held accountable.

I am pleased that we voted yesterday to pass H.R. 2264, which authorizes the Justice Department to take legal action against OPEC state-controlled entities who conspire to limit supply or fix the price of oil.

I also believe that building a diverse energy portfolio which focuses on renewable, homegrown energy sources like ethanol, biodiesel, as well as wind, solar, hydro-power and clean-coal technologies is a critical step toward energy independence, which will bring down prices, and clean up our environment.

The Federal Price Gouging Prevention Act is a critical first step in addressing skyrocketing energy costs and I urge all my colleagues to support the bill.

Mr. WELDON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to price gouging.

The good news for Florida consumers is that the state of Florida already has the ability to protect consumers from price gouging.

Florida law finds that gouging has occurred when a commodity's price represents a ''gross disparity'' from the average price of that commodity during the 30 days immediately prior to the declared emergency. This applies unless the increase is attributable to additional costs incurred by the seller or to national or international market trends. In fact, Florida law enforcement fully investigated over 58 cases of alleged gouging after Tropical Storm Rita.

Violators of Florida's anti-gouging law are subject to civil penalties of $1,000 per violation. In 2005, the State of Florida enacted criminal penalties for those who engage in price gouging.

In addition to the protections that Florida consumers already have in place through State law enforcement, the Federal Trade Commission has the authority to investigate and bring charges against those that engage in price gouging.

In a significant departure from previous legislation addressing this issue, Floridians who are gouged would not receive a rebate. Instead, H.R. 1252 would direct any fines collected from gougers to a program that largely benefits the Northeast and the Midwest. Previous legislation on this matter directed that any fines collected from price gouging be returned to the State where the gouging occurred so that the consumers could be reimbursed. H.R. 1252, however, directs that all of these funds instead be placed in the Low Income Home Energy Assistance, LIHEAP, fund. Unfortunately for the residents of Florida, this is a fund that they get little benefit from. The primary beneficiaries LIHEAP grants are those living in the Northeast and Midwest. While New York and Florida have populations that are nearly equal, New York received 10 times the amount of LIHEAP money that Florida received ($247 million for New York vs. $26 million for Florida). Other large beneficiaries include: New York, Michigan, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Wisconsin, and Illinois. In fact, on a per capita basis, no state does worse than Florida when it comes to

LIHEAP. The bottom line is that if Florida consumers get gouged, those living in the Northeast and the Midwest get the rebate.

This bill is more about show than about substance. Even the comprehensive investigation by the Federal Trade Commission, FTC, in the aftermath of hurricane's Katrina and Rita found no gouging or anti-trust violations.

The real driver of price for gas is the growing global demand for energy. The rapid growth in the worldwide demand for crude oil is being driven primarily by economic growth in China, India and the United States.

Ironically, during a Congressional hearing on this bill, the proponents of the bill offered some bizarre testimony. When asked if the oil companies were engaging in collusion—which is already illegal—a proponent of the bill offered that what was being engaged in is ''conscious parallelism.'' He then offered that you cannot prove ''conscious parallelism'' in court, so this bill does virtually nothing to address that. Another advocate for the price-gouging bill testified before the committee that ''drilling [for oil] will do nothing to lower the price of oil.'' I am concerned that these individuals are so dedicated to an ideology that they defy common sense.

The most important thing we can do to lower the price of gas for American consumers and to ensure our energy independence is to expand domestic energy production, expand refining capacity in the U.S. by reducing excessive burdens, encouraging more nuclear power, fostering the development of renewable energy, and encouraging conservation. Unfortunately, it took us 12 years to end the Democrat filibuster that kept America from developing more oil and gas off the Outer Continental Shelf, OCS. Last year we were successful in opening a small portion of the OCS to oil and gas recovery, and I hope that we can build on that success. Also, last year we secured passage of legislation that allows for greater production of oil and gas from Federal lands. Unfortunately, Democrat leaders have introduced legislation and are holding hearings to close off those sources of domestic energy production. We streamlined regulations for nuclear power plants, yet Democrats are considering injecting new regulations into the process. I was also pleased that we were able to secure passage of renewable energy tax credits. I have cosponsored legislation to extend these tax cuts for renewable energy and conservation so they are not allowed to expire.

The Democrats expression of ''outrage'' over gas prices is a bit ironic given that they are the ones who have consistently proposed higher gas taxes, higher energy taxes like the proposed BTU tax, and who are presently moving forward with ''cap and trade'' global warming legislation along the lines of what has been adopted in Europe. As the Washington Post pointed out last month, this cap and trade system has led German consumers to pay 25 percent more for electricity than they did two years ago, while German utilities are making record profits. This higher cost for electricity has made it difficult for some European countries to compete with cheaper foreign imports, resulting in European workers losing their jobs.

The rhetoric simply does not match the policies being advocated by the Democrat majority.

Mr. SPACE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1252, the Federal Price Gouging Prevention Act.

My district is currently experiencing some of the highest gas prices in its history. In several towns in my district, my constituents are paying prices as high as $3.49 per gallon to fill their tanks.

The price of gas is a crippling figure for the people of Southeastern Ohio who depend on their cars and trucks for transportation. Working families frequently commute long distances to reach their places of employment. For these families, the rise in gas prices is essentially an undeserved pay cut.

The farmers in my district also face the challenge of fueling their equipment on which they depend to make their modest profits.

I fear most for the fate of my district's retired and elderly populations. Most of these individuals are on a fixed income that already limits their ability to pay for the prescription drugs and medical visits they need. The rising price of gas places them only further into a bind and forces them to make decisions that no American should ever face.

I co-sponsored H.R. 1252 because I believe it is time for Congress to intervene on behalf of working Americans. This common-sense legislation simply ensures that oil companies play by the rules and offer consumers a fair price for gas, not one that takes advantage of circumstances.

I am a firm believer in the power of the marketplace to deliver the best possible services to American consumers. Free markets drive our economy and make it the most powerful in the world. However, when companies don't play by the rules, they must be punished because it is the consumer that ultimately suffers.

I believe that passage of this legislation offers important protections to the people of my district in their daily battle with the price of gas. I encourage my colleagues to lend their support as well.

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1252, the Federal Price Gouging Prevention Act.

I am a proud cosponsor of this bill, which makes it illegal for any company to sell gasoline at excessive prices or to take advantage of market conditions by increasing prices during an energy crisis. It allows the Federal Trade Commission and the States' Attorneys General to bring lawsuits against corporations that charge excessive prices for gasoline. The bill also permits investigations of companies suspected of price gouging and requires honest and accurate reporting of pricing practices.

In the first month of the 110th Congress, the House took away $14 billion in taxpayer subsidies from the oil companies. This money will be reinvested in alternative, renewable energy sources.

Yesterday the House passed a bill by a bipartisan 345–72 vote, a bill that authorizes the Justice Department to take legal action against OPEC state-controlled entities and governments that conspire to limit the supply or fix the price of oil.

Hawaii's consumers pay some of the highest gasoline prices in the Nation. In 1998, the State of Hawaii filed a lawsuit against the major oil companies operating in our state. The lawsuit revealed that 22 percent of an oil company's nationwide dealer profits came from Hawaii, a state that represented only 3 percent of the market. Clearly, Hawaii's consumers were contributing an excessive share of the company's profits in relation to market share.

Since President Bush took office, gas prices have more than doubled, and previous Congresses have failed to protect consumers from price increases. For the first time in years, Congress has begun exercising its oversight responsibilities. This is important given that the six largest oil companies made $30 billion in profits for the first quarter of 2007, on top of the $125 billion in record profits for 2006.

I urge my colleagues to vote for this bill, which aims to reduce the burden of high energy costs on American families and businesses, build on efforts to increase energy efficiency, lessen our dependence on foreign oil, and cut greenhouse gas emissions in the longer term.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. RUSH) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1252, 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. BARTON of Texas. 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.

PROVIDING EXCEPTION TO LIMIT ON MEDICARE RECIPROCAL BILLING ARRANGEMENTS

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2429) to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide an exception to the 60-day limit on Medicare reciprocal billing arrangements between two physicians during the period in which one of the physicians is ordered to active duty as a member of a reserve component of the Armed Forces.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2429

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

SECTION 1. EXCEPTION TO 60-DAY LIMIT ON MEDICARE RECIPROCAL BILLING ARRANGEMENTS IN CASE OF PHYSICIANS ORDERED TO ACTIVE DUTY IN THE ARMED FORCES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1842(b)(6)(D)(iii) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395u(b)(6)(D)(iii)) is amended by inserting after ''of more than 60 days'' the following: ''or are provided (before January 1, 2008) over a longer continuous period during all of which the first physician has been called or ordered to active duty as a member of a reserve component of the Armed Forces''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall apply to services furnished on or after the date of the enactment of this section.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BARTON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. PALLONE. 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 gentleman from New Jersey?

There was no objection.

Mr. PALLONE. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this legislation. I thank my good friend from California (Mr. THOMPSON) for sponsoring it. This legislation is necessary to ensure that our Nation's doctors, who are brave enough to serve their country in a time of war, have a medical practice to serve in when they come home.

Currently, Medicare allows for a physician who is ordered to active duty as a member of a reserve component of the Armed Forces to enter into a 60-day billing arrangement with another physician. These arrangements allow for physicians to maintain their practices while they go off to take care of our soldiers in combat.

Unfortunately, what we are finding is that they are often away longer than 60 days, which puts them at odds with the current Medicare antifraud rules. This legislation fixes that problem by lifting the 60-day limit currently in place, and allowing a physician who is called to active duty to find a substitute physician to watch over his patients for as long as he or she is deployed.

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

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. BARTON of Texas asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the bill on substance and in adamant opposition of the process.

Now, there is absolutely nothing wrong with the substance of this bill. It has two distinguished cosponsors, one in the majority party, one in the minority party. The underlying substance is eminently fair, and we are not going to ask for a rollcall vote. If it passes on a voice vote, so be it.

But having said that, I want to say in the strongest possible terms how extremely disappointed, and I mean extremely disappointed, that we have a bill that is in two committees of jurisdiction, the Ways and Means Committee and the Energy and Commerce Committee, and the bill had not even been introduced, had not even been introduced until this morning. There was no bill number.

Now, when you put a bill on the Suspension Calendar, theoretically the majority party, the chairman or chairmen or chairwomen ask the ranking member of the minority party if there is any problem with the bill. If there is not, then they approve it. Then the Speaker of the House or the majority leader of the House calls the minority leader of the House and says, ''We want to put this bill on the Suspension Calendar.'' And you do it.

Now, we have a bill before us that was not even introduced until the House convened this morning. There has been no hearing, there is no record, there has been no phone call. Chairman DINGELL did not call me yesterday, he did not call me this morning. I don't know if Chairman RANGEL called Ranking Member MCCRERY. I do know that NANCY PELOSI or STENY HOYER did not call JOHN BOEHNER.

So we are now in a situation, we have a little extra time, let's introduce a bill and pass it in the next 30 minutes. We did not do that when we were in the majority.

Now, this is a good bill. Mr. THOMPSON and Mr. JOHNSON deserve accolades for seeing a flaw in the current Social Security law, the Medicare law, and rectifying it. That is not the issue.

The new majority campaigned on a platform of fairness and openness. Is this fair? Is this open?

This happens to be a good bill. What if it weren't? What if it weren't?

The only two Members that really know anything about it are the two cosponsors, and thankfully they are both decent, honorable men, and we have read the substance of the bill and it is okay. But this is not the way the House of Representatives should be run. It is just wrong, W-R-O-N-G, wrong.

So I support the substance of the bill, but I am adamantly opposed to the process. I hope this thing goes on a voice vote. If it is a rollcall vote, I am going to vote ''present'' and express, when I see Mr. DINGELL, in the strongest possible terms how upset I am about the process.

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. BARTON of Texas. I yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Let me just correct one thing. The staff tells me Mr. RANGEL did call our committee yesterday at 10 o'clock in the morning on this bill. So the Ways and Means Committee was informed.

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Did he call Mr. MCCRERY?

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Yes.

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Then I stand corrected.

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

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

Just in response, I understand where Mr. BARTON is coming from. But I just want to point out that we do have bipartisan support in the House on the bill. And it is only a temporary measure that lasts for 1 year and provides immediate relief to these physicians that are going overseas and fighting for the country. It is a very special circumstance, which I don't think provides any real precedent here, because we do have these physicians who are going to serve their country in Iraq and we just don't want them to have a situation where they come back and they don't have any medical practice. I just don't think that is fair.

I would mention to the ranking member that if we wanted to make a permanent change in this, we would be sure to spend more time and work with our Republican colleagues in accomplishing that goal. This is a temporary measure, and it is just because of the circumstances.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMPSON) such time as he may consume.

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker and Members, this is a very important bill. There are almost 3,000 physicians that are serving our country in the Reserves and the National Guard. And, as has been pointed out, when these folks are deployed and they leave, just like every other person in the Guard and Reserves that is deployed, they leave their families, they leave their businesses at home, and they go over and they serve their country. But there is just one thing different with these doctors; when they are deployed, they also leave behind their patients. And these are patients who depend upon the medical care they get from that great American who is now serving his or her country, and these patients can't go without a doctor.

The way the rules are now, the physician has to line up someone to take their patients in their absence, and they can only do this for 60 days. This doesn't work. It is bad for the doctors and it is bad for the patients. What we are trying to do is to waive that 60-day requirement so the physicians can line up one doctor to take their Medicare patients while they are serving our country in Afghanistan or in Iraq.

□ 1130

And it's a temporary measure. It's only good through this year. So we can, in fact, establish a permanent fix. And this bill has been vetted all through the different committees, and the Ways and Means Committee, both the chairman and the ranking member are very aware of this bill. And my good friend and committee colleague and war hero SAM JOHNSON has signed up on this as a coauthor, recognizing the plight of both the physicians who are serving, and their patients and their practices at home. And it's important that we fix this now and then continue to work on the permanent fix so we can make sure that no doctors and no patients who are caught in this vise go without medical care, or doctors, while serving their country, lose their practices.

And I just want to say a special thank you to Dr. Bradley Clair of Lakeport, California, my constituent, who brought this to my attention. And

he's ready to be deployed on his third tour. He'll be going to Iraq. So we need to fix it for him, for the other doctors, and patients who are exposed because of this problem. We need to fix it permanently. And this is the first step in doing so.

SAM, thank you for your help and your friendship on this and other important issues.

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the minority sponsor of this piece of legislation, the Honorable SAM JOHNSON of Plano, Texas.

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, you know, it's not every day the House gets to consider a bipartisan, commonsense bill that's affordable. This doesn't cost anything and supports our service men and women overseas. However, I'm happy to say this is one of those days.

Right now the law prevents a Medicare physician from leaving his practice for more than 60 days at a time. And the regulation was created to prevent fraud, but it had the unintended effect of making life more difficult for someone that's called up to serve his country. And this bill eliminates the red tape by allowing our reservists to have one substitute doctor for their entire deployment.

Not only will the bill help our reservists, it'll prevent Medicare beneficiaries from experiencing a gap in service or losing access to care altogether.

And I want to thank my colleague from California for bringing this problem to my attention, I'm surprised we hadn't had it brought to our attention before, and for all the work you and your staff have done to get the bill to the floor today.

Those who serve our country and their communities need and want our assistance, and it's time we helped our weekend warriors who happen to be doctors to keep their patients and keep their practice. This is a great bill, and I appreciate the time. I thank Mr. KUCINICH for providing us the opportunity.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time. I was going to inquire whether my colleague on the other side does.

Mr. BARTON of Texas. No, Mr. Speaker. I yield myself such time as I may consume briefly.

We support the underlying concept of the bill, and, as I said, if it passes on a voice vote, we won't ask for a roll call vote.

I do stand by what I said, though, in terms of the committee process. We've got two bills on the suspension calendar from the Energy and Commerce Committee. Neither bill had a legislative hearing. Neither bill had a markup at subcommittee or full committee. Neither bill was introduced in its current form as of 2:45 yesterday afternoon. Both bills are on the floor today on the suspension calendar. That does call into question whether we even need an Energy and Commerce Committee, given that everything apparently comes to the floor without going through the committee process.

But we support the underlying principles of this bill, and we certainly support the patriotism and courage of the two sponsors.

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I would just say again, this is a temporary measure. We have these brave men and women who are leaving to care for our troops in Iraq, we're in a time of war, and I think it's just a very special circumstance right now. So I would urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support passage.

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 New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2429.

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. THOMPSON of California. 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.

QUESTION OF PERSONAL PRIVILEGE

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise to a question of personal privilege under article IX, clause 1.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has been made aware of a valid basis for the gentleman's point of personal privilege.

The gentleman from Ohio is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, there is an issue of critical importance facing this Congress, and that issue relates to whether or not this Congress should pass legislation to continue to fund the war in Iraq.

The legislation contains a particular provision that would lead to the privatization of Iraq's oil, a provision that I'm quite concerned about, because I think that if we take that position, it will make it very difficult for us to ever be able to end the war.

So today I'm going to lay out the case as to why this provision that's in the bill would advance privatization and as to what the options are for this Congress.

As many know, the administration has set forth several benchmarks for the Iraqi Government, including the passage of a hydrocarbon law by the Iraqi Parliament. The administration has emphasized only a small part of this law, what they call the ''fair distribution,'' that's in quotes, of oil revenues.

I want this House to consider the fact that this Iraqi hydrocarbon law contains a mere three sentences that generally discusses the so-called fair distribution of oil. Except for three scant lines, the entire 33-page hydrocarbon law is about creating a complex legal structure to facilitate the privatization of Iraqi oil. As such, it is imperative that Members of Congress read the Iraqi Parliament's bill, because passage of any legislation that includes insisting that the Iraq Government push the passage of a hydrocarbon act puts this Congress on record to promote privatizing Iraq's oil.

Now, I have maintained from the beginning that the war has been about oil. We must not be a party to any attempt to set the stage for multinational oil companies to take over Iraq's oil resources.

There have been several benchmarks set by the administration for the Iraqi Government, including passage of a so-called hydrocarbon law by the Iraqi Parliament. Many inside the Beltway are contemplating linking funding for the war in Iraq to the completion of these benchmarks, including passage of the hydrocarbon law by the Parliament.

This administration has led Congress into thinking that this bill is about fair distribution of oil revenues. In fact, as I mentioned earlier, except for three scant lines, the entire 33-page hydrocarbon law creates a structure to facilitate the privatization of Iraq oil.

Now, the war in Iraq is a stain on American history. Let us not further besmirch our Nation by participating in an outrageous exploitation of a nation which is in shambles due to the U.S. intervention.

Let me provide this House with an analysis of the underlying bill in the Iraqi Legislature, which this administration is trying to get Congress to pass to pressure the Iraqi Government to accept privatization. And this analysis that I'm offering at this moment is a version that passed the Iraqi Cabinet and was referred to the Iraqi Parliament.

The legislation contains only three sentences in regards to the fair distribution of oil, but does not resolve any of the issues facing this challenge. The legislation simply requires that future legislation be submitted for approval; thus this legislation does not even meet the benchmark of the administration.

The legislation ensures that ''chief executives of important related petroleum companies,'' follow that now, ''chief executives of important related petroleum companies'' are represented on a Federal Oil and Gas Council, which approves oil and gas contracts. This is akin to foreign oil companies approving their own contracts.

This legislation ensures that the Iraqi National Oil Company, which is the oil company of the people of Iraq,

has no exclusive rights for the exploration, development, production, transportation and marketing. The Iraq National Oil Company must compete against foreign oil companies with rules that benefit the foreign oil companies. This is for their own oil.

The legislation gives the Iraqi National Oil Company some control of developed oil fields and rights to participate in undeveloped oil fields in the Annex I and II of the legislation, but these annexes have never been made public, so we don't know for sure.

The legislation gives the Iraq National Oil Company temporary control of the oil pipelines and export terminals, but then it directs the Federal Oil and Gas Council, which is run by chief executives of oil companies, it directs them to turn these assets over to any entity with no further instructions. The opportunity for a foreign oil company to have control over the Iraqi oil pipeline and export terminals would give that company enormous control of the Iraqi oil market.

The legislation demands that contracts, and this is a quote, ''must guarantee the best level of coordination'' with the Oil Ministry, Iraqi National Oil Company, the regions and oil companies. The legislation mandates that undeveloped oil fields be developed quickly, and oil companies are given explicit authority to collaborate.

The legislation does not require contracts to be published for public review for up to 2 months after approval. The legislation provides for up to 35 years of exclusive control over oil fields for foreign oil companies. The legislation provides for a preference to Iraqis for jobs and services, but only if these benefits do not place extra costs or inconveniences on the foreign oil companies. The legislation states that disputes between the State of Iraq and any foreign investors shall be submitted for arbitration to an international court and will not be decided upon by an Iraqi court.

This legislation has four appendices whose contents remain secret. Annex I, which is secret, regards to present producing fields allocated to the Iraqi National Oil Company; Annex II, discovered or undeveloped fields allocated to the National Iraqi Oil Company; Annex III, discovered undeveloped fields outside the operations of the Iraqi National Oil Company; and Annex IV, exploration areas. These appendices will effectively make clear which old fields will be controlled by the Iraq National Oil Company and which are open to foreign control of oil companies.

And I might add that when you look at this, out of about 98 oil fields, Iraq will have control of approximately 80, 81 of those oil fields. Excuse me. The foreign oil companies will have control of about 80, 81 of those oil fields, or over 80 percent of Iraqi oil under this agreement will be controlled by foreign oil interests. This is an analysis that I'm offering based on facts that are ascertainable.

Now, what are others saying about this draft Iraqi oil law and what it will do? Here's a quote from the Christian Science Monitor of May 18, 2007, in an article entitled ''How Will Iraq Share the Oil?'' In the U.S., the demand that Iraq pass an oil law is a benchmark that is becoming a flash point. Here's the quote.

□ 1145

'' 'The actual law has nothing to do with sharing oil revenue,' says former Iraqi Oil Minister, Issam Al Chalabi, in a phone interview from Amman, Jordan. The law aims to set a framework for investment by outside oil companies, including favorable production sharing agreements that are typically used to reward companies for taking on risk, he says.

'' 'We know the oil is there. Geological studies have been made for decades on these oil fields; so why would we let them,' '' that is, the international oil companies, '' 'have a share of the oil?' he adds. 'Iraqis will say this is solid proof that Americans have staged the war . . . because of this law.' ''

The next quote comes from the Dow Jones Newswires of March 4, 2007, the headline: ''Iraq Oil Law Details Untouched Fields, Blocks—Document.'' And the text says:

''Iraq's draft hydrocarbon law, the centerpiece in the development of the country's shaky oil industry, details dozens of untouched oil fields loaded with proven reserves and scores of exploration blocks that may prove a magnet to international oil companies, according to a document seen by Dow Jones Newswires.''

In an article from the Dow Jones Newswires again, on March 10, 2007, the headline: ''Some Iraqi Politicians Urge Rejection of Draft Oil Law.'' Here's the text:

''The law, if passed, is expected to open the country's billions of barrels of proven oil reserves, the world's third largest, to foreign investors.''

From an article from the American Lawyer, April 25, 2007, ''Our Man in Iraq.'' Here is the text:

''Under the new law, the Iraq National Oil Company would have exclusive control of only about 17 of Iraq's approximately 80 known oil fields.'' So that number, then, is 17 of Iraq's approximately 80 known oil fields. ''The law would also allow the government to negotiate different kinds of exploration and production contracts with foreign oil companies, including production sharing agreements, or PSAs. Energy lawyers favor these because they allow oil companies to secure long-term deals and book oil reserves as assets on their company balance sheets. Under the proposed law, foreign companies would not have to invest their earnings in Iraq, hire Iraqi workers, or partner with Iraqi companies.''

Next, from the U.S. Morning Star Online, January 28, 2007, headline: ''Iraqi Officials Insist Oil Law Won't Favor U.S.''

''The proposal would provide for production sharing agreements that would give international firms 70 percent of the oil revenues to recover their initial investments and subsequently allow 20 percent of the profits without any tax or restrictions on transferring the funds abroad.''

This from CommonDreams.org, April 18, 2007, entitled ''Time to Do the Math in Iraq'':

''The most notable feature of the law is a revival of exploitive type of contact widely used prior to the rise of Arab nationalism in the 1960s, known as a production sharing agreement. Although the Oil Law uses an alternative term, 'exploration and production contract,' the effect is identical. The new arrangement would allow the bulk of Iraq's reserves to be controlled by outside oil companies, privatizing what until now has been a nationalized resource under the auspices of the Iraq National Oil Company. It specifies the royalty that will be paid to Iraq: '12.5 percent of gross production, measured at the entry flange to the main pipeline.' And as if the rest of the law were not already explicit enough, article 35(A) reiterates: 'Holders of exploration and production rights may transfer any net profits from petroleum operations to outside Iraq after paying taxes and fees owed.' ''

This, from a publication called PLATFORM in 2005, entitled ''Crude Designs: The Rip-Off of Iraq's Oil Wealth,'' by Greg Muttitt:

''At an oil price of $40 per barrel,'' and keep in mind that the price of oil is about $65 a barrel right now, heading towards $70 a barrel, but at a ''price of $40 a barrel, Iraq stands to lose between $74 billion and $194 billion over the lifetime of the proposed contracts.

''Under the likely terms of the contracts, oil company rates of returns from investing in Iraq would range from 42 to 162 percent, far in excess of the usual industry minimum target of around 12 percent return on investments.''

Next, on March 13, 2007, Antonia Juhasz, an oil industry analyst in an op-ed contribution, asks: ''Whose Oil is it, Anyway?'' Here is what Antonia Juhasz writes:

''Today more than three-quarters of the world's oil is owned and controlled by governments. It wasn't always this way. Until about 35 years ago, the world's oil was largely in the hands of seven corporations based in the United States and Europe. Those seven have since merged into four: ExxonMobil, Chevron, Shell, and BP. They are among the world's largest and most powerful financial empires. But ever since they lost their exclusive control of the oil to the governments, the companies have been trying to get it back. Iraq's oil reserves, thought to be the second largest in the world, have always been high on the corporate wish list. In 1998 Kenneth Derr, then chief

executive of Chevron, told a San Francisco audience, 'Iraq possesses huge reserves of oil and gas, reserves I'd love Chevron to have access to.'

''A new oil law set to go before the Iraqi Parliament this month would, if passed, go a long way toward helping the oil companies achieve their goal. The Iraq hydrocarbon law would take the majority of Iraq's oil out of the exclusive hands of the Iraqi Government and open it to international oil companies for a generation or more.

''In March, 2001,'' continuing to quote from this article, ''the National Energy Policy Development Group, better known as Vice President DICK CHENEY's energy task force, which included executives of America's largest energy companies, recommended that the United States Government support initiatives by Middle Eastern countries 'to open up areas of their energy sectors to foreign investment.' One invasion and a great deal of political engineering . . .'' later, this is exactly what the Iraq oil law would achieve. It does so to the benefit of oil companies but to the great detriment of Iraq's economy, democracy, and sovereignty.

''Since the invasion of Iraq, the administration has been aggressive in shepherding the oil law toward passage. It is one of the administration's benchmarks for the government of Prime Minister Nuri Kamal al-Maliki, a fact that'' the administration officials ''are publicly emphasizing with increasing urgency.'' And, that is that these are the benchmarks of the administration.

''The administration has highlighted the law's revenue sharing plan, under which the central government would distribute oil revenues throughout the nation on a per capita basis. But the benefits of this excellent proposal are radically undercut by the law's many other provisions. These allow much, if not most, of Iraq's oil revenues to flow out of the country and into the pockets of international oil companies.''

Continuing quoting from the article:

''The law would transform Iraq's oil industry from a nationalized model closed to American oil companies, except for limited although highly lucrative marketing contracts, into a commercial industry.''

So, again, the nationalized model is now closed to American companies except for limited marketing contracts. It would transform that into a commercial industry, all but privatized, that is fully open to international companies.

''The Iraq National Oil Company would have exclusive control of 17 of Iraq's 80 known oil fields, leaving two-thirds of known and as of yet undiscovered oil fields open to foreign control.

''The foreign companies would not have to invest their earnings in the Iraqi economy, partner with Iraqi companies, hire Iraqi workers, or share new technologies. They could even ride out Iraq's current 'instability' by signing contracts now, while the Iraqi Government is at its weakest, and then wait at least 2 years before even setting foot in the country. The vast majority of Iraq's oil would then be left underground for at least 2 years rather than being used for the country's economic development.

''The international oil companies could also be offered some of the most corporate-friendly contracts in the world, including what are called production sharing agreements. These agreements are the oil industry's preferred model but are roundly rejected by all the top oil producing countries in the Middle East because they grant long-term contracts, 20 to 35 years in the case of Iraq's draft law, and greater control, ownership, and profits to the companies than other models. In fact,'' this kind of contract is ''used for only approximately 12 percent of the world's oil.

''Iraq's neighbors Iran, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia maintain nationalized oil systems and have outlawed foreign control over oil development. They all hire international oil companies as contractors to provide specific services, as needed, for a limited duration and without giving the foreign company any direct interest in the oil produced.

''Iraqis may very well choose to use the expertise and experience of international oil companies. They are most likely to do so in a manner that best serves their needs if they are freed from the tremendous external pressure being exercised by the administration, the oil corporations, and the presence of 140,000 members of the American military.

''Iraq's five trade union federations, representing hundreds of thousands of workers, released a statement opposing the law and rejecting 'the handing of control over oil to foreign companies, which would undermine the sovereignty of the state and the dignity of the Iraqi people.' They ask for more time, less pressure, and a chance at the democracy they have been promised.''

Let me share with this House some basic facts about Iraqi oil because, over the past several months, we have had many different news agencies citing diverse reports about how much oil Iraq has.

From the Petroleum Economist Magazine, they estimate that Iraq has 200 billion barrels of oil. The Federation of American Scientists' estimate is 215 billion barrels of oil. The Council on Foreign Relations estimates Iraq has 220 billion barrels of oil. And the Center for Global Energy Studies estimates 300 billion barrels of oil. These figures, by the way, from a report from the Brookings Institution dated May 12, 2003.

Now, for the sake of discussion, let's take this figure of 300 billion barrels of oil so we can see how much money we are talking about here. As I mentioned earlier, the price of oil, somewhere around $65 a barrel right now and moving up quickly, as American consumers are finding out. It is not unusual to predict at this moment that the price of oil could go to $70 a barrel. Now, if it does go to $70 a barrel, we are looking here at a potential value of Iraqi oil at being about $21 trillion. Now, if the foreign oil companies have control over 80 percent or more, you start to get an idea of the kind of money that is at stake here and why there is such pressure being put on the Iraqi Government to privatize their oil.

Now, I would like to turn to a quote further talking about the Iraq oil, a basic fact. This from the Global Policy Forum called ''Oil in Iraq: the Heart of the Crisis,'' December, 2002:

''According to the Oil and Gas Journal, Western oil companies estimate that they can produce a barrel of Iraqi oil for less than a $1.50 and possibly as little as $1, including all exploration, oil field development and production costs and including a 15 percent return.

□ 1200

This is similar to production costs in Saudi Arabia, and lower than virtually any country. So again, the desirability of a private corporation having Iraq's oil is that their production costs would be very low.

A word about the history of oil exploitation in Iraq. Following World War I, the British assumed control of Iraq from the Ottoman Empire. In 1925, a 75-year concession contract was granted to American, French and British oil companies. By 1930, the consortium was in complete control of all Iraqi oil. The oil companies controlled the oil fields and reaped almost all the profits. It was not until the overthrow of the British-installed monarchy in 1958 that the foreign control of oil was challenged. In 1961, the consortium's rights were limited to current production. And beginning in 1972, Iraq oil resources were nationalized, a process that was finalized in 1975.

Now, here is a statement issued by the Iraqi Labor Union Leadership at a seminar held in December of 2006 to discuss this draft Iraqi oil law: ''Iraq is rich in national wealth, foremost among which is its oil wealth, the essence of the economic life for Iraq and the world, which has been a focus of attention of the large, industrialized countries in particular.

''The British and American oil companies were the first to obtain concessions to extract and invest in Iraqi oil nearly 80 years ago. After Iraq got rid of this octopus network, these foreign oil companies had again attempted to dominate this important oil wealth under numerous pretexts and invalid excuses.''

Indeed, Iraqi oil unions have objected to the Hydrocarbon Act. In an open letter to the U.S. Congress dated May 13, 2007, just a little more than a week ago, here are some excerpts:

''Peace be unto you and greetings to all.

''We wish to clarify certain matters relating to events in Iraq for our

friends among the Members of the U.S. Congress. It is common knowledge that the occupation spared neither the young nor the old, and that Iraq is passing through the most difficult of times because all and sundry are hounding it and covet a share of its riches. We see no good reason for linking the passing of the feeble Iraq oil law to the withdrawal of the occupation troops from Iraq.

''Everyone knows that the oil law does not serve the Iraqi people, and that it serves the administration, its supporters and the foreign oil companies at the expense of the Iraqi people, who have been wronged and deprived of their right to their oil, despite enduring all difficulties.

''We ask our friends not to link withdrawal with the oil law, especially since the USA claimed that it came to Iraq as a liberator and not in order to control Iraq's resources.

''The general public in Iraq is totally convinced that the administration wants to rush the promulgation of the oil law so as to be leaving Iraq with a victory of sorts.

''We wish to see you take a true stance for the children of Iraq. And we always say that history will remember those who advance peace over war.

''With my regards, Hassan Jum'a Awwad, Head of the Iraqi Federation of Oil Unions.''

This now from the Oil union leader's speech on oil law. This is a speech of the head of the Federation of Oil Unions in Basra on Tuesday, February 6, 2007:

''Recently, the Constitution of Iraq, on which the Iraq people voted in the most dire and difficult of conditions, notes in clause 111 that oil and gas are the property of the Iraqi people. But, alas, this clause in the Constitution will remain but ink on paper if the oil law and oil investment law being presented to the Parliament are ratified, laws which permit production-sharing agreements, laws without parallel in many oil producers, especially the neighboring countries. Why should Iraqis want to introduce such contracts in Iraq, given that applying such laws will rob the Iraqi Government of the most important thing it owns?''

''We send a message to all of the members of the Iraqi Parliament, when debating the oil and investment law, to bear the Iraqis in mind, to protect the national wealth, and to look at the neighboring countries. Have they introduced such laws even when their relations with foreign companies are closer than in Iraq?''

Now, there is a question that's being raised. Are these oil companies just trying to help Iraq gain its wealth? What if Iraq doesn't have the ability or the money to be able to get its own oil industry on its feet? Does Iraq have to privatize in order to tap its oil wealth? Well, the fact of the matter is that Iraq has options beyond privatization to develop its own oil capacity.

According to the Middle East Economic Survey, volume 49, number 2, dated March 19, 2007, entitled ''Iraq Open Letter from Iraqi Oil Experts to Parliament'':

''We anticipate that the motive behind the issuance of this law is based on the increase of production capacity through the attraction of foreign investments. In this regard, we feel and recommend to plan the increase of the capacity gradually, starting with the rehabilitation of currently producing fields by national effort, Iraqi National Oil Company, followed by the development of the giant discovered, but not developed or partially developed, fields, and to schedule the priority of their development according to their capacities and development costs, irrespective of their geographical locations.'' And it goes on to say that there ought to be an avoidance of long-term contracts with foreign companies at the present time.

This is a statement issued by the Iraqi Union Leadership in a seminar. And another statement in a seminar in December 2006 in Amman, Jordan:

''Whereas oil and gas are greatly important for the Iraqi economy and whereas the building of the state and its institutions are dependent on it as the main source of national income, it is therefore the right of the Iraqi people to read the draft oil law under consideration. The Iraqi people refuse to allow the future of their oil to be decided behind closed doors.''

In an article by Michael Schwartz called ''The Prize of Iraqi Oil,'' ''None of these conditions apply in Iraq. Huge reservoirs of easily accessible oil are already proven to exist, with more equally accessible fields likely to be discovered at little expense. That's why none of Iraq's neighbors emphasize production-sharing agreements. Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iran and the United Arab Emirates all pay the multinationals a fixed rate to explore and develop their fields, and all the profits become state revenues.''

Christian Science Monitor, May 18, 2007: ''How Will Iraq Share the Oil?'' ''In New York, oil industry analyst, Fidel Geit of Oppenheimer Company, Incorporated, has reviewed both the official Arabic version of the draft law and the unofficial English translation and say they are ambiguous and seem to be written in haste.'' Quote, ''Why shouldn't Iraq use Iraqi nationals to decide how contracts will be awarded? They have oil engineers. Use the best brains in the country and hopefully they will do what is in the best interest of the country,'' he says, ''otherwise there is an impression that American companies are telling Iraqis what to do.''

Now, I have stated many times on this floor that I believe that the war against Iraq was about oil. Now let me provide you with some quotes that may reflect on my thinking on this.

Mr. DICK CHENEY, CEO of Halliburton, in a speech at the Institute of Petroleum in 1999, said, ''By 2010, we will need on the order of an additional 50 million barrels a day. So where is the oil going to come from? Governments and national oil companies are obviously controlling about 90 percent of the assets. Oil remains fundamentally a government business. While many regions of the world offer great oil opportunities, the Middle East, with two-thirds of the world's oil and lowest cost, is still where the prize ultimately lies. Even though companies are anxious for greater access there, progress continues to be slow.''

In an article from Platform, November 2005, called ''Crude Designs: The Rip-Off of Iraq's Oil Wealth.'' Chapter four, ''Planning Iraq's Oil Future. Preinvasion Planning.'' And when you listen to this, it's pretty astonishing to see how all these facts have been available for people to be able to gain, and perhaps only now people are reflecting on the real meaning of this.

This is what Greg Muttitt writes: ''Prior to the 2003 invasion, the principal vehicle for planning the new postwar Iraq was the U.S. State Department's Future of Iraq project. This initiative, commencing as early as April 2002, involved meetings in Washington and London of 17 working groups, each composed of 10 to 20 Iraqi exiles and international experts selected by the State Department.

''The 'Oil and Energy' working group met four times between December 2002 and April 2003. Although full membership of the group has never been revealed, it is known that Ibrahim Bahr al-Uloum, the current Iraqi Oil Minister, was a member. The 15-strong oil working group concluded that Iraq, quote, 'should be opened to international oil companies as quickly as possible after the war,' and that, quote, 'the country should establish a conducive business environment to attract investment of oil and gas resources.'

''The subgroup went on to recommend production-sharing agreements as their favorite model for attracting foreign investment. Comments by the hand-picked participants revealed that 'many of the group favored production-sharing agreements with oil companies.' Another representative commented, 'Everybody keeps coming back to production-sharing agreements.'

''The reasons for this choice were explained in the formal policy recommendations of the working group, published in April 2003,'' and I quote from this article from Platform:

''Key attractions of production-sharing agreements to private oil companies are that, although the reserves are owned by the state, accounting procedures permit the companies to book the reserves in their accounts, but, other things being equal, the important feature from the perspective of private oil companies is that the government intake is defined in terms of the production-sharing agreement, and the oil companies are therefore protected under a production-sharing agreement from future adverse legislation,'' which means it would be very

tough to be able to have a government, once it gives up its oil wealth, to be able to get it back.

''The group also made it clear that in order to maximize investments, the specific terms of the production-sharing agreements should be favorable to foreign investors: 'PSAs can induce many billions of dollars of direct foreign investment in Iraq, but only with the right terms, conditions, regulatory framework laws, oil industry structure and perceived attitude toward foreign participation.'

''Recognizing the importance of this announcement, The Financial Times noted: 'Production-sharing deals allow oil companies a favorable profit margin and, unlike royalty schemes, insulates them from losses incurred when the oil price drops. For years, big oil companies have been fighting for such agreements without success in countries such as Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.'

''The article concluded that: 'The move could spell a windfall for big oil companies such as ExxonMobil, Royal Dutch/Shell, BP and TotalFinaElf.' ''

Now, this article goes on to talk about what has been done to try to shape the new Iraq with respect to oil.

''The U.S. and the U.K. have worked hard to ensure that the future path for oil development chosen by the first elected Iraqi Government will closely match their interests. So far it appears they have been highly successful. Production-sharing agreements, which were first proposed by the U.S. State Department group, have emerged as the model of oil development favored by the postinvasion phases of Iraqi Government.

''Phase one: Coalition Provisional Authority and Iraqi Governing Council. During the first 14 months following the invasion, occupation forces had direct control of Iraq through the Coalition Provisional Authority. Stopping short of privatizing oil itself, this Coalition Provisional Authority began setting up a framework for a longer-term oil policy.

''The Coalition Provisional Authority appointed former senior executives from oil companies to begin this process. The first advisers were appointed in January 2003, before the invasion even started, and they were stationed in Kuwait, ready to move in. First, there were Phillip Carroll, formerly of Shell, and Gary Vogler of ExxonMobil, backed up by three employees of the U.S. Department of Energy and one of the Australian Government. Carroll described his role as not only to address short-term fuel needs and the initial repair of production facilities, but also,'' point, '' 'begin planning for the restructuring of the Ministry of Oil to improve its efficiency and effectiveness.' '' Another point: '' 'Begin thinking through Iraq's strategy options for significantly increasing its production capacity.'

''In October 2003, Carroll and Vogler were replaced by Mob McKee of ConocoPhillips and Terry Adams of BP, and finally in 2004, by Mike Stinson of ConocoPhillips and Bob Morgan of BP. The 147,000 pound cost of two British advisers, Adams and Morgan, was met by the U.K. Government. Following the handover to the Iraq Interim Government in June 2004, Stinson became an adviser to the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad.''

Again, from Platform, On the 13th of July, 2003, ''In the first move towards Iraqi self-government, the Coalition Provisional Authority's Administrator Paul Bremer appointed the quasi-autonomous, but virtually powerless, Iraqi Governing Council. On the same day Mr. Bremer appointed Ibrahim Bahr al-Uloum, who had been a member of the U.S. State Department oil working group, as Minister for Oil.''

□ 1215

Within months of his appointment, Bahr al-Uloum announced he was preparing plans for the privatization of Iraq's oil sector, but that no decision would be taken until after the election scheduled for 2005. Speaking to the Financial Times, Bahr al-Uloum, a U.S.-trained petroleum engineer, said the Iraqi oil sector needs privatization, but it is a cultural issue, noting the difficulty of persuading the Iraqi people of any such policy. He then proceeded to announce that he personally supported production sharing agreements for upstream development, giving priority to U.S. oil companies and European companies, probably.

The second phase, the Iraq interim government. In June 2004, the Coalition Provisional Authority handed over Iraq's sovereignty to an interim government headed by Prime Minister Allawi. The position of Minister of Oil, was handed to Thamir al-Ghadban, a U.K.-trained petroleum engineer and former senior adviser to Bahr al-Uloum. In an interview in Shell Oil Company's in-house magazine, al-Ghadban announced that 2005 would be the ''year of dialogue'' with multinational oil companies.

''About 3 months after taking power, Allawi issued a set of guidelines to the Supreme Council for Oil Policy from which the Council was to develop a full petroleum policy. Preempting both the Iraqi elections and drafting of a new constitution, Allawi's guidelines specified that while Iraq's currently producing fields should be developed by the Iraq National Oil Company, all other fields should be developed by private companies, through the contractual mechanism of production sharing agreements.

''Iraq has about 80 known oil fields, only 17 of which are currently in production. Thus the Allawi guidelines would grant the other 63 to private oil companies.''

The third phase, the transitional government and writing the constitution: ''The interim government was replaced in 2005 by the election of Iraq's new National Assembly, which led to the formation of the new government with Ibrahim al-Ja'afari as Prime Minister. In a move which no doubt assisted policy continuity from the period of U.S. control, Ibrihim Bahr al-Uloum was reappointed to the position of Minister for Oil.

''Meanwhile, Ahmad Chalabi, the Pentagon's former favorite to run Iraq, was appointed chair of the Energy Council, which replaced the Supreme Council for Oil Policy as the key overseer of energy and oil policy. Back in 2002, Chalabi had famously promised that 'U.S. companies will have a big shot at Iraqi oil.'

''By June 2005, government sources reported that a Petroleum Law had been drafted, ready to be enacted after the December elections. According to sources, although some details are still being debated, the draft of the Law specifies that while Iraq's currently producing fields should be developed by Iraqi National Oil Company, new fields should be developed by private companies.''

Now, this again comes from an article, Foreign Policy in Focus. The title, ''When It Comes to Oil, the U.S. Administration is Bypassing Democracy in Iraq,'' an article ''Oil Pressure'' by Greg Muttitt, August 28, 2006. It goes on to say: Since the new Iraqi Government was formed in 2006, the U.S. Government has dramatically scaled up its efforts to provide ''advice.'' Last month, the administration and major oil companies reviewed and commented on the new law governing Iraq's crucial oil sector before it had even been seen by the Iraqi Parliament.

''Violating the very notions of freedom and democracy'' the administration invokes in nearly every speech, ''the U.S. Government has actively intervened in the restructuring of Iraq's oil industry since at least 2002.

In December 2002, the State Department established a working group on oil and energy as part of its ''Future of Iraq'' project. The project brought together influential exiled Iraqis with U.S. Government officials and international consultants. Later, some members of the group became part of the Iraqi Government. The result of the project's work was a draft framework for Iraq's oil policy. Despite Iraq being rich in oil and technical expertise, the group recommended a major role for foreign companies through long-term contracts, an approach that would set Iraq at odds with the rest of the Middle East where major oil producers keep their oil in the public sector.

''In March 2003, the wheels started to turn as the Coalition Provisional Authority appointed the former head of Shell USA as a senior oil adviser, in direct contact with the Iraq Ministry of Oil. He was joined by an executive from ExxonMobil, and after 6 months, the post was rotated to former managers of ConocoPhillips and BP.

''In December 2003, the framework was set out in more detail when USAID commissioned a report by the privatization specialists BearingPoint,'' is

the name of the company, entitled 'Options for Developing a Sustainable Long-Term Iraqi Oil Industry.' The report reinforced the 'Future of Iraq's' report, recommending long-term contracts with foreign companies.

''Pointing to the success, as they call it, of this model, BearingPoint used Azerbaijan's privatization model as an example. The report commented approvingly that Azerbaijan's high corruption and lack of democracy had not impeded investment; the government had simply given away a higher share of revenues in order to attract companies. The implication was that Iraq, which has a nascent democracy and chronic corruption, might follow the same approach.

''After the handover to the interim government in June 2004, senior oil advisers, now based within the Iraq Reconstruction Management Office in the U.S. Embassy worked closely with the Iraq Oil Ministry in shaping policy. Post holders included executives from ChevronTexaco and Unocal.

''In 2006, these efforts intensified. In February, the Iraq Reconstruction Management Office advisers accompanied eight senior officials from the Oil Ministry on a trip to the U.S., sponsored by the U.S. Trade and Development Agency. On the trip, they met oil company representatives to discuss the future structure of the Iraq oil industry.

''The same month, at the request of the State Department, USAID provided an adviser to the Oil Ministry, again from BearingPoint,'' the privatization specialist, ''to work directly on a new oil law providing 'legal and regulatory advice and drafting the framework of petroleum and other energy-related legislation, including foreign investment.' ''

''The U.S. campaign on the fledgling Iraqi Government has been successful. Following his appointment in May, new Oil Minister Husayn al-Shahristani announced that one of his top priorities would be writing of an oil law to allow Iraq to sign contracts with 'the largest companies.' ''

''This would be the first time in more than 30 years that foreign companies would receive a major stake in Iraq's oil. Oil was brought into public ownership and control in Iraq in 1975.

''With the ink not yet on the paper, the U.S. has maintained its pressure. On his visit to Baghdad in 2006,'' the U.S. Energy Secretary ''insisted that the Iraqi government must 'pass a hydrocarbon law under which foreign companies can invest.' But the work to make this case had already been done: 'We got every indication they were willing and also felt a necessity to open up this sector,' he commented after a meeting with the Oil Minister and Iraqi officials.

The Energy Secretary did not stop at reviewing the draft law himself in Baghdad. He also arranged for Dr. Al-Shahristani, the new Oil Minister, to meet with nine major oil companies, including Shell, BP, ExxonMobil, ChevronTexaco and ConocoPhillips, for them to comment on the draft as well, during the Minister's trip to Washington, D.C. the following week.

''Given the pressures involved, perhaps the Minister felt he did not have much choice. His promise to pass the law through Parliament by the end of 2006 was set in Iraq's agreement with the International Monetary Fund last December. According to that agreement, IMF officials would also review and comment on a draft in September.

''And still, the draft law had not been seen by the Iraqi Parliament. Meanwhile, an official from the Oil Ministry had stated that Iraqi civil society and the general public will not be consulted at all.

''These issues could hardly be more important for Iraq. Oil accounts for more than 90 percent of government revenue, is the main driver of Iraq's economy. And decisions made in the coming months will not be reversible—once contracts are signed, they will have a major bearing on Iraq's economy and politics for decades to come.''

There is much that has been written, an article in the Associated Press on March 13, 2007, about how Iraqi leaders fear ouster over oil money. Continued White House support for Iraq depended on positive action and all the benchmarks, especially the oil law and sectarian reconciliation, by the close of this parliamentary session. June 30.

In an article in the Los Angeles Times, May 13, 2007, Iraqis resist U.S. pressure to enact oil law. Foreign investment and Shiite control are primary concerns. Here is a quote. ''I did make it clear that we believe it is very important to move on the issues before us in a timely fashion and any undue delay would be difficult to explain.'' That is a quote from Vice President CHENEY, who recently visited Iraq to urge the passage of the Hydrocarbon Act, among other matters.

''The U.S. Energy Secretary calls on Iraq to open up its oil sector to foreign investment.'' This is an article from the 21st of July, 2006, saying that U.S. Energy Secretary Samuel Bodman has urged Iraq to establish a legal framework that would be instrumental in attracting foreign investment.

Other articles. From a Department of Energy press release, July 26, 2006: Secretary Bodman hosts Iraqi Ministers of Oil and Electricity. Energy leaders sign memorandum of understanding to further promote electricity cooperation.

From Agence France-Presse, U.S. wants new Iraq oil law so foreign firms can take part. July 18, 2006. The United States on Tuesday urged Iraq to adopt a new hydrocarbon law that would enable U.S. and other foreign companies to invest in the war-torn country's oil sector.

We all know that the Iraq Study Group, in one of its major recommendations, Recommendation 63, said the United States should encourage investment in Iraq's oil sector by the international community and international energy companies; that the United States should assist Iraqi leaders to reorganize the national oil industry as a commercial enterprise; that the United States should ensure the World Bank's efforts to assure that best practices are used in contracting.

Mr. Speaker, the last 50 minutes that I have spent talking about the effort to try to privatize Iraq's oil, if you go to one of the search engines, you can find perhaps 1 million different citations relating to this. So it is impossible to cover this kind of a subject, even in a period of an hour. But it needs to be said that this administration has pushed the Congress to put language in funding bills for Iraq that would set the stage for the privatization of Iraq's oil.

I am going to quote from the first war supplemental, that the President shall make and transmit to Congress a determination, No. 2, whether the Government of Iraq is making substantial progress in meeting its commitment to pursue reconciliation initiatives, including enactment of a hydrocarbon law. Then under subsection (b), it says if the President fails to make this determination, the Secretary of Defense shall commence the redeployment of our Armed Forces from Iraq.

In other words, privatize your oil, or we are leaving you without having a security and peacekeeping force to replace the United States Army.

□ 1230

In the second supplemental, the administration language promoted the President transmitting to Congress a report in classified and unclassified form, article 2, whether the Government of Iraq has enacted a broadly accepted hydrocarbon law that equitably shares revenues among all Iraqis.

Now again, they don't talk about what the real purpose of the Hydrocarbon Act has been. It is not about sharing revenues equitably; it is about a complex restructuring of Iraq's oil industry for the purpose of turning Iraq's oil over to private oil companies.

Finally, in the third supplemental that is before this Congress this week, there is an article from the Senate side that relates to Iraq oil, and I quote: ''The United States strategy in Iraq shall hereafter be conditioned on the Iraqi Government meeting certain benchmarks.'' And one such benchmark, ''enacting and implementing legislation to ensure the equitable distribution of hydrocarbon resources of the people of Iraq.'' And it goes on to pay homage to the issues of equity and ethnicity.

Madam Speaker, it is clear that the people of Iraq are under enormous pressure to give up control of their oil. When you consider that there was no cause to go to war against Iraq, that Iraq did not have weapons of mass destruction, that Iraq had nothing to do with 9/11, that Iraq had nothing to do with al Qaeda's role in 9/11, that the administration kept changing the reason

why we went into Iraq, and here we are, years later, we are still in Iraq, and enormous pressure is being put on the Iraqi Government to privatize their oil.

I am here to say that there is another path that can be taken, and that path is part of H.R. 1234, a bill that I have written that would enable the war to end by Congress determining that no more money will go for this war, telling the administration that it must open up diplomatic relations with Syria and Iran, and moving in a direction where we put together an international peacekeeping and security force that would move in as our troops leave. And then we set the stage for real reconciliation that cannot come with the U.S. serving as an occupying army.

We have a moral responsibility to the Iraqi people whose country we have ravaged with war to the tune of hundreds of billions of dollars of damage, whose people may have experienced the loss of perhaps as many as a million Iraqis during this conflict, innocent people, whose social bonds have been torn asunder. We have a moral responsibility to work to bring about a program of reconciliation between the Sunnis, Shiites and the Kurds which can only come when we end the occupation. We have a moral responsibility to bring about an honest reconstruction program, absent the U.S. contractors who have been gouging the Iraqi people, and gouging the American taxpayers as well, but we have to make sure that the Iraqi people have control of their oil.

I would like to believe that this war has not been about oil. I would like to believe that there was some kind of a righteous cause connected to what we did; but I know better, and the proof is in this Hydrocarbon Act.

This Congress has an opportunity to finally take a stand and reject this Hydrocarbon Act. We can strip out this provision forcing Iraq to privatize its oil. We can strip that out of the legislation. Or we can simply defeat the legislation because that is in there, and then go back to the boards and tell the President, look, Mr. President, we are not going to give you any more money for this war, which is what I believe we should do. Tell the President, this war is over, Mr. President, and use the money that is in the pipeline to bring the troops home. Let's go and reach out to the international community. With the end of the occupation and the closing of bases, we will have people who will start listening to us internationally, and we will have some credibility.

But the morality which this country rests on, our heart and soul of who we are as Americans, is not reflected by this obscene attempt to steal the oil resources of Iraq. That is why I have chosen to take this time to come before the Congress, to lay these facts out for Members of Congress and for the American people so that you can see without question the relationship between war and this oil and the relationship between the pressure that is being put on the Iraq Government right now and privatization and the continuation of the war.

Let's end this war. Let's end the attempt to control Iraq's oil. Let's challenge the oil companies in this country as this House has done this morning. Let's take a stand for truth and justice. Let's take a stand for what is right. Let us not be seduced by this idea that somehow we have the military might, and we can, therefore, grab other people's resources. That is not what America is about.

America has a higher calling in the world. It is time we began a process of truth and reconciliation in our own country, in reaching out and creating the healing of America. But we must first begin with the truth, and the truth is what I have told this Congress today.

Madam Speaker, thank you.

Members of Congress, thank you.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1100, CARL SANDBURG HOME NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE BOUNDARY REVISION ACT OF 2007

Mr. ARCURI. Madam Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 429 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 429

Resolved, That at any time after the adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1100) to revise the boundary of the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site in the State of North Carolina, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived except those arising under clause 9 or 10 of rule XXI. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Natural Resources. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. It shall be in order to consider as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the five-minute rule the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Natural Resources now printed in the bill. The committee amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be considered as read. All points of order against the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute are waived except those arising under clause 9 or 10 of rule XXI. Notwithstanding clause 11 of rule XVIII, no amendment to the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be in order except those printed in the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolutiuon. Each such amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole. All points of order against such amendments are waived except those arising under clause 9 or 10 of rule XXI. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. Any Member may demand a separate vote in the House on any amendment adopted in the Committee of the Whole to the bill or to the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

SEC. 2. During consideration in the House of H.R. 1100 pursuant to this resolution, notwithstanding the operation of the previous question, the Chair may postpone further consideration of the bill to such time as may be designated by the Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. TAUSCHER). The gentleman from New York (Mr. ARCURI) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. ARCURI. Madam Speaker, for purposes of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. HASTINGS). All time yielded during consideration of the rule is for debate only.

I yield myself such time as I may consume, and I also ask unanimous consent that all Members be given 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on House Resolution 429.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. ARCURI. Madam Speaker, House Resolution 429 provides for consideration of H.R. 1100, the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site Boundary Revision Act of 2007, under a structured rule. The rule provides 1 hour of general debate controlled by the Committee on Natural Resources and makes in order the substitute reported by the Committee on Natural Resources. The rule also allows for consideration of all three amendments that were submitted to the Rules Committee on H.R. 1100.

Madam Speaker, let me begin by congratulating my good friend and freshman class colleague Mr. SHULER for working this thoughtful legislation through the legislative process. H.R. 1100 will further preserve the legacy and communicate the stories of internationally recognized author, Pulitzer Prize-winner, and great American historian, Carl Sandburg.

Located in the pristine wilderness of North Carolina is the 248-acre Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site. Each year, over 150,000 people visit for the purpose of learning about Carl Sandburg's positive influences on writing, or to hike and just enjoy the splendor of this beautiful, pristine site.

In recent years it was determined by interested parties at all levels, local, State and Federal, including the National Park Service, that increasing

the size would be desirable to carry out the purposes of this historic site.

H.R. 1100 addresses the need for more space by authorizing the Secretary of the Interior to acquire up to 115 acres of land from willing sellers by donation, purchase with donated or appropriated funds, or exchange.

Now, for some unknown reason, some my colleagues have labeled this legislation an ''egregious example of landgrabbing'' by the Federal Government. Nothing could be further from the truth. The key point to this legislation is that the land would have to be acquired from ''willing sellers.''

Of the 115 acres, 5 acres would be used to construct a new visitor center and parking lot, and the remaining 110 acres would be used to enhance the overall experience when visiting the site. Visitors will now have an opportunity to sit on the same ridge Carl Sandburg sat to pen some of his greatest works and explore the same beautiful mountainside Carl Sandburg would frequent with his family for picnics.

Madam Speaker, H.R. 1100 has strong bipartisan support here in the House, and bicameral support from North Carolina's two Senators, who have introduced companion legislation.

Further, H.R. 1100 has the support of the administration, as well as the State of North Carolina and Henderson County, where the site is located.

All of that said, with such broad support, one might ask why are we here debating a rule for consideration of this legislation? The reason is that during a subcommittee and later full committee markup, it was discovered that there are a few Members of this body who object to the legislation in its current form. Those Members made several attempts to alter the existing legislation by amendment during the committee process. In addition, those same Members submitted amendments to the Rules Committee which we will consider later today, again seeking to alter this legislation.

While one might argue that our debate today is unnecessary, I contend it is yet another example of the majority's efforts to provide our colleagues with opportunities to offer their amendments, voice their views, and make their objections known here in the House Chamber. I look forward to a fruitful discussion of this bill.

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

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. ARCURI) for yielding me the customary 30 minutes, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. HASTINGS of Washington asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 429 allows for consideration of H.R. 1100, the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site Boundary Revision Act, which would increase our Federal inventory of land by up to 115 acres. Rarely does the Rules Committee consider rules for bills making changes to historic sites because they are typically brought to the floor under suspension of the rules.

Mr. Speaker, coming from an area in central Washington that is 40 percent federally owned land mass, I believe we ought to be encouraging land exchanges where possible rather than more land purchases. The Federal land management agencies simply have too much land to manage effectively with their current level of funding. We all know there is a serious backlog of road, trail and facility maintenance on Federal lands. In many cases, Federal land agencies are struggling to manage invasive species, plant pests, and unnaturally high fuel loads that lead to catastrophic wildfires. Yet, year after year, we are spending precious tax dollars to buy up more private property and take it off the local tax rolls.

We need to make land exchanges and the orderly restructuring of Federal land holdings easier. The Federal Government owns and must maintain many small, isolated parcels of land that have no special resource value. We should make it easier for the Federal agencies to dispose of these properties and retain the proceeds to acquire lands that are high in resource value.

□ 1245

This is a practical solution that allows us to protect special places without having to spend limited tax dollars.

I would also add that there are many other issues, in my view more pressing matters, affecting public lands management that we could be considering today. For example, the extension of payments to forested counties for rural schools and roads. As many of my colleagues are aware, the Congress long ago promised rural communities that they would get a fair share of the revenue produced from Federal forestlands as compensation for the tax-exempt status of Federal forestlands.

However, unfortunately, special interest groups successfully used litigation under the Endangered Species Act to bring harvest to a standstill in many places like the Pacific Northwest. This left many counties struggling to pay for basic services while saddled with large areas of nontaxable Federal land. Although the House has passed legislation providing for a 1-year fix on this issue, we need a longer-term solution, and we need to get this legislation to the President's desk as soon as possible.

So, Mr. Speaker, I hope that the House will soon have an opportunity to consider these and other issues impacting Federal land management.

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

Mr. ARCURI. Mr. Speaker, I would like to respond by saying that it's important to note on this bill that all this bill really does is to create an environment for people to donate the land or for funds to be donated to actually purchase the land, and we're not talking about a vast tract of land. We're talking about a very small amount of land, 115 acres, 22 acres of which have already been pledged, and basically are waiting for this legislation to be passed so that the conservatory could be created so that the acreage can be donated to it.

So I would say in response to my good friend and colleague from Washington that this is not any type of huge land grab. This is really just a very small amount of acreage that is being set up and being donated just to enhance the whole, again, experience of the Carl Sandburg site.

So I think it is a very good bill. It is a good rule, and I would urge all of my colleagues to support it.

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

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 1 minute.

I just point out that this is an increase of 44 percent over the current land value, and I know we're talking about acres and we're not talking about square miles. But to paraphrase former Senator Edward Dirksen, in another sense, you know, a billion here, a billion there, pretty soon you're talking about real dollars. Well, we're talking about Federal land ownership, and I'm very sensitive to that because I come from the western part of the United States.

As I mentioned in my opening remarks, 40 percent of my district is owned by the Federal Government, and I have some counties in which 75 percent of the counties' land mass is owned by the Federal Government.

Mr. Speaker, at this time I'm pleased to yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT).

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this rule today and it goes back to the experience we had on the floor and in committee.

Mr. BISHOP had offered an amendment in the National Parks Subcommittee that would have improved this bill, in my opinion, because his amendment would have reduced the number of acres that are being added to this so-called park. This was not Carl Sandburg's original home. The acreage being added or sought to be added is not even available for view from the Sandburg home. It was not part of the original home. So it made sense that an amendment like this ought to have a vote and it did.

When it came time for a recorded vote, the subcommittee chairman promised to hold the vote open for 15 minutes. About 8 to 9 minutes later, though, for some time the vote on the amendment was passing, once there was one more vote ''nay'' than in the affirmative, between 8 and 9 minutes later, the chairman closed the vote, even though he said he would leave it open for 15 minutes. He closed it as I walked into the door and others alerted him, and actually he never said that

the vote was closed. He simply asked the clerk for a count at that point, and when it was pointed out to him that the vote had not been closed but simply a count asked for, and that I was there when he did that, he still refused to allow my vote, and my vote as reflected would have been ''aye.'' That would have tied the vote. We all know there were others on the way, though we knew not how they would vote. But I was promised that my vote would also be counted in the record but it, in fact, did not.

And we went through a series of parliamentary inquiries to make sure that the chairman had every opportunity to do the right thing, and so that it was not quite as clear as it became, that there was only one reason that vote was held open, and that was to foreclose the opportunity to pass this amendment.

Now, the House rules say that a record vote shall not be held open on the floor for the purpose of changing the outcome of a vote. Clearly, that's what happened here. Clearly, it would have changed the outcome of the vote, at least as I came in, to a tie with other people coming if the vote had been held open as long as the chairman said he was going to.

But the promises of bipartisanship in this Chamber, as we saw it yesterday, as we saw in this subcommittee hearing, are about as hollow as some of the other things around this floor.

Now, as far as the rule, it should have been open to this amendment. The amendment should have been part of the original bill, but through this procedural folly, it was not. And so I object to the rule. I rise in opposition to the rule, and I would encourage our colleagues across the aisle to remember their promises.

I know it's been clear back to November and all those campaign promises leading up to November, and that's a long time, even though the Attorney General is being condemned for forgetting things further back than that. Nonetheless, we won't get into questions of hypocrisy. I just ask you to remember your promises about bipartisanship and open government, because this rule forecloses the openness that we were promised we would have, especially when it pertains to a good amendment that deserves consideration before this floor.

Mr. ARCURI. Mr. Speaker, I must say I'm a bit confused because the gentleman from Texas is opposing the rule, the rule which is allowing the amendment that he is speaking of. So the Rules Committee has put the amendment in, the Bishop amendment, that he's talking about. It will entitle a full and fair debate on it this afternoon, and we are giving the gentleman everything that he has asked for. And he stands up here and talks about some type of hypocrisy, and frankly, I just don't understand why he is mentioning that, why he is talking about that when, in fact, we are giving the rule that allows for debate on that particular amendment.

So we are, in fact, giving the gentleman exactly what he is asking for, and he is opposing the rule. So I guess I just don't understand what his point is, but I would say that we are supporting the rule that, in fact, does allow for full and fair debate on this particular amendment.

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

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT).

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman yielding. There were three amendments made in order on this bill, and what I have a problem with is the process and how ridiculously partisan it was there, and there should have been more made in order here, but I do appreciate what has been made in order.

Mr. ARCURI. Mr. Speaker, we have no further speakers, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of time.

I just simply want to say that the gentleman from Texas, a member of the committee, was apparently told something by the subcommittee chairman and that wasn't carried out, and I think that's the point that he made. I am pleased that the committee has made these three amendments in order. They were debated, and I think the full House deserves that consideration.

I think the rule could have been, obviously, better if it were an open rule on a bill here that certainly is not that controversial.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ARCURI. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1100 will further preserve the legacy and communicate the stories of internationally recognized author, Pulitzer Prize winner and great American historian, Carl Sandburg.

Again, I congratulate my good friend and freshman class colleague, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. SHULER) for his efforts to bring this thoughtful legislation to the floor.

I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join me in voting ''yes'' on the previous question and on the rule so that future generations can also enjoy the beauty and splendor of the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The previous question was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PASTOR). The question is on the resolution.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. 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, this 15-minute vote on adoption of the resolution will be followed by 5-minute votes on motions to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 1252 and H.R. 2429.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 228, nays 198, not voting 6, as follows:

[Roll No. 403]

YEAS—228

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Allen
Altmire
Andrews
Arcuri
Baca
Baird
Baldwin
Barrow
Bean
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
Berry
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Blumenauer
Boren
Boswell
Boucher
Boyd (FL)
Boyda (KS)
Brady (PA)
Braley (IA)
Brown, Corrine
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carney
Carson
Castor
Chandler
Clarke
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Costello
Courtney
Cramer
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (IL)
Davis, Lincoln
DeFazio
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Donnelly
Doyle
Edwards
Ellison
Ellsworth
Emanuel
Engel
Eshoo
Etheridge
Farr
Fattah
Filner
Frank (MA)
Giffords
Gillibrand
Gonzalez
Gordon
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutierrez
Hall (NY)
Hare
Harman
Hastings (FL)
Herseth Sandlin
Higgins
Hill
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Hirono
Hodes
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hooley
Hoyer
Inslee
Israel
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jefferson
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kagen
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilpatrick
Kind
Klein (FL)
Kucinich
Lampson
Langevin
Lantos
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lynch
Mahoney (FL)
Maloney (NY)
Markey
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (NY)
McCollum (MN)
McDermott
McGovern
McIntyre
McNerney
McNulty
Meehan
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Melancon
Michaud
Miller (NC)
Miller, George
Mitchell
Mollohan
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Moran (VA)
Murphy (CT)
Murphy, Patrick
Murtha
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Oberstar
Obey
Olver
Ortiz
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Payne
Perlmutter
Peterson (MN)
Pomeroy
Price (NC)
Rahall
Rangel
Reyes
Rodriguez
Ross
Rothman
Roybal-Allard
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Salazar
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schwartz
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Serrano
Sestak
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shuler
Sires
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Solis
Space
Spratt
Stark
Stupak
Sutton
Tanner
Tauscher
Taylor
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tierney
Towns
Udall (CO)
Udall (NM)
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz (MN)
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watson
Watt
Waxman
Weiner
Welch (VT)
Wexler
Wilson (OH)
Woolsey
Wu
Wynn
Yarmuth

NAYS—198

Aderholt
Akin
Alexander
Bachmann
Bachus
Baker
Barrett (SC)
Bartlett (MD)
Barton (TX)
Biggert
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blunt
Boehner
Bonner
Bono
Boozman
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Brown (SC)
Brown-Waite, Ginny

Buchanan
Burgess
Burton (IN)
Buyer
Calvert
Camp (MI)
Campbell (CA)
Cannon
Cantor
Capito
Carter
Castle
Chabot
Coble
Cole (OK)
Conaway
Crenshaw
Cubin
Culberson
Davis (KY)
Davis, David
Davis, Jo Ann
Davis, Tom
Deal (GA)
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Doolittle
Drake
Dreier
Duncan
Ehlers
Emerson
English (PA)
Everett
Fallin
Feeney
Ferguson
Flake
Forbes
Fortenberry
Fossella
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Gerlach
Gilchrest
Gillmor
Gingrey
Gohmert
Goode
Goodlatte
Granger
Graves
Hall (TX)
Hastert
Hastings (WA)
Hayes
Heller
Hensarling
Herger
Hobson
Hoekstra
Inglis (SC)
Issa
Jindal
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, Sam
Jones (NC)
Jordan
Keller
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kirk
Kline (MN)
Knollenberg
Kuhl (NY)
LaHood
Lamborn
Latham
LaTourette
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (KY)
Linder
LoBiondo
Lucas
Lungren, Daniel E.
Mack
Manzullo
Marchant
Marshall
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul (TX)
McCotter
McCrery
McHenry
McHugh
McKeon
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller, Gary
Moran (KS)
Murphy, Tim
Musgrave
Myrick
Neugebauer
Nunes
Paul
Pearce
Pence
Peterson (PA)
Petri
Pickering
Pitts
Platts
Poe
Porter
Price (GA)
Pryce (OH)
Putnam
Radanovich
Ramstad
Regula
Rehberg
Reichert
Renzi
Reynolds
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Royce
Ryan (WI)
Sali
Saxton
Schmidt
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shadegg
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Souder
Stearns
Sullivan
Tancredo
Terry
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Turner
Upton
Walberg
Walden (OR)
Walsh (NY)
Wamp
Weldon (FL)
Weller
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Wicker
Wilson (NM)
Wilson (SC)
Wolf
Young (AK)
Young (FL)

NOT VOTING—6

DeGette
Hulshof
Hunter
Jones (OH)
McMorris Rodgers
Shays

□ 1319

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan changed her vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

So the resolution was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

FEDERAL PRICE GOUGING PREVENTION ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1252, 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 Illinois (Mr. RUSH) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1252, as amended.

This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 284, nays 141, not voting 7, as follows:

[Roll No. 404]

YEAS—284

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Aderholt
Allen
Altmire
Andrews
Arcuri
Baca
Baird
Baldwin
Barrow
Bean
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
Berry
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Blumenauer
Bono
Boozman
Boren
Boswell
Boucher
Boyd (FL)
Boyda (KS)
Brady (PA)
Braley (IA)
Brown, Corrine
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Buchanan
Butterfield
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carney
Carson
Castle
Castor
Chabot
Chandler
Clarke
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coble
Cohen
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Costello
Courtney
Cramer
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (IL)
Davis, Jo Ann
Davis, Lincoln
DeFazio
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dent
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Donnelly
Doyle
Edwards
Ellison
Ellsworth
Emanuel
Emerson
Engel
English (PA)
Eshoo
Etheridge
Farr
Fattah
Ferguson
Filner
Forbes
Fortenberry
Frank (MA)
Gerlach
Giffords
Gilchrest
Gillibrand
Gillmor
Gonzalez
Goode
Goodlatte
Gordon
Graves
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutierrez
Hall (NY)
Hall (TX)
Hare
Harman
Hastings (FL)
Hayes
Heller
Herseth Sandlin
Higgins
Hill
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Hirono
Hodes
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hooley
Hoyer
Inslee
Israel
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jefferson
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, E. B.
Jones (NC)
Kagen
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Keller
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilpatrick
Kind
Kirk
Klein (FL)
Kucinich
Kuhl (NY)
LaHood
Lampson
Langevin
Lantos
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
LaTourette
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lewis (KY)
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lynch
Mahoney (FL)
Maloney (NY)
Markey
Marshall
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (NY)
McCollum (MN)
McCotter
McDermott
McGovern
McHugh
McIntyre
McNerney
McNulty
Meehan
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Melancon
Michaud
Miller (MI)
Miller (NC)
Miller, George
Mitchell
Mollohan
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Moran (VA)
Murphy (CT)
Murphy, Patrick
Murtha
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Oberstar
Obey
Olver
Ortiz
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Payne
Perlmutter
Petri
Platts
Pomeroy
Price (NC)
Rahall
Ramstad
Rangel
Regula
Reichert
Renzi
Reyes
Rodriguez
Rogers (KY)
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
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shuler
Sires
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (NJ)
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Solis
Space
Spratt
Stark
Stupak
Sutton
Tanner
Tauscher
Taylor
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tierney
Towns
Turner
Udall (CO)
Udall (NM)
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walden (OR)
Walsh (NY)
Walz (MN)
Wamp
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watson
Watt
Waxman
Weiner
Welch (VT)
Wexler
Whitfield
Wilson (NM)
Wilson (OH)
Wolf
Woolsey
Wu
Wynn
Yarmuth
Young (FL)

NAYS—141

Akin
Alexander
Bachmann
Bachus
Baker
Barrett (SC)
Bartlett (MD)
Barton (TX)
Biggert
Bilbray
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blunt
Boehner
Bonner
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Brown (SC)
Burgess
Burton (IN)
Buyer
Calvert
Camp (MI)
Campbell (CA)
Cannon
Cantor
Carter
Cole (OK)
Conaway
Crenshaw
Cubin
Culberson
Davis (KY)
Davis, David
Davis, Tom
Deal (GA)
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Doolittle
Drake
Dreier
Duncan
Ehlers
Everett
Fallin
Feeney
Flake
Fossella
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Gingrey
Gohmert
Granger
Hastert
Hastings (WA)
Hensarling
Herger
Hobson
Hoekstra
Inglis (SC)
Issa
Jindal
Johnson, Sam
Jordan
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kline (MN)
Knollenberg
Lamborn
Latham
Lewis (CA)
Linder
Lucas
Lungren, Daniel E.
Mack
Manzullo
Marchant
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul (TX)
McHenry
McKeon
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller, Gary
Moran (KS)
Murphy, Tim
Musgrave
Myrick
Neugebauer
Nunes
Paul
Pearce
Pence
Peterson (MN)
Peterson (PA)
Pickering
Pitts
Poe
Porter
Price (GA)
Pryce (OH)
Putnam
Radanovich
Rehberg
Reynolds
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Royce
Ryan (WI)
Sali
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shadegg
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (NE)
Smith (TX)
Souder
Stearns
Sullivan
Tancredo
Terry
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Upton
Walberg
Weldon (FL)
Weller
Westmoreland
Wicker
Wilson (SC)
Young (AK)

NOT VOTING—7

DeGette
Hulshof
Hunter
Jones (OH)
McCrery
McMorris Rodgers
Shays

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). Members are advised that 2 minutes remain in this vote.

□ 1330

Messrs. BACHUS, EVERETT, ROGERS of Alabama, MILLER of Florida, and HOBSON changed their vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

Mr. GOODLATTE 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.

PROVIDING EXCEPTION TO LIMIT ON MEDICARE RECIPROCAL BILLING ARRANGEMENTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2429, 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 New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2429.

This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 422, nays 0, answered ''present'' 1, not voting 9, as follows:

[Roll No. 405]

YEAS—422

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Aderholt
Akin
Alexander
Allen
Altmire
Andrews
Arcuri
Baca
Bachmann
Bachus
Baird
Baker
Baldwin
Barrett (SC)
Barrow
Bartlett (MD)
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 (PA)
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
Cubin
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (IL)
Davis (KY)
Davis, David
Davis, Jo Ann
Davis, Lincoln
Davis, Tom
Deal (GA)
DeFazio
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Donnelly
Doolittle
Doyle
Drake
Dreier
Duncan
Edwards
Ehlers
Ellison
Ellsworth
Emanuel
Emerson
Engel
English (PA)
Eshoo
Etheridge
Everett
Fallin
Farr
Fattah
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
Gutierrez
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
Inglis (SC)
Inslee
Israel
Issa
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jefferson
Jindal
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jones (NC)
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 (FL)
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
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Neugebauer
Nunes
Oberstar
Obey
Olver
Ortiz
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Paul
Payne
Pearce
Pence
Perlmutter
Peterson (MN)
Peterson (PA)
Petri
Pickering
Pitts
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
Sessions
Sestak
Shadegg
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
Tancredo
Tanner
Tauscher
Taylor
Terry
Thompson (CA)
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Tierney
Towns
Turner
Udall (CO)
Udall (NM)
Upton
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walberg
Walden (OR)
Walsh (NY)
Walz (MN)
Wamp
Wasserman Schultz
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)

ANSWERED ''PRESENT''—1

Barton (TX)

NOT VOTING—9

DeGette
Hulshof
Hunter
Johnson (GA)
Jones (OH)
McMorris Rodgers
Sali
Shays
Thompson (MS)

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). Members are advised that there are 2 minutes remaining in this vote.

□ 1339

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GRIJALVA. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 1100.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. CLARKE). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Arizona?

There was no objection.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Parliamentary inquiry, Madam Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman may state his parliamentary inquiry.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I wish to reserve a point of order on H.R. 1100, and would ask the Chair at what time would be the appropriate time to reserve that point of order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Now would be the appropriate time to make the point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Then, Madam Speaker, I rise to reserve a point of order against consideration of H.R. 1100 because I believe that the bill itself fits the definition of an earmark. And I would ask the author of the bill if he might, by way of making my point of order, I would quote rule XXI, clause 9(d), which states the definition for a congressional earmark, and it states, Means a provision or report language included primarily at the request of a Member providing, authorizing or recommending a specific amount of discretionary budget authority, credit authority, or other spending authority, or other expenditure, or targeted to a specific State, locality or congressional district, other than through a statutory or administrative formula driven or competitive award process.

And I would be pleased to yield to the author of the bill as to why this bill doesn't fit that definition of an earmark.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman may make his point of order, but may not yield.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. I reserve a point of order then. I make my point of order against the consideration of H.R. 1100.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The point of order may not be reserved.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. I make a point of order against consideration of H.R. 1100.

Madam Speaker, I believe I have made my point that this bill indeed fits the definition of a congressional earmark under rule XXI, clause 9(d) and, therefore, violates the rules of the House and, therefore, should not be considered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair finds that the entry on page 6 of the report of the Committee on Natural Resources constitutes compliance with clause 9(a) of rule XXI. The point of order is overruled.

CARL SANDBURG HOME NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE BOUNDARY REVISION ACT OF 2007

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 429 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on

the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 1100.

□ 1344

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 1100) to revise the boundary of the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site in the State of North Carolina, and for other purposes, with Mr. PASTOR in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered read the first time.

The gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GRIJALVA) and the gentleman from Utah (Mr. BISHOP) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Chairman, H.R. 1100 authorizes a boundary expansion of 115 acres at the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site, a unit of the National Park System in western North Carolina. The bill was introduced by my colleague on the Natural Resources Committee, Representative HEATH SHULER, in whose district the Sandburg National Historic Site is located. Representative SHULER has been a strong advocate for the bill, and I commend him for his enthusiasm and the dedication to this important piece of legislation.

The 264-acre Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site preserves the farm where the two-time Pulitzer Prize-winning author and his family lived for the last 22 years of his life. Carl Sandburg was one of America's most versatile and recognized writers whose stories, histories, and poems captured and recorded America's traditions, struggles, and dreams.

H.R. 1100 authorizes a 115-acre boundary adjustment that is recommended in the historic site's 2003 General Management Plan, a plan developed through a 4-year process that involved extensive public input. The boundary adjustment is necessary to allow construction of a visitor center and a parking lot as well as to protect the pastoral views from the Sandburg estate.

H.R. 1100 authorizes the Secretary of Interior to acquire land from willing sellers only, and I would note that all of the affected landowners have agreed to have their parcels included in the proposal to expand the historic site.

H.R. 1100 is important for the continued protection and operation of this historic site, and it has bipartisan support. At a hearing on the bill last month, the administration testified in support of the legislation, as did a local county commissioner. In the Senate, companion legislation has been sponsored by Senator DOLE and Senator BURR.

During the markup of this bill, the Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands adopted an amendment that made several technical changes and standardized the bill's language. The amended bill was forwarded to the full committee by voice vote. The bill, as amended, was ordered favorably reported to the House by the Natural Resources Committee by voice vote.

Mr. Chairman, H.R. 1100 is a result of a lengthy public planning process. It has extensive and enthusiastic community support, including the support of the landowners involved. It also has the backing of the Bush administration and North Carolina's Republican Senators. Given all this, we have to wonder why there are those who would try to make this, a straightforward bill, controversial.

Mr. Chairman, I would again commend Representative SHULER for his hard work on behalf of this important and worthy legislation, and I strongly urge the passage of H.R. 1100, as amended.

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

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, the headlines in the papers could probably read ''Scramble the Eggs Because We're Bringing Home the Bacon.''

We are going to be leaving for Memorial Day weekend. We will have the ability of standing in front of our constituents, looking them straight in the eye, and saying that one of the last things we did before we went back home was to cast a vote for something that can be described as one of the biggest pieces of pork legislation we have. A contingency from North Carolina, both congressional and senatorial side, come to Washington and they brought something back home. Even though this particular bill does not meet the definition of general welfare as was intended in the Constitution, does not meet a critical need, does not enhance the purpose of a specific park that we have, it does spend money upfront and will yearly require this country to have a larger financial obligation. And it does also tell us that enough votes can deliver anything regardless of the merits.

We intend to show to all those who may be listening that this bill fails on the size, the cost, and the logic of it. We intend to introduce three amendments eventually within this process. One that will say that 5 acres included in this recommendation has logic to it, that we admit that is truly there. There is a need for safe public parking and a visitor center, which is the 5 acres they requested.

We will also present an amendment which will say the first thing we need to do is make sure that we are dealing with the backlog of resource needs that we have. This particular park, according to the National Park Service, has $600,000 worth of construction needs in the regular park itself, which we should be doing before we try any kind of expansion.

We will also be introducing, by Mr. HELLER of Nevada, an amendment that says if this land wishes to be donated, we will accept it.

Had any of these three amendments been adopted in the committee, the committee of jurisdiction, this bill would probably be here as a suspension bill. But when the attitude is it's all or nothing, rejecting any kind of minority input, we will probably object for the logic in this bill. This bill can be jammed through by the numbers but certainly not by the logic.

Mr. Chairman, I realize the chief sponsor is here, and I think it would be only fair to allow him to have the opportunity to speak now in defense of his bill before I go on.

Mr. Chairman, with that, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Chairman, I yield such time as he may consume to the chairman of the Natural Resources Committee, Mr. RAHALL.

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Chairman, I certainly want to commend the distinguished chairman of the subcommittee, Mr. GRIJALVA, the respected chairman of the Subcommittee on Parks, Forests and Public Lands, for his efforts in managing the bill on the floor today and bringing this legislation before us.

I, of course, do rise in support of H.R. 1100, introduced by one of our newest colleagues on the Natural Resources Committee, a very respected member of our committee, Representative HEATH SHULER. I commend Mr. SHULER for his work on this legislation as well as his dedication to his constituents, who stand firmly behind this bill to protect and interpret a local resource that has national importance. Some may call it pork. Whatever you want. But the last time I checked, we are the people's House of Representatives. We represent the people that sent us here. And perhaps because Mr. SHULER is doing such an effective job of that, it raises the ire of some in this body. But he has worked diligently to guide this bill through the legislative process. I applaud him for those efforts.

Carl Sandburg was an American poet, a biographer, novelist, and songwriter. Today the farm he owned is preserved as the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site, managed by the National Park Service for all Americans to visit and learn about the life and works of one of America's most beloved authors.

During the 22 years Sandburg spent at the farm until his death in 1967, he published more than ten volumes of poetry and prose, including a novel and an autobiography. And it was this farm he returned to after winning his second Pulitzer Prize in 1951.

The pending measure is important to the future protection and interpretation of the Sandburg farm. The 115-acre boundary adjustment will allow for the construction of a much-needed visitor center and parking lot. As important, the boundary adjustment will provide the opportunity to protect the views

from the Sandburg estate that the author and his family cherished and that today's visitors so richly enjoy.

The State of North Carolina's Department of Cultural Resources has recognized the importance of protecting the views from Sandburg's estate by purchasing 22 acres within the proposed boundary expansion area. They intend to donate these acres to the National Park Service upon authorization of the boundary adjustment. All of the other affected landowners have agreed to have their properties included within the proposed boundary adjustment.

This is a straightforward bill, as the chairman of the subcommittee has said. It enjoys bipartisan support, and I urge that it be approved by all of our colleagues on the House floor.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Chairman, I yield such time as he may consume to the author and sponsor of the legislation, Congressman SHULER.

Mr. SHULER. Mr. Chairman, Carl Sandburg was a national treasure who spent 20 years of his life in the mountains of western North Carolina. While he was not a native son, we in North Carolina are certainly proud to claim him as one of our own.

His farm is now a National Historic Site visited by thousands of families around the world. This site is important both for its history and its beauty.

H.R. 1100 would revise the boundary of the historic site to add 115 acres. The addition would serve two purposes. The first purpose is to protect the scenic views and open spaces the Sandburg family enjoyed from their home. The second purpose is to allow the site to build a much-needed visitor center and parking area. These additions are part of the site's General Management Plan which was adopted in 2003, after a full public process.

This bill has wide bipartisan support. The administration has testified in support of this bill. North Carolina Senators RICHARD BURR and ELIZABETH DOLE are pushing companion legislation in the Senate. And this is strongly supported by local county government.

I thank Chairman GRIJALVA, Chairman RAHALL, and members of the committee for their support.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Chairman, it is my pleasure to yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WESTMORELAND).

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Mr. Chairman, I want to thank my friend from Utah for yielding.

It's quite interesting. I was listening to the rule debate, and the gentleman from New York said that the reason this was being brought up under a rule is to make sure that the process was open and that there were people who had amendments, and I just thought that was quite comical and more of the smoke-and-mirror thing that this majority has put forth.

Mr. Chairman, I rise today in opposition of H.R. 1100. This is a great opportunity for us to realize what an earmark is, whether it is recognized by the Chair as an earmark or not, what real pork is, and what a Federal land grab is.

This is designed to increase the National Park Service's land inventory. This is ironic considering that the National Park Service currently has an overall maintenance backlog for lands it currently owns. In fact, this very site, the Carl Sandburg National Historic Site, already has $600,000 in deferred maintenance cost itself.

The author of the bill said that this was a mission to allow the site. If my understanding is correct, you cannot even see the additional 115 acres from the home site itself. And I don't know if this is going to involve any landscaping or cutting down trees or grading costs or whatever, and maybe Mr. Sandburg did see this, but it must have been on a walk and not from his home.

This was not an original part of the Sandburg estate. And if you read the intent of the legislation when it was done, it was to preserve the farm, not to buy up all the surrounding land.

Mr. Chairman, I hope that my colleagues will understand exactly what this bill is, that they will oppose it and join me in protecting the taxpayers' dollar.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

This bill authorizes the purchase of 115 acres. I have already said 5 acres is legitimate. There is a need for safe parking and a visitor center, and that is the amount of space that they need. It is the other 110 acres which, unfortunately, fits the title of ''pork.''

This park is about Carl Sandburg. It is supposed to venerate his life and his literary legacy. Unfortunately, the extra 110 acres has absolutely nothing to do with his life or literary legacy.

The National Park System said, and some that sit here on the floor, that this land would protect the viewshed. The logical question is what viewshed? The ridge is the natural boundary of this park. The land to be adopted is over the ridge, which means you stand anywhere in that extra 100 acres and you can't see the house from that acreage. You stand at the house and you can't see the acreage unless we give you some complimentary periscopes. Simply, there is no view to deal with.

The county came up here and said, well, this park has evolved, kind of like Jurassic Park, and now we are trying to protect some of the historic pasturelands.

□ 1400

Historic pasturelands? This is about Carl Sandburg. He wrote about Abraham Lincoln. He did not invent Arby's.

They also said during the committee that this is to protect the resources. The resources of this park is the house. You could be on that 100 acres they want to add, and the house could burn to the ground, and you wouldn't know about it until the fire trucks from the town came running by the road to get there. This has nothing to do with preserving and protecting the vast purpose of this particular park. I've got four problems with this bill, this is the first one.

The second one deals with the cost. When we had the hearing in the markup, it was said that this bill would cost between 2- and $3 million. CBO has now scored it at $7 million. They have also said it will incur to the Federal Government an ongoing expense of a half million dollars a year. This park already costs about $1.2 million to run. They bring in about $100,000 to $200,000 worth of revenue a year, so it is a $1 million drag on the Federal Treasury at first. This will add to that, making it a $1.5 million net deficit every year the existence of this park is there.

Now, some people will say, look, it's only 100 acres. We're only talking about $7 million. In the scope of what we do here in the Nation, that's not much. But if you actually spend $7 million here, 2- or $3 million there, pretty soon you realize that we are in a situation where we have squandered all our money, and we don't have anything for those deserving projects that actually are before us.

The National Park Service said this park itself needs $600,000 in maintenance work. It is galling that a park system that is always talking about the need would in any way recommend or that we as a body would adopt that recommendation to try and expand into areas that we are not necessarily dealing with.

I show you this picture right now because it is Dinosaur National Monument. It straddles the border between Utah and Colorado. This is the visitors center. I used to go there. This is exciting. The entire mountain has been scaled back, and you can see the fossil remains of dinosaurs. Unfortunately, this is condemned. No school kid can ever go into this building or see the fossil remains. No Park Service employee can go in there because this is on the backlog of stuff that needs to be done.

Before we buy extraneous territory that adds to something that has nothing to do with the mission of the park, we should solve these types of problems first, because the money we use to buy this land in North Carolina is money that will not be used in real parks, for real needs, for real issues anywhere else in the Nation, in California, in Arizona, in New Mexico, in Maine. None of those will receive that. It is simply a misplaced sense of priority.

Now, this area was represented in the past by a gentleman who used to chair the appropriations subcommittee that dealt with public lands. He could have easily added this kind of money to an appropriations prospect. But having the ability of seeing the overall needs that we have in our forest system, our

parks system, our public lands system, he flat out didn't. He did take, instead of a parochial view, a very patriotic view of the needs of this country, and I am hopeful that we will do that as well.

There is a third area of concern I have, and that deals with community. To be honest, we are dealing with a community that overtaxed its citizens by $5 million last year. They brought in $5 million more than they spent. They have a general reserve fund of $21 million. If this is definitely needed as open space, because it doesn't really fit the park, but any kind of open space, they could easily do that. Or they could do what cash-strapped cities in the West do, which is simply bond for that kind of an approach. Even the idea that 20 acres was given to the State, and that the State will now dedicate that, still presents another problem because that means that forevermore this county will have additional PILT land, and additional PILT money will be going to that, which, once again, cuts into the amount which is a finite supply for all of us that are left.

The fourth reason I have a problem with this bill is simply it's not pork. If this was a significant addition to giving the message of Carl Sandburg, I would not object to it. If this was the 5 acres that is a significant addition for parking, safety and for a visitors center, I would not object to it. But this is simply land that doesn't protect a viewshed, that doesn't have any historical connection with the family. It is land that is simply being gobbled up and will forevermore be subsidized through PILT payments by this body to this county. And when we have these other needs, the question is simply, for what? There is no logic for that.

This is a hard place, I know, to deal with logic; but this is one of those bills that simply defies logic. Mr. Chairman, for that reason I have to oppose this particular bill.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Chairman, as we go into the discussion and the debate on the amendments, let me just remind my colleagues that H.R. 1100 is supported by the Bush administration, State and local governments, citizens, and North Carolina's Republican Senators. I would also note that the 115-acre addition was developed through a 4-year planning process.

And, yes, Carl Sandburg is beloved in North Carolina, but his significance is of national importance. That is why our cosponsors from east coast to west coast are part of this bipartisan legislation.

Mr. Chairman, I would say that the preservation of the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site and the enhancement of that site is a national responsibility, and that is why this legislation is important, to extend that national responsibility.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIRMAN (Mr. ROSS). All time for general debate has expired.

Pursuant to the rule, the amendment in the nature of a substitute printed in the bill shall be considered as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the 5-minute rule and shall be considered read.

The text of the committee amendment is as follows:

H.R. 1100

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 ''Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site Boundary Revision Act of 2007''.

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

For the purposes of this Act:

(1) MAP.—The term ''map'' means the map entitled ''Sandburg Center Alternative'' numbered 445/80,017 and dated April 2007.

(2) SECRETARY.—The term ''Secretary'' means the Secretary of the Interior.

(3) HISTORIC SITE.—The term ''Historic Site'' means Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site.

SEC. 3. CARL SANDBURG HOME NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENT.

(a) ACQUISITION AUTHORITY.—The Secretary may acquire from willing sellers by donation, purchase with donated or appropriated funds, or exchange not more than 110 acres of land, water, or interests in land and water, within the area depicted on the map, to be added to the Historic Site.

(b) VISITOR CENTER.—To preserve the historic character and landscape of the site, the Secretary may also acquire up to five acres for the development of a visitor center and visitor parking area adjacent to or in the general vicinity of the Historic Site.

(c) BOUNDARY REVISION.—Upon acquisition of any land or interest in land under this section, the Secretary shall revise the boundary of the Historic Site to reflect the acquisition.

(d) AVAILABILITY OF MAP.—The map shall be on file and available for public inspection in the appropriate offices of the National Park Service.

(e) ADMINISTRATION.—Land added to the Historic Site by this section shall be administered as part of the Historic Site in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. No amendment to the committee amendment is in order except the amendments printed in House Report 110–165. Each amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report; by a Member designated in the report; shall be considered read; shall be debatable for the time specified in the report, equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent of the amendment; shall not be subject to amendment; and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question.

AMENDMENT NO. 1 OFFERED BY MR. BISHOP OF UTAH

The Acting CHAIRMAN. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 1 printed in House Report 110–165.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Chairman, I offer an amendment.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Amendment No. 1 offered by Mr. BISHOP of Utah:

Page 2, line 20, after the period insert the following: ''The authority to acquire property under this subsection may not be exercised until all maintenance for the Historic Site deferred as of the day before the date of the enactment of this Act has been completed.''.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to House Resolution 429, the gentleman from Utah (Mr. BISHOP) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Utah.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Chairman, as I said in the opening remarks, we are going to try to present some amendments that can actually make this into a better bill.

This is the first one in which I want to do which simply deals with the backlog we are talking about.

This amendment requires the Park Service to eliminate its maintenance backlog at this particular national historic site, the Carl Sandburg site, prior to the purchasing of land.

As I said already, there is a $600,000 backlog that the Park Service has said exists already at Carl Sandburg's historic site. According to the Congressional Budget Office, this bill costs $7 million to implement. Those funds must be prioritized on an ''existing needs'' list, which means the Park Service has the discretion to use the $7 million to buy new land before they actually fix the existing buildings that happen to be there.

Overall, the Park Service has a maintenance backlog that's anywhere from $5- to $10 billion. This is not the time to buy more land until we fix the existing problems. Any addition to this park simply exacerbates the problem. And this bill, not only in the overall cost, but also add an additional $500,000 a year on operating costs of this particular park.

So once again, Mr. Chairman, this is the purpose of this particular amendment, to say, fine. What we will do, though, is make sure that what we own and what we are operating and what we are using, which is actually the house, it's about Carl Sandburg, should be properly maintained first before the Park System uses any of this money that may be appropriated or any of their dedicated funds that they may have for that kind of appropriation to expand the park. Fix what we have first.

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

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to this amendment.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from Arizona is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Chairman, this amendment is clearly intended to stop the boundary expansion at the Carl Sandburg home historical site from ever happening. It imposes excessive, ill-defined requirements on this historic site, standards that we have never imposed on any other national park or government agency, and that I suspect most of us would never impose

on ourselves. Could you, as a homeowner, certify that all maintenance on your home is ever complete? Isn't there always a light bulb to be changed, a wall to be painted? Would we expect the Department of Defense to certify that maintenance on every piece of equipment in their inventory is complete before allowing them to purchase new equipment? Of course not. So why is the Carl Sandburg Home Historic Site expected to meet that standard?

The minority has had 12 years to do something about the National Park Service maintenance backlog and failed to act, but that failure should not be allowed to hinder the continuing needs of the National Park System.

The new majority in Congress is committed to addressing the past budget shortfalls, while managing and growing the National Park Service responsibly. We can do both, and we must do both.

Further, Mr. BISHOP's amendment requires an unspecified person to determine that all deferred maintenance at Carl Sandburg has been completed, but fails to define not only who makes the determination, but also what the definition of ''deferred maintenance'' is. Therefore, I don't see how a determination can ever be made. Even the Director of the National Park Service herself has testified before the Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands that deferred maintenance is an ongoing process, just like it is for every other Federal agency or a homeowner.

The North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources has already purchased 22 of the 110 acres proposed to be added. They would like to donate these lands to the National Park Service, but Congress must authorize this boundary adjustment first. This amendment would require the State to continue to hold the land indefinitely, something they should not have to do.

Mr. Chairman, this amendment will have no impact on whether the backlog of maintenance on the national parks is managed effectively. Rather, it was simply introduced to kill this boundary addition. I urge defeat of the amendment.

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

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Chairman, I think it is one of those things that it's a simple question: Do we expand what we have, buy more stuff to take care of, or do we take care of what we have first? And I have to admit that under Republican leadership we have had huge increases in these budgets; however, the need is still significantly there.

I appreciate the comments that were made by my colleague, the gentleman from Arizona, as to what those deferred maintenance needs may or may not be. Actually, the Park Service has already done that. They have listed out exactly what needs to be done there. In fact, I said $600,000. I was wrong. It's $599,673 worth of specific maintenance that has to be done on this site first. And it just makes sense that we take care of this first before we do any kind of other expansions; otherwise, we are simply not dealing properly with what should be before us.

I appreciate, also, the fact that North Carolina bought the 22 acres, but I would remind you also that they bought it from a group that virtually had the land so it could be kept in open space in the first place, and that as soon as we federalize these acres as well as the other 110 acres, this automatically becomes PILT money available for North Carolina. This is the gift that keeps on giving and the cost that keeps on costing the rest of this Nation.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to my colleague from North Carolina, sponsor of the legislation (Mr. SHULER).

Mr. SHULER. Mr. Chairman, this amendment unfairly targets H.R. 1100.

The gentleman from Utah did not offer this amendment to two similar Republican bills. Had he required H.R. 1080, Mrs. CUBIN's legislation dealing with the Grand Teton National Park, to delay land acquisition until deferred maintenance was completed, it would have cost them $57 million. That is 115 times more in deferred maintenance costs than the Carl Sandburg home.

None of these groups or agencies is required to complete backlog maintenances. That is because the maintenance is never fully completed, and it is an ongoing process.

This amendment fails to define the deferred maintenance, what it is, who will complete it, or in what time frame it is to be completed. It is a weak attempt to stop legislation.

I urge my colleagues to vote ''no'' on this amendment.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Utah (Mr. BISHOP).

The question was taken; and the Chairman announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Utah will be postponed.

□ 1415

AMENDMENT NO. 2 OFFERED BY MR. BISHOP OF UTAH

The Acting CHAIRMAN. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 2 printed in House Report 110–165.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Chairman, I offer an amendment.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Amendment No. 2 offered by Mr. BISHOP of Utah:

Page 2, line 18, strike ''110'' and insert ''five''.

Page 2, line 18, strike the comma at the end.

Page 2, strike ''within the area depicted on the map,''.

Page 2, line 22, strike ''also'' and all that follows through ''acres'' on line 23 and insert the following: ''use the land, water, or interests in land and water acquired under subsection (a)''.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to House Resolution 429, the gentleman from Utah (Mr. BISHOP) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Utah.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Chairman, this is the amendment that does what I originally said ought to have been done. There has been compelling evidence that there is a need for 5 additional acres to provide for safe parking enhancement and to provide for a visitors center. In addition, in the testimony we had at the hearing, they asked that this acreage not be made mandatory as contiguous to the park itself to leave them the flexibility as far as the planning process.

So what I am asking for this to do is make in order those 5 acres, which I admit is a legitimate request, and it would not include the extra 110 acres that are supposedly for a viewshed protection that no one can see or for a resource that is not related in any way to the purpose of this particular park.

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

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Chairman, the Bishop amendment arbitrarily slashes the boundary adjustment at the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site by 95 percent. This reduction is based on no science, no studies, and would substitute the judgment of a few for those of the many.

The National Park Service has invested 4 years and tens of thousands of dollars in a public planning process to determine the future of this very important historic site. With extensive analysis and public input, a 115-acre boundary adjustment was determined to be necessary to protect park resources and provide for the enjoyment of the public. Mr. BISHOP's amendment simply ignores this, undermining good public policy.

The amendment flies in the face of the wishes of the local community, including the village council and the local county commissioners. It defies the many State and Federal agencies that participated in and supported the outcome of the multiyear planning process. It contradicts the wishes of the Bush administration, who testified in support of this legislation at a hearing just last month. And it goes against the desires of two Senators from North Carolina, both Republicans, I might add, who have sponsored companion legislation in the Senate.

Mr. Chairman, this amendment also flies in the face of the desires of landowners in question who have agreed to have their properties included in the proposed boundary expansion. It virtually guarantees these lands will be developed. The owners would like the opportunity at some future date to sell their property or an easement on their property to the historic site for conservation purposes. If and when these landowners are ready to sell their land, this amendment assures that the Federal Government would not be at the table, but a developer surely will.

Mr. Chairman, the Natural Resources Committee has moved this year Republican-sponsored park expansion bills that have added more than 3,000 acres at a cost of millions of dollars with no amendment of this type offered. Money and expanding parking are clearly not the real issue here. The Bishop amendment has no science, no studies, no local support, and it should be defeated.

Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. SHULER).

Mr. SHULER. Mr. Chairman, this amendment violates the wishes of the residents of Henderson County, their Republican county commissioners, the State of North Carolina, Republican Senators ELIZABETH DOLE and RICHARD BURR and the administration.

Additionally, this amendment flies in the face of the 2003 general management plan that was conducted publicly with wide support. This general management plan included all 115 acres that are in this bill. This amendment would eliminate the ability of the Carl Sandburg Home to protect their viewshed and thus undermine the purpose of this bill.

My bill is not seeking any appropriation or requiring the government to purchase anything. I oppose this amendment, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Chairman, I take some umbrage at the claim that this is an arbitrary number that is taken out. In our hearing testimony, it was very clear from both the park as well as the county that 5 acres was what was needed for the parking and the visitors center. That is not a number pulled out of the air. It was specifically for 5 acres. That is why I have continuously used that particular number.

Things have changed, I admit, since the hearing. When we had the hearing, it was said this would totally cost somewhere between $2 million and $3 million. CBO has said today this will cost $7 million and a continuing ongoing fee of $500,000 every year.

I would not be necessarily as opposed to this if indeed donation was the goal. It is unfair to the gentlelady from Wyoming, as well as the bill that deals with a donation of land to the Grand Teton National Park, to compare this with that. That was simply a donation. The total cost is zero. The total expansion of that park is expanding the Grand Teton Park by six ten-thousandths of a percent. This particular bill expands this park 44 percent, and if you divide $7 million by the number of acres, that is something around $64,000 an acre.

That would be a cost that would be there. There is an ongoing cost and an ongoing decision that the United States needs to go into if we are going to make these kinds of decisions.

Like I said, the amendment is straightforward. There is a need for parking. There is a need for the visitors center; 5 acres meets that need. The rest of it is simply not a need, it is not necessary, and we should reject this kind of pork.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Just in closing, on the issue of cost, CBO scored this bill as costing $7 million because they included the cost of the future visitors center that was estimated at $3.5 million. Just for the record, I note that both Mr. BISHOP's amendment and Mr. HELLER's amendment allow the $3.5 million to be spent on the visitors center.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Utah (Mr. BISHOP).

The amendment was rejected.

AMENDMENT NO. 3 OFFERED BY MR. HELLER OF NEVADA

The Acting CHAIRMAN. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 3 printed in House Report 110–165.

Mr. HELLER of Nevada. Mr. Chairman, I offer an amendment.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Amendment No. 3 offered by Mr. HELLER of Nevada:

Page 2, strike lines 15 through 20 and insert the following:

(a) ACQUISITION AUTHORITY.—The Secretary may acquire from willing sellers by donation, purchase with donated funds, or exchange not more than 110 acres of land, water, or interests in land and water, within the area depicted on the map, to be added to the Historic Site.''.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to House Resolution 429, the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. HELLER) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Nevada.

Mr. HELLER of Nevada. Mr. Chairman, in the spirit of my colleague from Utah, I rise today to offer an amendment to H.R. 1100 that will allow for the expansion of the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site, provided that it is acquired from willing sellers by donation, purchased with donated funds, or exchange.

As those of us from public land States know all too well, public funding for lands management is insufficient to adequately manage the current Federal estate. Nearly 85 percent of my home State of Nevada is controlled by the Federal Government. In Nevada, we have vast management needs. We need funding for important priorities like the management of wild horses and burros, wildfire mitigation and management, endangered species, and rangeland and habitat restoration, to just name a few. And I know this is the case across much of the West.

We need to be cognizant of the fact that every time we add to the Federal estate, it spreads our already limited resources even thinner. As a result, Mr. Chairman, any additions to the Federal estate must be carefully debated and have demonstrable necessities of Federal protection.

This bill was reported out of committee, Mr. Chairman, with an estimated price tag of $2.25 million. Since that time, as mentioned by my colleague from Utah, the Congressional Budget Office has scored this legislation and determined that the actual price tag is $7 million.

That is no small chunk of change; $7 million can provide energy assistance to over 44,000 North Carolina households living below poverty.

Mr. Chairman, $7 million can go a long way to protect veterans in the Asheville veterans hospital, which has been plagued by shortages of nurses and doctors.

Mr. Chairman, $7 million would buy flu shots for all of the children living below the poverty level in North Carolina's 11th District for 11 years.

And in the context of this debate, that $7 million is desperately needed to manage and maintain the land currently owned by the Federal Government. In fact, some of that money is needed to address the $600,000 in deferred maintenance currently existing at the very site that is proposed for expansion.

Additionally, it is unclear to me why this particular piece of property is vital to the Carl Sandburg story for which the park was created and in dire need of Federal protection.

Mr. Chairman, during subcommittee proceedings we learned that this expansion enjoys support from the community and local governments. I understand the importance of communities and Federal land management agencies working together, and it is in that spirit that I am offering this amendment.

This amendment strikes a balance that will allow for the expansion of the park, but will not take away from the already overburdened budget for public lands management.

Henderson County, which is the home of the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site, has determined that they would like to protect the viewshed area. If this is the priority for them, this compromise amendment will give the community the opportunity to show their support by making a financial commitment to purchase this property, with the Federal Government ultimately responsible for management. I believe that local support can

make this compromise I am proposing a reality.

Mr. Chairman, my amendment allows for my colleague's constituents to achieve their goal while protecting the budgets of our Federal land management agencies, who have a difficult time managing the lands they already own.

I urge my colleagues to support this amendment and its wise use of Federal resources.

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

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Chairman, this amendment is inconsistent and unfair. As I stated earlier, the enhancement and preservation of this site is a national responsibility. This amendment abdicates that responsibility by prohibiting the use of Federal funds to fulfill this role. Strangely, it allows Federal funds to be used for development but requires State and local landowners to shoulder the costs of protecting the historic viewshed.

Philanthropy has and will continue to play an important role in the care of our national parks and is something that we are all thankful and grateful for. A perfect example is the State of North Carolina. Recognizing the importance of protecting the historic viewshed, it has purchased 22 of the 110 acres identified as needing protection and would like to donate them to the National Park Service. The National Park Service will, of course, continue to welcome any donation of land or money to help protect the remainder of this land.

However, it is irresponsible to expect the State to shoulder the total responsibility of purchasing all 110 acres, nor should small landowners have the responsibility to donate their property to the National Park Service. We need to maintain the option to purchase the land from willing sellers, so that when it is on the sale block, the Federal Government's hands are not tied.

The amendment is not about the availability of Federal funds. This is a funding source specifically set aside for Federal acquisitions of land identified as important for conservation. The Land and Water Conservation Fund has a current balance of $16 billion. I would say that is sufficient to allow the possibility of using appropriated funds for this 110-acre addition.

□ 1430

This amendment is also inconsistent. It allows the use of Federal funds to purchase 5 acres for construction of a visitor center, yet does not allow the use of Federal funds to purchase 110 acres of land or easements to protect the historic viewshed.

Finally, this amendment is unfair. Committee Republicans raised no objections nor offered any amendments when the Natural Resources Committee favorably reported a Republican bill that would add more than 3,000 acres to the Jean Lafitte National Historic Park. That bill allows appropriated funds to be used, and the CBO estimate put the cost at up to $5 million. Why should appropriated funds be available for that bill but specifically protected in this bill?

Mr. Chairman, land protection at a national historic site is a national responsibility, as recognized by my Republican colleagues in the Jean Lafitte legislation. The Heller amendment is inconsistent and unfair. I believe Mr. SHULER's predecessor did not recognize the importance of enhancing and protecting this valuable viewshed. We should not penalize the author of this legislation for recognizing it.

Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to Mr. SHULER for his comments.

Mr. SHULER. Mr. Chairman, while my preference is for as much land to be donated or purchased privately, this amendment would tie the hands of the government if it ever decided to step in and protect the Carl Sandburg home's viewshed.

Mr. HELLER did not offer this amendment to Mrs. CUBIN's bill or Mr. JINDAL's bill in committee, both Republican bills very similar to H.R. 1100.

It is not reasonable to expect all of the land to be donated from small landowners who are currently living on the land. I urge my colleagues to oppose this amendment.

Mr. HELLER of Nevada. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Utah (Mr. BISHOP).

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Chairman, I wish to simply address a couple of the issues that have been brought up again.

In comparing this particular bill to two others, one specifically still held up in the committee, it is true that one bill did have a donation, which is what he is patterning after, so the Grand Teton bill is very similar to this: Willing donor.

The other bill by the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. JINDAL) is with the Jean Lafitte National Park. This is the ability of coming up with area that is necessary for protecting from the devastation of hurricanes. It is also area coming mainly from State and local lands, not from private owners, and we do not actually oppose the boundary revisions because it makes sense on a case-by-case basis in this particular area, especially when the cost for the land is only $1,000 per acre. It would only increase the size of this particular national site by 15 percent, not the 44 percent as in this one.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HELLER of Nevada. Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. HELLER).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chairman announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. HELLER. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Nevada will be postponed.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Chairman, I move that the Committee do now rise.

The motion was agreed to.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. PASTOR) having assumed the chair, Mr. ROSS, Acting Chairman of the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 1100) to revise the boundary of the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site in the State of North Carolina, and for other purposes, had come to no resolution thereon.

URGING AMERICANS AND PEOPLE OF ALL NATIONALITIES TO VISIT THE AMERICAN CEMETERIES, MEMORIALS AND MARKERS

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 392) urging Americans and people of all nationalities to visit the American Cemeteries, Memorials and Markers.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 392

Whereas the United States has fought in wars outside of its borders to restore freedom and human dignity;

Whereas the United States has spent its national treasure and shed its blood in fighting those wars;

Whereas many of those who died on the battlefield were laid to rest exactly where they fell;

Whereas those plots of ground are now known as American Cemeteries, Memorials and Markers, and they exist in 10 foreign countries on four continents;

Whereas these cemeteries exist as the final resting place for American servicemembers who fought valiantly in battles across the globe, including Ardennes and Flanders, Belgium; Manila, the Philippines; North Africa, Tunisia; Florence, Italy; and Normandy, France;

Whereas each year millions of American and foreign citizens visit the American Cemeteries, Memorials and Markers;

Whereas these overseas sites annually recognize Memorial Day with speeches, a reading of the Memorial Day Proclamation, wreath laying ceremonies, military bands and units, and the decoration of each grave site with the flag of the United States and that of the host country; and

Whereas the splendid commemorative sites inspire patriotism, evoke gratitude, and teach history: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That House of Representatives strongly urges Americans and people of all nationalities to visit the American Cemeteries, Memorials and Markers abroad, where the spirit of American generosity, sacrifice, and courage are displayed and commemorated.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from

California (Mr. FILNER) and the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. LAMBORN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

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

Mr. Speaker, we are about to take up a package of seven bills that have come to the floor from the Veterans Committee, a committee which I am very proud of that has worked together over the first 4 or 5 months of this session to keep our contract with our Nation's veterans. And there is no better time than just before Memorial Day to say thank you. Memorial Day celebrates those who have made the ultimate sacrifice for our Nation's freedom. We are here on the floor today to say thank you to those, and to those who are still deployed, and to veterans from past wars.

In the recent election, Mr. Speaker, the Democrats promised to do more for our Nation's veterans. We said we had a President who was saying, support the troops, support the troops, support the troops; but when they came home, where was that support? Walter Reed ripped off the veil of our incompetency of dealing with veterans and showed that so many were not getting the care they were promised and people thought they were getting.

We have had story after story in the Nation's press about how returning veterans with PTSD or brain injury have not been getting the care which this Nation has promised at the highest quality medical system in the world. So we have to do better.

We have a system that is really about to break and collapse. What we saw as the majority party is that the first thing that had to be done was give the VA the resources to carry out the job; secondly, we had to have accountability for the spending of those resources.

Well, in the first three spending bills that went through this House, we were able to add $13 billion for the health care of our veterans. That is an unprecedented increase from one year to the next, an increase of 30 percent in the health care budget.

We have put in the resources to clean up the backlog of claims for disability pensions that have built up to 600,000. We have put in the money to open up new Centers of Excellence for traumatic brain injury, to finally give the mental health care that the tens of thousands of veterans who are coming back from Iraq and Afghanistan need.

We call it PTSD, post-traumatic stress disorder, but virtually every soldier subject to at least five blasts that would give them brain injury, seeing their buddies shot and killed in front of them, maybe having to kill even by accident some innocent people in Iraq, they come back with tremendous mental issues. They have to be worked out. They need medical care, and too many have been falling through the cracks.

So we have said we will provide the resources to make sure that does not occur. We have provided the resources to meet these needs. Now we have to have accountability for their spending. The Veterans' Affairs Committee of this Congress has pledged to do that.

So we have a collection of bills on the floor this afternoon to say thank you to our Nation's veterans, thank you for your efforts in this war, thank you for your efforts in past wars, and we honor those who gave the ultimate sacrifice on Memorial Day.

This resolution before us now, H. Res. 392, comes to us under the leadership of the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. LAMBORN), and I thank him for his activity on the Veterans' Affairs Committee. This resolution encourages people to visit the cemeteries, memorials, and markers overseen by the American Battle Monuments Commission. I am sure many people who hear this say, what is the American Battle Monuments Commission?

In 1923, Congress created the Battle Monuments Commission to control the construction of military cemeteries, monuments and markers erected to honor American servicemembers killed on foreign soil. Host countries provide the necessary lands for these sites to the United States in perpetuity and free of charge.

The Commission cares for 24 military cemeteries and 25 memorials, monuments and markers in 15 nations around the world. These sites serve as the final resting places for almost 125,000 Americans who fought in the Mexican-American War through World War I and II. The Commission takes special care that all cemeteries under its supervision are maintained to the highest standard attainable.

The Battle Monuments Commission extends an open invitation to all to visit these splendid shrines and go beyond the most well known, like Normandy, and venture into others. Each site has its own sense of history, sacrifice and beauty; each offers a different and unique experience. No two have the same garden or architecture. Perhaps only the spiritual qualities are similar.

In less than a month from now, on June 6, the Battle Monuments Commission will commemorate the 63rd anniversary of the D-Day landing by opening a new Normandy American Cemetery Visitor Center. Under construction since 2002, the center will tell the story of the American servicemembers memorialized at Normandy.

I encourage everyone to visit this new D-Day center and any of the other sites under the jurisdiction of the Commission.

Overseas American cemeteries are lasting reminders of America's willingness to come to the defense of others. These tangible symbols of American values endure long after the fighting is over.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. LAMBORN for bringing this resolution to us.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the chairman of the committee for the good work he has done and also the ranking member, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BUYER), for the good work he has done in helping shepherd this package of bills and resolutions that are on the floor today paying tribute to our Nation's veterans.

Mr. Speaker, on House Resolution 392, I want to commend this resolution urging Americans and people of all nationalities to visit the American cemeteries, memorials and markers located on and near the battlefields where members of our Armed Forces fought and died to secure our Nation's freedom, and to actually secure the freedom of the whole world.

Properly honoring a veteran's memory is one of our most solemn and sacred obligations. These patriots and their families are due the tribute and thanks of a grateful Nation.

The overseas national cemeteries of the American Battle Monuments Commission provide these heroes honored repose in a national shrine far from the homes they left to serve us. These cemeteries are the gold standard in memorializing the priceless gift given us by those who fell in our defense.

The Commission oversees 24 overseas military cemeteries that serve as resting places for almost 125,000 American war dead; on Tablets of the Missing that memorialize more than 94,000 United States service men and women; and through 25 memorials, monuments and markers.

These memorials and cemeteries are the final resting place for Americans who fought valiantly in battles whose names ennoble our history: Ardennes and Flanders, Belgium; Manila in the Philippines; North Africa, Tunisia, Italy, and Normandy.

With Memorial Day less than a week away, this is a most fitting time to consider this resolution. I ask my colleagues to support it. I look forward to its passage.

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

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers.

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the ranking member, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BUYER).

□ 1445

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Res. 392 that encourages Americans and people of all nationalities to visit American cemeteries, memorials and markers operated by the American Battle Monuments Commission.

More than 125,000 American war dead of the Mexican, Civil, Spanish American and both World Wars are buried in American cemeteries across the globe. Our overseas cemeteries are under the jurisdiction of the American Battle Monuments Commission. I believe they

are the gold standard in preserving the final resting place of this Nation's heroes.

I've had the privilege of visiting our cemeteries in Normandy, in Luxembourg and Cyrennes which is just outside Paris. I believe that those who work at these cemeteries, in fact, when I said they set the gold standard, it is a standard to which our VA cemeteries here in this country should achieve. It's emblematic, I believe, of our Nation's regard to those who made the highest sacrifice.

They are true shrines to Americans who came to lands that they had never seen, to fight for a people that they had never met. They fought for no bounty of their own and left freedom in their footsteps.

Normandy, the American cemetery, is probably the most famous of our Nation's overseas cemeteries. It is the final resting place of more than 10,000 Americans who died in one of the greatest and most decisive battles of the epic struggle against tyranny in World War II. This year the Commission will open a new visitors center to help communicate the story of this site to those who fought and died over its length and breadth in time.

I had the opportunity to deliver the Memorial Day address, along with my friend HENRY BROWN of South Carolina, at Normandy as I stood there on the cliffs at Omaha Beach in 2005, an experience that I will never forget.

When I visited the Luxembourg cemetery last year, I was in awe of the beauty of the white stone chapel flanked by two very large stone pylons as the centerpiece of this cemetery in which then-General Patton lies in rest before his men. These pylons have maps and inscriptions telling the achievements of the U.S. Armed Forces in the region. Inscribed here are the 371 names of missing who gave their lives near this site but whose remains were not recovered or identified.

The Luxembourg cemetery is also the final resting place for some 5,000 GIs who repulsed Hitler's final offensive in the Battle of the Bulge, including several members of the famous Band of Brothers, deposed in Steve Ambrose's book.

I think if you visited any of these cemeteries all over the world you can't help but walk away with the same feeling that I have, a strong sense of humility and very humbled that these individuals gave everything in the name of freedom and in the name of liberty.

I just encourage everyone so when you go overseas and you're on a trip, or you go to Paris, pause for a moment and go visit one of our cemeteries on foreign land.

And I'm pleased that after World War II we now make every effort to bring these bodies back to our own country. So from Korea and Vietnam and the first Gulf War, second Gulf War, we try everything we can to bring these bodies back.

And speaking of Korea, now that the chairman is here on the floor, I would even ask of the chairman, there is a bill that was filed by one of our colleagues to bring recognition to Raymond Jerry Murphy, to name the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in New Mexico after this Medal of Honor winner. And I've given you several letters as to why this bill shouldn't be brought up. We're hopeful that you could have brought this bill to the floor while he was alive, but now he has since deceased.

So I would ask the chairman if he has knowledge as to why this bill shouldn't be brought to the floor and given the same honor to which you're giving here with regard to this bill.

I yield to the chairman.

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, this is not a germane issue, and I will stick to dealing with the bills on the floor.

Mr. BUYER. So the chairman would raise an issue of germaneness rather than addressing the issue of how we honor the men and women who serve this country. That is disappointing.

This is a Medal of Honor winner from the Korean War in which we tried to seek to give recognition, just like we're doing in this bill, in how we honor our Nation's sacred fallen. This is an individual of whom is so respected in New Mexico the entire delegation supports it. It passed by unanimous consent in the Senate. The Senate bill lies upon this desk, but the chairman of the Veterans Affairs Committee won't bring it to the floor, and I don't understand.

I will now yield back to the gentleman for a better explanation, rather than germaneness, as to why you will not honor this veteran that the entire delegation of New Mexico supports.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ROSS). Does the gentleman from Indiana yield back the balance of his time?

Mr. BUYER. No, the gentleman from Indiana yields to the chairman of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, parliamentary inquiry.

Does the yieldee have to make time for an extraneous comment from the yielder?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Does the gentleman from Indiana yield for a parliamentary inquiry?

Mr. BUYER. I absolutely yield for a parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from California will state his parliamentary inquiry.

Mr. FILNER. Is the yieldee required to give time to the yielder for a matter that has nothing to do with the matter under discussion?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members may yield to one another during debate, but remarks must be confined to the question under debate.

Mr. FILNER. So are they through with their time? Have they yielded back the balance of their time?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Indiana has the floor.

Mr. BUYER. I will reclaim my time since the gentleman now is not speaking of a parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Indiana is recognized.

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, I think by silence, by omission, the chairman just spoke, and how disappointed I am that veterans, that he just said that he wanted to come to the floor, that he was going to take this moment as a thank-you to veterans and all they do; yet here we have an opportunity in bipartisanship to recognize this Medal of Honor winner from Korea, whereby he wouldn't even do it when the gentleman was alive, and now he's deceased, and he still won't even give this individual the recognition. Yet the Senate bill, in a bipartisan fashion, lays upon this desk.

I am very disappointed, and I don't know what it's going to take to get you to move this bill and give the recognition. The Governor supports it. The two Senators support it. The Members of Congress from New Mexico support it. All the veterans service organizations support the bill, and I support this bill.

And if you know of a particular reason as to why this Medal of Honor winner, Mr. Murphy, should not receive this recognition by having the veterans hospital named in his honor, please let all of us know, because if you're blocking this for political motive, now we're upset.

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of H. Res. 392, I have nothing more to add except I do want to thank the chairman and I want to thank the ranking member for their words on behalf of H. Res. 392, and I urge its adoption by the entire House. I yield back the balance of my time.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H. Res. 392.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join Mr. LAMBORN and me to unanimously support H. Res. 392. I have no further requests for time, and I yield back my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 392.

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.

VETERANS OUTREACH IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2007

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 67) to amend title 38, United

States Code, to improve the outreach activities of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 67

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 ''Veterans Outreach Improvement Act of 2007''.

SEC. 2. IMPROVEMENT OF OUTREACH ACTIVITIES WITHIN DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 5 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new subchapter:

''SUBCHAPTER IV—OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

''§ 561. Outreach activities: coordination of activities within the Department

''(a) COORDINATION PROCEDURES.—The Secretary shall establish and maintain procedures for ensuring the effective coordination of the outreach activities of the Department between and among the following:

''(1) The Office of the Secretary.

''(2) The Office of Public Affairs.

''(3) The Veterans Health Administration.

''(4) The Veterans Benefits Administration.

''(5) The National Cemetery Administration.

''(b) ANNUAL REVIEW OF PROCEDURES.—The Secretary shall—

''(1) annually review the procedures in effect under subsection (a) for the purpose of ensuring that those procedures meet the requirements of that subsection; and

''(2) make such modifications to those procedures as the Secretary considers appropriate in light of such review in order to better achieve that purpose.

''§ 562. Outreach activities: cooperative activities with States; grants to States for improvement of outreach

''(a) PURPOSE.—It is the purpose of this section to provide for assistance by the Secretary to State and county veterans agencies to carry out programs in locations within the respective jurisdictions of such agencies that offer a high probability of improving outreach and assistance to veterans, and to the spouses, children, and parents of veterans, to ensure that such individuals are fully informed about, and assisted in applying for, any veterans' and veterans-related benefits and programs (including State veterans' programs) for which they may be eligible.

''(b) PRIORITY FOR AREAS WITH HIGH CONCENTRATION OF ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS.—In providing assistance under this section, the Secretary shall give priority to State and county veteran agencies in locations—

''(1) that have relatively large concentrations of populations of veterans and other individuals referred to in subsection (a); or

''(2) that are experiencing growth in the population of veterans and other individuals referred to in subsection (a).

''(c) CONTRACTS FOR OUTREACH SERVICES.—The Secretary may enter into a contract with a State or county veterans agency in order to carry out, coordinate, improve, or otherwise enhance outreach by the Department and the State or county (including outreach with respect to a State or county veterans program). As a condition of entering into any such contract, the Secretary shall require the agency to submit annually to the Secretary a three-year plan for the use of any funds provided to the agency pursuant to the contract and to meet the annual outcome measures developed by the Secretary under subsection (d)(4).

''(d) GRANTS.—(1) The Secretary may make a grant to a State or county veterans agency to be used to carry out, coordinate, improve, or otherwise enhance—

''(A) outreach activities, including activities carried out pursuant to a contract entered into under subsection (c); and

''(B) activities to assist in the development and submittal of claims for veterans and veterans-related benefits, including activities carried out pursuant to a contract entered into under subsection (c).

''(2) A State veterans agency that receives a grant under this subsection may award all or a portion of the grant to county veterans agencies within the State to provide outreach services for veterans, on the basis of the number of veterans residing in the jurisdiction of each county.

''(3) To be eligible for a grant under this subsection, a State or county veterans agency shall submit to the Secretary an application containing such information and assurances as the Secretary may require. The Secretary shall require a State or county veterans agency to include, as part of the agency's application—

''(A) a three-year plan for the use of the grant; and

''(B) a description of the programs through which the agency will meet the annual outcome measures developed by the Secretary under paragraph (4).

''(4)(A) The Secretary shall develop and provide to the recipient of a grant under this subsection written guidance on annual outcome measures, Department policies, and procedures for applying for grants under this section.

''(B) The Secretary shall annually review the performance of each State or county veterans agency that receives a grant under this section.

''(C) In the case of a State or county veterans agency that is a recipient of a grant under this subsection that does not meet the annual outcome measures developed by the Secretary, the Secretary shall require the agency to submit a remediation plan under which the agency shall describe how and when it plans to meet such outcome measures. The Secretary must approve such plan before the Secretary may make a subsequent grant to that agency under this subsection.

''(5) No portion of any grant awarded under this subsection may be used for the purposes of administering the grant funds or to subsidize the salaries of State or county veterans service officers or other employees of a State or county veterans agency that receives a grant under this subsection.

''(6) Federal funds provided to a State or county veterans agency under this subsection may not be used to provide more than 50 percent of the total cost of the State or county government activities described in paragraph (1) and shall be used to expand existing outreach programs and services and not to supplant State and local funding that is otherwise available.

''(7) In awarding grants under this subsection, the Secretary shall give priority to State and county veterans agencies that serve the largest populations of veterans.

''(8)(A) In a case in which a county government does not have a county veterans agency, the county government may be awarded a grant under this subsection to establish such an agency.

''(B) In a case in which a county government does not have a county veterans agency and does not seek to establish such an agency through the use of a grant under this subsection, the State veterans agency for the State in which the county is located may use a grant under this section to provide outreach services for that county.

''(C) In the case of a State in which no State or county veterans agency seeks to receive a grant under this subsection, the funds that would otherwise be allocated for that State shall be reallocated to those States in which county veterans agencies exist and have sought grants under this subsection.

''(9) A grant under this subsection may be used to provide education and training, including on-the-job training, for State, county, and local government employees who provide (or when trained will provide) veterans outreach services in order for those employees to obtain accreditation in accordance with procedures approved by the Secretary and, for employees so accredited, for purposes of continuing education.

''(e) DEFINITIONS.—For the purposes of this section:

''(1) The term 'State veterans agency' means the element of the government of a State that has responsibility for programs and activities of that State government relating to veterans benefits.

''(2) The term 'county veterans agency' means the element of the government of a county or municipality that has responsibility for programs and activities of that county or municipal government relating to veterans benefits.

''§ 563. Outreach activities: funding

''(a) SEPARATE ACCOUNT.—Amounts for the outreach activities of the Department under this subchapter shall be budgeted and appropriated through a separate appropriation account.

''(b) SEPARATE STATEMENT OF AMOUNT.—In the budget justification materials submitted to Congress in support of the Department budget for any fiscal year (as submitted with the budget of the President under section 1105(a) of title 31), the Secretary shall include a separate statement of the amount requested to be appropriated for that fiscal year for the account specified in subsection (a).

''§ 564. Definition of outreach

''For purposes of this subchapter, the term 'outreach' means the act or process of taking steps in a systematic manner to provide information, services, and benefits counseling to veterans, and the survivors of veterans, who may be eligible to receive benefits under the laws administered by the Secretary to ensure that those individuals are fully informed about, and assisted in applying for, any benefits and programs under such laws for which they may be eligible.

''§ 565. Authorization of appropriations

''There is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary for each of fiscal years 2008, 2009, and 2010, $25,000,000 to carry out this subchapter, including making grants under section 562(d) of this title.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by adding at the end the following new items:

''SUBCHAPTER IV—OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

''561. Outreach activities: coordination of activities within the Department.

''562. Outreach activities: cooperative activities with States; grants to States for improvement of outreach.

''563. Outreach activities: funding.

''564. Definition of outreach.

''565. Authorization of appropriations.''.

(c) DEADLINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall implement the outreach activities required under subchapter IV of chapter 5 of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), by not later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER) and the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BUYER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

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

This bill comes to us from the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MCINTYRE), and we thank him for his leadership on veterans outreach.

If I had to sum up this bill in one phrase, I would say that it allows local organizations to provide more bang for the buck by having greater resources at the local level.

This bill requires the VA to partner with State and local governments, through grant opportunities, to reach out to veterans and their families to ensure receipt of benefit for which they are eligible and assist them in completing their benefits claims.

As we have seen from recent news reports all over the country, we still have veterans slipping through the cracks of this system. They are either unaware of their veterans benefits or are having difficulty getting those benefits processed.

This bill establishes a grant program for the VA to provide to States' outreach activities, cooperative relationships and benefit claims development. The grant program allows State veterans agencies to award a portion of the grants to local governments for outreach purposes.

In addition, the grant allows funding for education and training of State and local government employees for accreditation to provide outreach services. It may also be used to establish a local government veterans service program.

The bill prohibits any portion of the grant to be used by the State for administrative purposes and requires the VA to allocate grants based on veteran populations.

The bill limits grant use by States to less than 50 percent of the cost of State and local government outreach activities and prohibits grant funds from supplanting State and local funds for such activities.

H.R. 67 authorizes $25 million annually, in fact $1 per veteran in our Nation, to improve outreach to veterans and remove some of the significant obstacles veterans must overcome to access their benefits. This is particularly true in rural areas, which Mr. MCINTYRE represents. The bill also contains performance measures to ensure that grant recipients are properly fulfilling the requirements of the program.

The bill is supported by the American Legion, Military Officers Association, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Paralyzed Veterans of America, National County Veteran Service Officers, National Organization of Veterans Advocates, and Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America.

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

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

I rise in strong support of H.R. 67, the Veterans Outreach Improvement Act. I thank my colleagues, Mr. MCINTYRE and Mr. FILNER, for bringing the legislation to the floor.

H.R. 67 requires Secretary Nicholson to coordinate and implement a plan throughout the VA to help provide veterans with outreach so that they are aware of potential benefits and understand how to apply for them.

The bill also authorizes a matching fund grants program for State and local governments to provide such outreach.

I'd also like to thank my colleague, Mr. LAMBORN from Colorado, for his amendment to this legislation with reporting and grant requirements to strengthen accountability for admission.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. LAMBORN).

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 67, the Veterans Outreach Improvement Act of 2007.

I would like to thank my friend and colleague, Mr. HALL of New York, chairman of the committee's Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs Subcommittee, of which I am ranking member, for his leadership on this bill.

I would also like to thank Mr. MCINTYRE, the sponsor of this legislation, and both Ranking Member BUYER and Chairman FILNER for their support.

One of the persistent challenges we face in providing benefits to deserving veterans is communicating to them and their families the existence of benefits they may have earned. This bill is a solid example of good federalism. It funds outreach by State and local governments, which have proven to be capable incubators for effective public policy.

This legislation also sends VA a signal that Congress expects strong and effective outreach to our veterans.

I'm also pleased that Chairman HALL and I were able to work together to improve an already good bill with an amendment that would improve VA's accountability for the taxpayer dollars allocated under this authorization.

This amendment would require any State or county veterans agency applying for funds to submit a plan for their use to the VA Secretary and for the Secretary to review their performance annually.

I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation.

□ 1500

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the author of the legislation, Mr. MCINTYRE, such time as he may consume.

Mr. MCINTYRE. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to rise today in strong support of H.R. 67, the Veterans Outreach Improvement Act of 2007, a bill which I filed on the first day of this 110th Congress back in January.

I want to thank Chairman FILNER and Ranking Member BUYER for their support, as well as Mr. HALL, the chairman of the subcommittee, and the gentleman who just spoke, Mr. LAMBORN, the ranking member of the subcommittee.

This truly has been a bipartisan effort. H.R. 67 will help our veterans cut through the bureaucratic red tape. You know, as we approach Memorial Day this coming weekend, there can be no greater tribute that we pay to our veterans than ensuring that they receive the benefits that they need and deserve.

H.R. 67 would allow the VA to partner with State and local governments to reach out to veterans and their families, to ensure that they receive the benefits for which they are eligible, and assisting them in completing their benefits claims. The Veterans Outreach Improvement Act would require the Secretary of the VA to establish and annually review a plan to coordinate outreach activities within the Department so that local veterans service officers can better serve our veterans.

Unfortunately, many veterans, their spouses, or, in some cases, their surviving spouses, are unaware of the benefits to which they are entitled through the VA. In fact, according to a Knight-Ridder report, as many as 2 million poor veterans or their widows may not be receiving up to $22 billion annually in pensions to which they are entitled. Other estimates suggest that only 30 percent of our veterans receive the benefits for which they are eligible.

Under this bill, the Secretary of the VA would establish a grant program to fund outreach at the State and local levels with accompanying performance measures to ensure that the Federal funds are effectively promoting outreach. This bill would authorize $25 million annually in fiscal years 2008, 2009, and 2010 to fund this grant program. That is $1 for each veteran in America, just $1 to make sure that we are reaching out to these brave men and women who fought for our country to know about the benefits they have earned and have assistance in applying for them. It would be $25 million well spent, well directed. It's the least that we can do for those who have put their lives on the line for our country to make sure they know, understand and, in fact, receive the benefits for which they are eligible.

By providing these vital resources to veterans service offices at the State and Federal level, we will indeed get more bang for our buck to locate veterans and assist them in receiving the benefits they deserve.

This legislation is supported by the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Paralyzed Veterans of America, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, the Military Officers Association of America, the National Association of Veterans' Advocates and the National Association of County Veterans Service Officers.

My special thanks to Ms. Ann Knowles of Sampson County, North

Carolina, who has worked with us on this important bill in her role as national president of the County Veterans Service Officers.

As Memorial Day approaches, it's important that we demonstrate to this Nation's veterans our commitment to provide them the benefits that they need and deserve. By passing the Veterans Outreach Improvement Act, we will do just that.

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

I would ask the Chair how much time I have.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Indiana has 18 minutes remaining.

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman for bringing this bill to the Veterans' Affairs Committee and for his interest in outreach.

In the bill previous to this one, I brought up an issue with regard to how we give proper recognition to a Medal of Honor recipient, Jerry Murphy of New Mexico. Jerry Murphy, in his tenure at the Department of Veterans Affairs, even after he retired, was a champion of veterans outreach. Like many of my comrades, when they come back from war, they have seen a lot of things, far worse than what I have ever seen. They call themselves generally, Mr. MCINTYRE, the lucky ones, because one of their friends or buddies is in worse shape than what they are; they dedicate their lives to them.

That's exactly what Jerry Murphy did in his tenure, not only serving the Department of Veterans Affairs, but, in addition, he was the director of the Veterans Services Division of the Albuquerque, New Mexico, regional VA office from 1974 to 1997. This individual, dedicated his life and received not only the Medal of Honor, he also received the Silver Star.

What I would like to do, so America can reach out and touch and understand the type of individual who would dedicate his life to the service of his comrades, and he would push them in a wheelchair, take them to an appointment in that hospital. The individual he was pushing, they had no idea that they were being pushed by a Medal of Honor recipient.

This individual, Raymond G. Murphy, was a second lieutenant in the United States Marines Reserve, Company A, 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, 1st Marine Division, and 3 February of 1953 was an important date, because on that date, for his conspicuous gallantry, and the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty as a platoon commander of Company A, and actions against an enemy aggressor force, he rose up and distinguished himself.

The citation that he received when he was given the Congressional Medal of Honor stated that although painfully wounded by fragments of an enemy mortar shell while leading his evacuation platoon in support of assault units attacking a cleverly concealed and well-entrenched hostile force occupying commanding ground, Second Lieutenant Murphy steadfastly refused medical aid and continued to lead his men up a hill through a withering barrage of hostile mortar and small-arms fire, skillfully maneuvering his force from one position to the next and shouting words of encouragement.

Undeterred by increasing intense enemy fire, he immediately located casualties as they fell and made several trips up and down the fire-swept hill to direct evacuation teams for the wounded, personally carrying many of the stricken marines to safety.

When reinforcements were needed by the assaulting elements, Second Lieutenant Murphy employed part of his unit as support, and, during the ensuing battle, he killed two of the enemy with his pistol.

With all the wounded evacuated and the assaulting units beginning to disengage, he remained behind with a carbine to cover the movement of the friendly forces off the hill, and, through the suffering of intense pain from his previous wounds, seized an automatic rifle to provide more firepower when the enemy reappeared in the trenches.

After reaching the base of the hill, he organized a search party again to ascend the slope for a final check on missing marines. Locating and carrying the bodies of a marine gun crew back down the hill, he was wounded a second time while conducting the entire force to the line of departure through a continuing barrage of enemy small arms, artillery, mortar fire.

He also, once again, refused medical assistance until assured that every one of his men, including all casualties, had preceded him to the main line. His resolute, inspiring leadership, exceptional fortitude and great personal valor reflect the highest credit upon Second Lieutenant Raymond Murphy, and he enhanced the finest traditions of the United States Naval Service.

This was the citation he received, was given to him when he received the Medal of Honor. This is the same individual whereby the three members of the New Mexico delegation, led by HEATHER WILSON, have brought a bill, H.R. 474, to the floor about the VA Medical Center in Albuquerque, New Mexico, where he worked. As a matter of fact, he was always the humble servant. Even after his retirement, as I said, he became a volunteer.

This brave marine, who earned the Medal of Honor, chose to be buried wearing his VA hospital volunteer smock. This is the type of individual of whom, at a moment like this, as we go into Memorial Day, we think of these individuals, not only what they have done, not only at the moment of calling, it was most difficult during war, but then how did they dedicate their life.

Memorial Day, yes, it's that day, but it's also a day whereby, not those who just died in service to country, but what do they do later on with their life, and we think of them. Here is a gentleman, Mr. MCINTYRE, I know exactly this is the type of person you are thinking about, who dedicated themselves to outreach.

So I ask you to talk to the chairman, because he is the sole impediment as to why the House and the Senate do not honor this gentleman.

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

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FILNER. 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. 67, as amended.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I urge all my colleagues to unanimously support this bill.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of six excellent pieces of legislation that would benefit our Nation's veterans.

Unfortunately, due to a family medical emergency, I am unable to be present and vote for these bills today. However, had I been here to vote, each of the six bills would have had my full support.

As we approach Memorial Day, it is important to honor our Nation's servicemen and servicewomen. We would not be a free Nation without the sacrifices that each and every one has made. These six important pieces of legislation are an excellent way to repay some of the debt that we owe all of our soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines and merchant marines.

I support each of these bills, and I urge all of my colleagues to honor our veterans by supporting these bills as well.

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 67, the Veterans Outreach Improvement Act of 2007. This bill directs the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish, maintain, and modify as necessary procedures for ensuring the effective coordination of outreach activities of the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Office of the Secretary, the Office of Public Affairs, the Veterans Health Administration, the Veterans Benefits Administration, and the National Cemetery Administration. The bill would also direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to ensure that state, territorial and local outreach assistance is provided in locations that have relatively large concentrations of veterans or are experiencing growth in veteran populations. Additionally, this bill would authorize the Secretary to make grants to state veterans agencies for state and local outreach services. This legislation is supported by the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Paralyzed Veterans of America, Military Officers Association of America, and Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America. It represents another step in our effort to fulfill our promises in the GI Bill of Rights for the 21st Century.

It is a important that we act in manner that will help ensure that our government sponsors quality programs and provides quality services to our veterans. It is also important that we act in a manner that will help ensure, to the extent possible, that our veterans are able to take full advantage of the programs and services offered by Department of Veterans Affairs facilities across the country. To achieve these

goals we must, among other things, improve the outreach capabilities and capacities of the Department of Veterans Affairs while also improving its coordination with state, territorial and local authorities. This will help greatly in our ongoing efforts to disseminate information regarding veterans programs and services and also help improve the quality of claims for benefits submitted by our veterans.

I remain committed to facilitating communication between federal authorities, veteran service organizations, and veterans on Guam. We have achieved some success in this regard. But more must be done. I am routinely informed by federal officials that the quality of claims received from Guam veterans, in particular, needs to be improved. Efforts to improve and enhance outreach, communication, and information sharing between federal and local officials and veterans embodied in this bill will help the situation on Guam. But I also want to take this opportunity to again urge the veterans service organizations and veterans themselves to be vigorous and proactive in seeking out information and training on veterans programs and benefit claims submissions. Many veterans already are, and in many ways, we are witnesses to veterans helping veterans. Continued information sharing and collaboration among and within the greater veterans community across the country will continue to result in stronger programs and services for them.

This legislation is timely and important. On Guam, indeed across the country, our population of veterans grows each month. We have a moral obligation to serve, in the best way possible, those who have served to protect us and to defend our freedom and liberty. Support for this legislation is one way to help fulfill that obligation. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 67.

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. Speaker, as a former member of the Air Force Reserve, I am pleased to rise in support of this important veterans outreach measure. We must continue to ensure that all of our veterans are aware of and receive the benefits that they have earned and deserve. These grants will help our states connect veterans with the many benefits for which they are eligible but may be unaware are available to them.

But it is not just our states' responsibility to conduct this outreach, and I encourage all of my colleagues in the House to use the privilege of our offices to help veterans obtain needed benefits and services. In March, I held a Veterans' Resource Fair in my district. I brought 45 service providers together under one roof to help more than 350 veterans register for benefits, find jobs, and resolve pressing case work issues. I will hold another in just a few months time. My office stands ready to assist any one of you in conducting a similar event for the veterans in your district.

We must work to support the men and women who made individual sacrifices to preserve our freedom not just on Memorial Day, but on all days. I urge my colleagues to pass this bill, and I hope that we will continue to join together to promote and protect meaningful benefits for our veterans. I yield back.

Mr. FILNER. 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 California (Mr. FILNER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 67, 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. FILNER. 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.

ESTABLISHMENT OF NATIONAL CEMETERY IN SOUTHERN COLORADO REGION

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1660) to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a national cemetery for veterans in the southern Colorado region, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1660

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

SECTION 1. ESTABLISHMENT OF NATIONAL CEMETERY IN SOUTHERN COLORADO REGION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall establish, in accordance with chapter 24 of title 38, United States Code, a national cemetery in El Paso County, Colorado, to serve the needs of veterans and their families in the southern Colorado region.

(b) CONSULTATION IN SELECTION OF SITE.—Before selecting the site for the national cemetery established under subsection (a), the Secretary shall consult with—

(1) appropriate officials of the State of Colorado and local officials in the southern Colorado region; and

(2) appropriate officials of the United States, including the Administrator of General Services, with respect to land belonging to the United States in El Paso County, Colorado, that would be suitable to establish the national cemetery under subsection (a).

(c) AUTHORITY TO ACCEPT DONATION OF PARCEL OF LAND.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may accept on behalf of the United States the gift of an appropriate parcel of real property. The Secretary shall have administrative jurisdiction over such parcel of real property, and shall use such parcel to establish the national cemetery under subsection (a).

(2) INCOME TAX TREATMENT OF GIFT.—For purposes of Federal income, estate, and gift taxes, the real property accepted under paragraph (1) shall be considered as a gift to the United States.

(d) REPORT.—As soon as practicable after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on the establishment of the national cemetery under subsection (a). The report shall set forth a schedule for such establishment and an estimate of the costs associated with such establishment.

(e) RELATIONSHIP TO CONSTRUCTION AND FIVE YEAR CAPITAL PLAN.—The requirement to establish a national cemetery under subsection (a) shall be added to the current list of priority projects, but should not take priority over existing projects listed on the National Cemetery Administration's construction and five-year capital plan for fiscal year 2008.

(f) SOUTHERN COLORADO REGION DEFINED.—In this Act, the term ''southern Colorado region'' means the geographic region consisting of the following Colorado counties:

(1) El Paso.
(2) Pueblo.
(3) Teller.
(4) Fremont.
(5) Las Animas.
(6) Huerfano.
(7) Custer.
(8) Costilla.
(9) Alamosa.
(10) Saguache.
(11) Conejos.
(12) Mineral.
(13) Archuleta.
(14) Hinsdale.
(15) Gunnison.
(16) Pitkin.
(17) La Plata.
(18) Montezuma.
(19) San Juan.
(20) Ouray.
(21) San Miguel.
(22) Dolores.
(23) Montrose.
(24) Delta.
(25) Mesa.
(26) Crowley.
(27) Kiowa.
(28) Bent.
(29) Baca.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER) and the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. LAMBORN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

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

I am pleased to bring to the floor a bipartisan bill authored by Congressman SALAZAR of Colorado with Congressman LAMBORN of Colorado. It establishes a veterans cemetery in El Paso County, Colorado.

Southern Colorado, which includes El Paso, Colorado, and the city of Colorado Springs, has the second highest concentration of veterans living in the United States. Currently those veterans and their families who wish either to visit a veterans cemetery or have their loved ones interred must travel into the Denver metropolitan area to Fort Logan National Cemetery.

Not only is this an undue burden, but the Fort Logan cemetery is running out of room. To alleviate this problem, H.R. 1660 directs the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a national cemetery for veterans in El Paso County, Colorado. This was a fitting tribute to those Americans who have served our Nation with honor. The veterans national cemeteries of the United States demonstrate the desire of a grateful Nation to appropriately commemorate those who have served in the Armed Forces.

Since 1862, close to 3 million burials have been made in the VA national cemeteries. The National Cemetery Administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs manages 125 of these cemeteries nationwide for our veterans. Of these, 58 of them are no longer accepting interments. Thus, the

need to build new cemeteries is quite urgent.

As we lose more and more of our greatest generation of veterans and face the increasing prospects of additional fatalities of Iraq, this country, at the very least, needs to ensure that veterans are provided a dignified, accessible and well-maintained final resting spot. This bill would go a long way in making that happen.

It is supported by the Military Order of the Purple Heart, American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Disabled American Veterans and Paralyzed Veterans of America.

I was proud to see the bipartisan approach taken by two members of our committee, Mr. SALAZAR and Mr. LAMBORN, to make sure that this bill got through the committee. They both worked cooperatively and tirelessly to get this bill to the floor today.

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

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1660, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I strongly support this bill. I would like to thank both Ranking Member BUYER and Chairman FILNER for their work on this bill. I would also like to thank Mr. HALL, chairman of the DAMA subcommittee, and Mr. SALAZAR for their leadership on H.R. 1660 as well.

This bill would authorize the Secretary to build a national cemetery to serve the needs of the veterans and families in southern Colorado. As amended by my own amendment, this bill would place the national cemetery in El Paso County, Colorado. El Paso County is the largest county in Colorado and is home to approximately 100,000 veterans. Southern Colorado is home to more than 150,000 veterans, and that population is expanding rapidly.

With the establishment of this new national cemetery, families will have a much shorter and easier commute to visit the final resting place of their loved ones since they will no longer need to travel to Fort Logan National Cemetery in Denver.

I understand that this cemetery is not included in the Department of Veterans Affairs 5-year plan, and I look forward to working with our committee's distinguished ranking member, chairman and other members of the committee to ensure that we serve the needs of all veterans and their families as we develop these national shrines.

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

□ 1515

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the coauthor of the bill, Mr. SALAZAR of Colorado, as much time as he may consume.

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding. I thank the chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee for his strong support of veterans, not only now, but during his tenure in the U.S. Congress.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to bring forward this legislation directing the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a national cemetery for veterans and their families in the Southern Colorado region. I would like to thank Mr. LAMBORN from Colorado who, together, we have worked in a bipartisan effort and the bipartisan spirit of the Veterans' Affairs Committee trying to make sure that the issue is resolved.

As you know, Fort Logan is the only cemetery that we have in Colorado that will accept veterans, and it is due to be filled. It is strange to say, but it has got a life expectancy of 10 years. I think it is important that we begin working on this issue right now. I would like to especially thank Chairman FILNER for allowing us to bring this forward.

The National Cemeteries of the United States offer testimony to the desire of a grateful Nation to commemorate the Americans who have served our Nation in the Armed Forces.

Since 1862, more than 3 million burials have been made in VA national cemeteries. Of the 120 cemeteries, 58 of them are no longer accepting burials, and many are out of reach and geographically inconvenient for our veterans and their families. Southern Colorado, including El Paso County and the city of Colorado Springs, has one of the highest concentrations of veterans living in the United States. For that reason, Mr. Speaker, Congressman LAMBORN and myself worked together in this bipartisan spirit to try to make sure that for the veterans coming back from this war, for the veterans that have served in Colorado, and for veterans that want to be buried in Colorado in 10 years, that there will be adequate space for them to be buried in Colorado. Currently, those veterans, their aging widows, and their families must sometimes travel hours into the highly congested area of Denver to Fort Logan National Cemetery, which is quickly running out of room.

The Colorado congressional delegation has worked in a bipartisan manner to create legislation that will benefit all veterans of this great State, and I would like to thank my good friends, Mr. UDALL and Mr. PERLMUTTER of Colorado, for taking time to speak on this important bill. I think a national cemetery in Southern Colorado will serve as a fitting tribute and a final resting place to those who have served our Nation with honor.

I certainly urge a ''yes'' vote on H.R. 1660. But before I yield back, I want to remind the ranking member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee that on his question on Jerry Murphy, Jerry Murphy died on Good Friday. Jerry Murphy was born in Pueblo, Colorado. He attended college at Adams State College in Durango and Western State College, and it was a week after we came back that we gave a fitting tribute to Jerry Murphy on this House floor.

So he is remembered, Mr. Ranking Member, and I believe that the process takes a little bit of time before we can get things moving on the floor, but certainly he is not forgotten.

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Colorado for his good work, for his words just now, and I wholeheartedly support him and his work on this bill. We have worked together in a bipartisan spirit, and I thank him for that.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the ranking member from Indiana (Mr. BUYER) such time as he may consume.

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, this bill would authorize the VA Secretary to build a national cemetery in Southern Colorado.

Providing our veterans with a place of honor of repose is one of the most sacred missions of the veterans committee, and we have accorded this mission our support over the years.

The National Cemetery Administration's record of satisfaction among the families and its beneficiaries is the envy of the Federal Government, a reflection of the sound administration, the strong congressional support, free of political influence. Yet I have some concerns about the bill.

The Department of Veterans Affairs has a well-established and proven method that uses distance and demographics to select cemetery sites. Congress has long deferred to that process, which is essentially free from this institution's political pressures. Since 1999, Congress has authorized 12 new national cemeteries, all of which went through this process. In the absence of political pressures, the Nation has benefited with a rational distribution of cemeteries that serve veterans their families, and the Nation very well.

This region of Colorado is not on any of the VA's strategic plans for new cemeteries in the next 20 years, nor was it identified by an independent 2002 Logistics Management Institute study that listed the areas with the greatest need for a national cemetery all the way to the year 2030.

Nonetheless, we have before us a bill to develop a cemetery in Southern Colorado, which has not been identified as a priority in any of these studies. Therefore, I ask the chairman of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee if you have now, since having brought this bill to the floor, developed criteria with regard to the development of VA national cemeteries whereby Members will know what to follow when they file bills before your committee? I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, we have criteria, as the gentleman stated, in the VA; and, if the need requires, we will establish the criteria for Members' requests.

Mr. BUYER. Reclaiming my time. I would like to work with the chairman, because I believe in that answer we do not have the criteria at this moment, and I think all the Members in this body need to know what the criteria would be with regard to placing a VA national cemetery. We have given such

deference to the executive branch. And I know that both gentlemen from Colorado brought up the issue to us about rural areas in the country and felt that, given the way that these studies were structured, that this VA cemetery could never be built. So given that deference, the chairman was very responsive to you.

We took up an amendment by Mr. STEARNS, which both of the gentlemen from Colorado had agreed to, whereby we did not want this to displace any of the other present cemeteries in the present priority.

I respect the gentleman, and I want to work with the chairman on coming up with criteria.

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

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield to another gentleman from Colorado (Mr. PERLMUTTER) such time as he may consume.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman, and I thank my colleagues from Colorado, Mr. SALAZAR and Mr. LAMBORN, for bringing this legislation to the floor.

As we approach Memorial Day, let us remember those who have fallen fighting for our country. And this is one way to recognize our service men's and women's sacrifices, by establishing a new VA cemetery in El Paso County. Although I don't represent that area, it is south of where I live, this is an area of our State that needs a cemetery of this kind.

Memorial Day is usually marked by parades, speeches, and the decoration of graves; but for the people of Southern Colorado, this means traveling up to Fort Logan which is in the Denver area. With the passage of this bill, the 150,000 veterans residing in Southern Colorado will have their own VA cemetery to honor and decorate.

I urge my colleagues to vote ''yes'' on this bill.

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this legislation to establish a national cemetery for veterans in southern Colorado, and I congratulate my colleague JOHN SALAZAR for his work on this bill.

I also want to recognize the work of my former colleague Joel Hefley and my current colleague DOUG LAMBORN on this issue. Establishing a national veterans cemetery in southern Colorado has been and continues to be a goal shared by the entire Colorado delegation.

For over 8 years, it has also been a goal of the Pikes Peak Veterans Cemetery Committee. And it has been a goal of the Department of Colorado Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Colorado chapters of the American Legion, the Paralyzed Veterans of America, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and the Association for Service Disabled Veterans. So many people have worked tirelessly to build support for this cemetery, and I hope they are pleased today that we are now one step closer to making it a reality.

This is a particularly timely bill to consider today, as we approach another Memorial Day and as we continue to send our troops to Iraq and Afghanistan. We remember the sacrifices that our veterans have made and the sacrifices that our men and women in uniform continue to make today to protect our freedom.

And at a time when our country is divided over the war in Iraq, it's even more important that we honor the service of those who have given their lives for this country and of the many veterans still among us.

Of course, it isn't enough just to remember—we must provide our troops and veterans with the care and support they have been promised. And we must provide them with a resting place within or as close as possible to their own communities.

With a growing military retiree and veterans population in southern Colorado and particularly El Paso County—and with Denver's Fort Logan cemetery rapidly filling up its burial spaces—it makes sense to provide for the future even as we ensure that southern Colorado's veterans receive the recognition they deserve.

A National Veterans Cemetery in El Paso County will also serve as an important symbol for those in the military community who have given so much to their country. Mr. Speaker, this is an important piece of legislation, and I urge its passage.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 1660, as amended.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. FILNER. I urge my colleagues to support this bill, and yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1660, 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.

RETURNING SERVICEMEMBER VA HEALTHCARE INSURANCE ACT OF 2007

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 612) to amend title 38, United States Code, to extend the period of eligibility for health care for combat service in the Persian Gulf War or future hostilities from two years to five years after discharge or release, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 612

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 ''Returning Servicemember VA Healthcare Insurance Act of 2007''.

SEC. 2. EXTENSION OF PERIOD OF ELIGIBILITY FOR HEALTH CARE FOR COMBAT SERVICE IN THE PERSIAN GULF WAR OR FUTURE HOSTILITIES.

Subparagraph (C) of section 1710(e)(3) of title 38, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

''(C) in the case of care for a veteran described in paragraph (1)(D) who—

''(i) is discharged or released from the active military, naval, or air service after the date that is five years before the date of the enactment of the Returning Servicemember VA Healthcare Insurance Act of 2007, after a period of five years beginning on the date of such discharge or release; or

''(ii) is so discharged or released more than five years before the date of the enactment of the Returning Servicemember VA Healthcare Insurance Act of 2007 and who did not enroll in the patient enrollment system under section 1705 of this title before such date, after a period of three years beginning on the date of the enactment of such Act; and''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER) and the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BUYER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

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

Mr. Speaker, not all of the returning veterans from the OEF/OIF suffer from obvious wounds. Those who suffer from an external injury are readily identified and receive immediate care for that injury. However, many of our returning veterans, and on this I include, Mr. Speaker, Guard and Reserve units who have been ordered to combat, are coming back with injuries that are not external. They are hidden wounds of the war, such as post-traumatic stress disorder, PTSD, forms of brain injury, which may not be evident without further diagnosis, which may not be evident to the soldier or to the doctor looking at him.

Unlike the physical wounds, mental wounds are not easily identified and may go undetected. PTSD is a mental health condition that is triggered by a traumatic event which causes an intense fear and/or helplessness. Some of the symptoms for this condition include reexperiencing the trauma through nightmares, obsessive thoughts, flashbacks. We know that this condition may not reveal itself for many months or maybe for years after experiencing the event.

We listened to veterans, veteran service organizations, family members, and we heard them say that their returning veterans needed more time to access the VA health care system when they came home from war.

Conditions like PTSD and traumatic brain injury are the driving force behind this bill, the Returning Servicemember VA Healthcare Insurance Act of 2007. It extends from 2 years to 5 years following discharge or release the eligibility period for veterans. And, as I said, we include Guard and Reserve units all those who served in combat during or after the Persian Gulf War are eligible to receive hospital care,

medical services, or nursing home care provided by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs. It provides for an additional 3 years of eligibility for veterans discharged more than 5 years before the enactment of this act who may not have enrolled in the VA health care system.

This system is recognized throughout the country, and indeed the world, as providing safe quality health care to our veterans. Two years was simply not enough time for returning OEF/OIF veterans to utilize this very important benefit. We are fixing that with this piece of legislation. It is a bill that will have a profound effect most immediately on our veterans returning from war. I urge my colleagues to support the bill.

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

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlelady from Florida (Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE).

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I thank the ranking member and certainly the chairman of the Veterans Committee.

I rise today in support of H.R. 612, the Returning Servicemember VA Health Care Insurance Act. This measure provides much needed expansion to the availability of VA health care to certain American soldiers returning from combat. Currently these individuals only have 2 years in which they can access medical services at the VA. Unfortunately, conditions associated with service in a combat theater can sometimes take longer to manifest themselves. In response, the measure provides a 5-year window of health care for our veterans.

I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation. Many of the young men and women in our Armed Forces have been away from their loved ones for very long periods of time. During this time, they have endured harsh conditions and tremendous physical and mental strains. The very least that Congress can do is to give these brave individuals 3 additional years of health care. I think it is the right thing to do, and I know that both the ranking member as well as the chairman fully support this effort to extend the health care for the additional time. I think it is a good public policy.

□ 1530

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the chairman for amending this legislation to address my concern that, as originally drafted, the bill did not provide equity for those veterans whose eligibility period would have expired prior to the enactment of this bill.

At my request, the bill was amended to make sure that those veterans whose eligibility period had ended prior to the enactment and did not enroll in the VA health care would be eligible for an additional 3 years of VA health care services. All veterans who served in combat should receive the same level of care, and I appreciate the chairman for adopting and agreeing to this amendment.

In 1993, Congress enacted Public Law 103–210 to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide additional authority for the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide health care for veterans of the Persian Gulf War.

The special health care authority allowed VA to treat those veterans who served in combat operations in the Persian Gulf for possible war-related illnesses, even though there was not definitive evidence that the disorders treated were related to wartime service.

Subsequent congressional hearings on Persian Gulf veterans health care highlighted the importance of early intervention in treating the kind of unexplained health problems experienced by many Persian Gulf war veterans.

In 1998, with the potential of renewed combat in the Persian Gulf, Public Law 105–368, the Veterans Programs Enhancement Act of 1998, was enacted. This law authorizes the VA to provide medical care and other medical services to combat veterans for a period of 2 years following the service separation date for veterans who served on active duty in theater of combat operations during a period of war after the Persian Gulf War, or in combat against a hostile force during a period of hostilities after November 11 of 1998. Members of the National Guard and Reserves may be eligible for this care if they meet certain requirements which essentially satisfy the definition of a ''veteran.''

The experience of the 1990s taught us the importance of both increasing understanding of war-related illnesses generally, and ensuring that the VA is better prepared to treat veterans of future wars and military combat.

I would also, at this moment, like to thank my colleague, Mr. SALAZAR of Colorado, who shared with me his statement that he gave honoring the life of a great American, Raymond Gerald Murphy. And I had an opportunity to read his statement that he read into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, and I appreciate him honoring such an American. My only regret is that I never had an opportunity to meet someone like this. And I'm sure that he touched the lives of many, many people.

And so I suppose where we are, Mr. Speaker, is that with regard to how we recognize this Medal of Honor recipient by naming the hospital after him, the Veterans' Affairs Committee has specific criteria that we are to go by. And when you look at the specific criteria, we satisfy all the criteria. He's a Medal of Honor recipient. He has letters of support from all the veterans groups in the State of New Mexico, all of the recognized organizations, I have their letters here, Mr. Speaker, I'll be more than happy to get them to you, along with the support of the Governor, all the Members of Congress, and we should be able to get this done. There's no reason why we shouldn't.

So here we have a situation whereby the committee has specific criteria for the naming of a VA hospital. This Medal of Honor recipient clearly applies. It passed the Senate. Yet we don't have criteria, as the chairman just spoke on the last bill, with regard to the naming of a cemetery. Yet we did it just for a political reason. And so now it's difficult for me to figure out how to follow the leadership of the chairman.

We don't have criteria, but we take action on the floor. But where we do have criteria, we don't take action on the floor. So it is a puzzling moment that we have in how we are bringing these veterans bills to the floor.

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

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the ranking member for his helpful amendment to this bill. As I said earlier, this is a very important bill to thousands and thousands of returning veterans. They have basically unfettered access to one of the best health care systems in the world without going through a lot of red tape, without going through a lot of paperwork to prove that they are eligible. They will have 5 years.

And it is most important for our Reserve and Guard units, who are not eligible for the benefit structure of the VA system. They are not eligible for most of the benefits of the GI bill. And we are trying to make an effort to bring them in under the VA benefits under what we call ''total force structure.''

So this bill is important to thousands of people, those that are coming back from the Marines or Army and those that are in the Guard and Reserve units. All of them now will have 5 years where these hidden injuries, brain injury, or post-traumatic stress disorder may become evident, and they may seek help. Now they will be able to do it without any of the bureaucratic entanglements. And I think this will have a remarkable impact on the lives of our Nation's veterans.

And I will tell you, as George Washington said more than 200 years ago, ''The morale of our fighting troops is dependent, most of all, on how they feel they're going to be treated when they come home.'' When they know they will have 5 years to come to the VA, they will know that a Nation is caring for them and is responsive to their needs.

Mr. HALL of New York. Mr. Speaker, I often say that the opportunity to serve on Veterans' Affairs Committee is one of the greatest privileges I have been given in my short time in Congress. The action on the floor of the House today is another reminder of how it is truly an honor to serve on this Committee. Earlier this afternoon the House passed several pieces of legislation to improve outreach and care to our nation's veterans.

Memorial Day is the day for Americans to officially honor the heroes who have fallen in service to our country, and a day to pray for and remember the brave souls who have given the ultimate sacrifice. We are the beneficiaries of those who serve and who have served to preserve the peace and freedom we enjoy.

As a nation, we honor the bravery of those who have fought and died for our country and recognize the tremendous sacrifices they and their families have made. But to truly honor these heroes it is our duty as a grateful nation to not just spend the day remembering their service, but to provide the promised support and benefits to the soldiers and veterans who served with and followed them. These bills help provide that support.

H.R. 67, the Veterans Outreach Improvement Act, creates a grant program to allow the VA to partner with State and county veteran organizations to reach out to veterans and their families to ensure they are aware of their eligibility for benefits.

This bipartisan bill also increases acountability in spending taxpayer dollars by requiring reports on how the grants in this program have been used to improve outreach. I am proud to be a cosponsor of this bill and am pleased it has passed the House.

H.R. 612 is an extremely important piece of legislation. This bill will extend access to VA Healthcare for Iraq and Afghanistan veterans from two years to five years. This is vital to the health of our veterans returning from Iraq because of the nature of Traumatic Brain Injury and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

In some cases, TBI and PTSD symptoms do not emerge until several years after the injury occurred. With the current freeze on Category 8 veteran enrollment in VA healthcare, this means that some OIF/OEF will realize they suffered a brain injury while deployed but be locked out of the system.

They might not have health insurance to cover their treatment, and will not have crucial medical documents that will help them receive disability benefits.

By expanding their eligibility for 3 additional years, Congress is acting to limit the damage done by the President's Category 8 veterans enrollment freeze. I was proud to also cosponsor this legislation.

Another extremely important bill to our Iraq and Afghanistan veterans is H.R. 2199, the Traumatic Brain Injury Health Enhancement and Long Term Support Act.

TBI is the signature injury of the war in Iraq and this bill vastly improves the VA's ability to provide care for brain injury.

This bill requires the VA to establish a program to screen veterans for TBI and establish a program of long term care for acute TBI victims.

Currently, of the nearly 1,300 VA health care facilities in the United States, only 4 have specialized TBI programs. This bill allows the VA to partner with private facilities to provide treatment the VA cannot immediately provide.

It also establishes centers of research and a national database so we can better understand the causes and symptoms of TBI. Hopefully, this will allow us to better treat victims in the future. This bill contains provisions of H.R. 1944, a bill I originally cosponsored.

H.R. 1470 expands chiropractic care to all VA facilities throughout the country by 2011. During a subcommittee hearing on returning Iraq and Afghanistan veterans, several OIF veterans suggested that back injuries will be a long term problem for this generation of veterans. This bill will help the VA better prepare for this new wave of patients.

I am proud that these bills passed the House today and that I could support their passage.

Congress has a responsibility to live up to our promises to our veterans. Today was another down payment on fulfilling these promises.

Through my role on the Veterans Affairs Committee, I pledge to continue to push for legislation that will improve services for our veterans and treat them with the respect they have worked so hard to earn.

Mr. SPACE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 612, the Returning Servicemember VA Healthcare Insurance Act.

This bill extends the eligibility period for receipt of VA hospital care, medical services, and nursing home care for veterans who served in combat during—or after—the Persian Gulf War.

Currently, the eligibility period for these VA services is two years. This bill lengthens that two year time frame to five years from a veteran's date of discharge or release from service.

As we learn more and more about what are increasingly being referred to as the signature wounds of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom—Traumatic Brain Injury and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder—I believe that this extension of VA care is essential to this Congress' mission to provide comprehensive care to our nation's heroes.

Often, a servicemember's battle scars run deeper than what is visible to an outsider. While many bodily injuries sustained are apparent to the naked eye, TBI, PTSD, and other conditions are not easily observed. Diagnosis of these conditions may require lengthy, detailed evaluations by specialists over the course of time. Furthermore, some psychological disorders take months or even years to develop following a servicemember's release from duty. Some chronic physical conditions also take time to peak and subsequently diagnose.

By extending eligibility to VA care to five years, we are helping to ensure that fewer physical and mental wounds go undiagnosed and untreated. We are helping to ensure that the care that veterans seek out and receive is more complete by enabling the VA to address more of servicemembers' health needs. Most importantly, we are offering another way to better care for our nation's wounded warriors who have sacrificed the best years of their lives.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 612 because it is an improvement upon the current system.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FILNER. I would ask, Mr. Speaker, 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. 612, as amended.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PERLMUTTER). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to unanimously support this 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 California (Mr. FILNER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 612, 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. FILNER. 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.

CARL SANDBURG HOME NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE BOUNDARY REVISION ACT OF 2007

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 429 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for further consideration of the bill, H.R. 1100.

□ 1539

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for further consideration of the bill (H.R. 1100) to revise the boundary of the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site in the State of North Carolina, and for other purposes, with Mr. ROSS (Acting Chairman) in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. When the Committee of the Whole rose earlier today, a request for a recorded vote on amendment No. 3 printed in House Report 110–165 by the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. HELLER) had been postponed.

Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, proceedings will now resume on those amendments on which further proceedings were postponed, in the following order:

Amendment No. 1 by Mr. BISHOP of Utah.

Amendment No. 3 by Mr. HELLER of Nevada.

The Chair will reduce to 5 minutes the time for the second vote in this series.

AMENDMENT NO. 1 OFFERED BY MR. BISHOP OF UTAH

The CHAIRMAN. The unfinished business is the demand for a recorded vote on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Utah (Mr. BISHOP) on which further proceedings were postponed and on which the noes prevailed by voice vote.

The Clerk will redesignate the amendment.

The Clerk redesignated the amendment.

RECORDED VOTE

The CHAIRMAN. A recorded vote has been demanded.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 185, noes 243, not voting 9, as follows:

[Roll No. 406]

AYES—185

Aderholt
Akin
Alexander
Bachmann
Bachus
Baker
Barrett (SC)
Bartlett (MD)
Barton (TX)
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Boehner
Bonner
Bono
Boozman
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Brown (SC)
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Buchanan
Burgess
Burton (IN)
Buyer
Calvert
Camp (MI)
Campbell (CA)
Cannon
Cantor
Capito
Carter
Chabot
Coble
Cole (OK)
Conaway
Crenshaw
Cubin
Culberson
Davis (KY)
Davis, David
Davis, Tom
Deal (GA)
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Doolittle
Drake
Dreier
Duncan
Ehlers
Emerson
English (PA)
Everett
Fallin
Feeney
Ferguson
Flake
Forbes
Fortenberry
Fortuño
Fossella
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Gillmor
Gingrey
Gohmert
Goode
Goodlatte
Granger
Graves
Hall (TX)
Hastert
Hastings (WA)
Hayes
Heller
Hensarling
Herger
Hobson
Hoekstra
Issa
Jindal
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, Sam
Jones (NC)
Jordan
Keller
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kline (MN)
Knollenberg
Kuhl (NY)
Lamborn
Latham
LaTourette
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (KY)
Linder
LoBiondo
Lucas
Lungren, Daniel E.
Mack
Manzullo
Marchant
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul (TX)
McCotter
McCrery
McHenry
McHugh
McKeon
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller, Gary
Moran (KS)
Murphy, Tim
Musgrave
Myrick
Neugebauer
Nunes
Paul
Pearce
Pence
Peterson (PA)
Petri
Pickering
Pitts
Poe
Porter
Price (GA)
Pryce (OH)
Putnam
Radanovich
Ramstad
Regula
Rehberg
Reichert
Renzi
Reynolds
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Royce
Ryan (WI)
Sali
Saxton
Schmidt
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shadegg
Shimkus
Shuster
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Souder
Stearns
Sullivan
Tancredo
Terry
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Upton
Walberg
Walden (OR)
Walsh (NY)
Wamp
Weldon (FL)
Weller
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Wicker
Wilson (NM)
Wilson (SC)
Wolf
Young (AK)
Young (FL)

NOES—243

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Allen
Altmire
Andrews
Arcuri
Baca
Baird
Baldwin
Barrow
Bean
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
Berry
Biggert
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Blumenauer
Boren
Boswell
Boucher
Boyd (FL)
Boyda (KS)
Brady (PA)
Braley (IA)
Brown, Corrine
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carney
Carson
Castle
Castor
Chandler
Christensen
Clarke
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Costello
Courtney
Cramer
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (IL)
Davis, Lincoln
DeFazio
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Donnelly
Doyle
Edwards
Ellison
Ellsworth
Emanuel
Engel
Eshoo
Etheridge
Faleomavaega
Farr
Fattah
Filner
Frank (MA)
Frelinghuysen
Gerlach
Giffords
Gilchrest
Gillibrand
Gonzalez
Gordon
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutierrez
Hall (NY)
Hare
Harman
Hastings (FL)
Herseth Sandlin
Higgins
Hill
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Hirono
Hodes
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hooley
Hoyer
Inglis (SC)
Inslee
Israel
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jefferson
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kagen
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilpatrick
Kind
Kirk
Klein (FL)
Kucinich
LaHood
Lampson
Langevin
Lantos
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lynch
Mahoney (FL)
Maloney (NY)
Markey
Marshall
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (NY)
McCollum (MN)
McDermott
McGovern
McIntyre
McNerney
McNulty
Meehan
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Melancon
Michaud
Miller (NC)
Miller, George
Mitchell
Mollohan
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Moran (VA)
Murphy (CT)
Murphy, Patrick
Murtha
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Norton
Oberstar
Obey
Olver
Ortiz
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Payne
Perlmutter
Peterson (MN)
Platts
Pomeroy
Price (NC)
Rahall
Rangel
Reyes
Rodriguez
Ross
Rothman
Roybal-Allard
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Salazar
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schwartz
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Serrano
Sestak
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shuler
Simpson
Sires
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Solis
Space
Spratt
Stark
Stupak
Sutton
Tanner
Tauscher
Taylor
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tierney
Towns
Turner
Udall (CO)
Udall (NM)
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz (MN)
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watson
Watt
Waxman
Weiner
Welch (VT)
Wexler
Wilson (OH)
Woolsey
Wu
Wynn
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—9

Blunt
Bordallo
Davis, Jo Ann
DeGette
Hulshof
Hunter
Jones (OH)
McMorris Rodgers
Shays

□ 1603

Messrs. LEWIS of Georgia, DAVIS of Alabama, MARSHALL and TIERNEY changed their vote from ''aye'' to ''no.''

Mr. KUHL of New York changed his vote from ''no'' to ''aye.''

So the amendment was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

Stated for:

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Chairman, on rollcall No. 406, the Bishop of Utah amendment to H.R. 1100, amendment No. 1, I was mistakenly recorded as "no," intending to vote "aye."

AMENDMENT NO. 3 OFFERED BY MR. HELLER OF NEVADA

The Acting CHAIRMAN. The unfinished business is the demand for a recorded vote on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. HELLER) on which further proceedings were postponed and on which the noes prevailed by voice vote.

The Clerk will redesignate the amendment.

The Clerk redesignated the amendment.

RECORDED VOTE

The Acting CHAIRMAN. A recorded vote has been demanded.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 183, noes 243, not voting 11, as follows:

[Roll No. 407]

AYES—183

Aderholt
Akin
Alexander
Bachmann
Bachus
Baker
Barrett (SC)
Bartlett (MD)
Barton (TX)
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Boehner
Bonner
Bono
Boozman
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Brown (SC)
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Buchanan
Burgess
Burton (IN)
Buyer
Calvert
Camp (MI)
Campbell (CA)
Cannon
Cantor
Capito
Carter
Chabot
Coble
Cole (OK)
Conaway
Crenshaw
Cubin
Culberson
Davis (KY)
Davis, David
Davis, Tom
Deal (GA)
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Doolittle
Drake
Dreier
Duncan
Ehlers
Emerson
English (PA)
Everett
Fallin
Feeney
Ferguson
Flake
Forbes
Fortenberry
Fortuño
Fossella
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Gillmor
Gingrey
Gohmert
Goode
Goodlatte
Granger
Graves
Hall (TX)
Hastert
Hastings (WA)
Hayes
Heller
Hensarling
Herger
Hobson
Hoekstra
Issa
Jindal
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, Sam
Jordan
Keller
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kline (MN)
Knollenberg
Kuhl (NY)
Lamborn
Latham
LaTourette
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (KY)
Linder
LoBiondo
Lucas
Lungren, Daniel E.
Mack
Manzullo
Marchant
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul (TX)
McCotter
McCrery
McHenry
McHugh
McKeon
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller, Gary
Moran (KS)
Murphy, Tim
Musgrave
Myrick
Neugebauer
Nunes
Paul
Pearce
Pence
Peterson (PA)
Petri
Pickering
Pitts
Poe
Porter
Price (GA)
Pryce (OH)
Putnam
Radanovich
Ramstad
Regula
Rehberg
Reichert
Renzi
Reynolds
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Royce
Ryan (WI)
Sali
Saxton
Schmidt
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shadegg
Shimkus
Shuster
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Stearns
Sullivan
Tancredo
Terry
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Turner
Upton
Walberg
Walden (OR)
Wamp
Weldon (FL)
Weller
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Wicker
Wilson (NM)
Wilson (SC)
Wolf
Young (AK)
Young (FL)

NOES—243

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Allen
Altmire
Andrews
Arcuri
Baca
Baird
Baldwin
Barrow
Bean
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
Berry
Biggert
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Blumenauer
Boren
Boswell
Boucher
Boyd (FL)
Boyda (KS)
Brady (PA)
Braley (IA)
Brown, Corrine
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carney
Carson
Castle
Castor
Chandler
Christensen
Clarke
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Costello
Courtney
Cramer
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (IL)
Davis, Lincoln
DeFazio
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dicks

Dingell
Doggett
Donnelly
Doyle
Edwards
Ellison
Ellsworth
Emanuel
Engel
Eshoo
Etheridge
Faleomavaega
Farr
Fattah
Filner
Frank (MA)
Frelinghuysen
Gerlach
Giffords
Gilchrest
Gillibrand
Gonzalez
Gordon
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutierrez
Hare
Harman
Hastings (FL)
Herseth Sandlin
Hill
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Hirono
Hodes
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hooley
Hoyer
Inglis (SC)
Inslee
Israel
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jefferson
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Jones (NC)
Kagen
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilpatrick
Kind
Kirk
Klein (FL)
Kucinich
LaHood
Lampson
Langevin
Lantos
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lynch
Mahoney (FL)
Maloney (NY)
Markey
Marshall
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (NY)
McCollum (MN)
McDermott
McGovern
McIntyre
McNerney
McNulty
Meehan
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Melancon
Michaud
Miller (NC)
Miller, George
Mitchell
Mollohan
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Moran (VA)
Murphy (CT)
Murphy, Patrick
Murtha
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Norton
Oberstar
Obey
Olver
Ortiz
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Payne
Perlmutter
Peterson (MN)
Platts
Pomeroy
Price (NC)
Rahall
Rangel
Reyes
Rodriguez
Ross
Rothman
Roybal-Allard
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Salazar
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schwartz
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Serrano
Sestak
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shuler
Simpson
Sires
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Solis
Souder
Space
Spratt
Stark
Stupak
Sutton
Tanner
Tauscher
Taylor
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tierney
Towns
Udall (CO)
Udall (NM)
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walsh (NY)
Walz (MN)
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watson
Watt
Waxman
Weiner
Welch (VT)
Wexler
Wilson (OH)
Woolsey
Wu
Wynn
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—11

Blunt
Bordallo
Davis, Jo Ann
DeGette
Hall (NY)
Higgins
Hulshof
Hunter
Jones (OH)
McMorris Rodgers
Shays

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE ACTING CHAIRMAN

The Acting CHAIRMAN (during the vote). Members are advised there are less than 2 minutes remaining on this vote.

□ 1611

So the amendment was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

Stated against:

Mr. HALL of New York. Mr. Chairman, on rollcall No. 407, the Heller of Nevada amendment, had I been present, I would have voted "no."

The Acting CHAIRMAN. The question is on the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute.

The committee amendment in the nature of a substitute was agreed to.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. Under the rule, the Committee rises.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. CAPUANO) having assumed the chair, Mr. ROSS, Acting Chairman of the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 1100) to revise the boundary of the Carl Sandburg Home Historic Site in the State of North Carolina, and for other purposes, pursuant to House Resolution 429, he reported the bill back to the House with an amendment adopted by the Committee of the Whole.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the rule, the previous question is ordered.

The question is on the amendment.

The amendment was agreed to.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, and was read the third time.

MOTION TO RECOMMIT OFFERED BY MR. PEARCE

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, I offer a motion to recommit.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is the gentleman opposed to the bill?

Mr. PEARCE. In its present form.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the motion to recommit.

The Clerk read as follows:

Mr. Pearce moves to recommit the bill H.R. 1100 to the Committee on Natural Resources with instructions to report the same back to the House promptly with an amendment to prohibit the Secretary of the Interior from using eminent domain to acquire land, water, or interests in land or water under section 3 of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from New Mexico is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, we are moving to recommit this bill in order to provide an amendment that would prohibit the Secretary of Interior from using eminent domain to acquire land, water, or interest in land or water under section 3 of the bill.

Now, most of you, like me, received probably the hardest phone calls from both Democrats and Republicans alike when our Supreme Court made the Kelo decision which said that local entities could, in fact, use eminent domain to acquire property from private individuals.

□ 1615

This motion to recommit is extremely simple. We do not want the Park Service to use eminent domain to take over property.

I sat as the chairman of the National Park Subcommittee in the Resources Committee for all of the last year and part of the year before that, and I will tell you that the most disturbing things that happened in committee were that we heard testimony from people around the Appalachian Trail where the willing seller that is referenced in the bill, the underlying bill today, the willing seller legislation was in fact used to threaten, to intimidate, to cause people to become ''willing sellers'' against their will.

Right now, I am working on the Continental Divide Trail, which goes north to south from the Mexico border to the Canadian border. Since 1978, it did not have one mile that had actually come from private landowners in New Mexico.

I believe in the park system and I believe in the trail system of the United States Government, but I do not believe that the government should or could be able to intimidate, to harass, to cause people to become willing sellers. And that is my fear in this legislation, that it does not go far enough and is not explicit enough.

I have expressly worked to get all of the landowners through the Second District of New Mexico, including 22 miles on the Acoma Indian Reservation, where they did not want any Federal presence, no people coming across their land, and now they are excited about the prospect.

So I support the concept of preservation, and I support the concept of our national parks, but I will fight to the last breath to protect the private property rights of the people in this country, because it is a constitutional right. The right to private property is the basis of our economic and, therefore, all other freedoms.

So, Mr. Speaker, we simply say that in this bill ''the willing seller'' is not hard enough; that we want assurance that eminent domain will not be used to acquire land, water, or interests in land or water under section 3 of the bill.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the motion to recommit.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, first of all, this legislation, H.R. 1100, went through full committee hearing, it went through subcommittee hearing, was referred to this floor by voice vote, and this whole discussion we have had on the bill today and the debate was under an open rule. So I fail to understand why we need a motion to recommit. I believe it is a red herring. It is a non-issue.

I remind Members that in the legislation itself under section 3, acquisition authority, let me quote: ''The Secretary may acquire from willing sellers,'' willing sellers, ''by donation, purchase with donated or appropriated funds, or exchange of land.''

Willing sellers. The concept of willing seller means that you cannot use eminent domain. I think the legislation before us is good legislation. The motivation for its defeat is something that we have not been able to get to the root of that reason. But the legislation has merited support from the full committee, the subcommittee, and through the discussions today.

I would continue to urge that we defeat the motion to recommit and pass the underlying legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to my colleague, the author of the legislation,

the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. SHULER).

Mr. SHULER. Mr. Speaker, I just would like to say that in 1968, Stewart Udall, Secretary of Interior from 1961 to 1968, put forth this great historic site in Flat Rock, North Carolina. We continue to see a tremendous amount of bipartisan support in my community, an all-Republican county commission, might I add, along with both Republican Senators, ELIZABETH DOLE and RICHARD BURR, both with overwhelming support, with companion legislation in the Senate.

We continue to find that we are playing politics here with the will of the people of my community. They have asked for this. The administration put forth in 2003 their management plan for this to adapt all 115 acres.

It is a very good bill. I oppose this motion to recommit, and I ask all my colleagues to vote ''yes'' on final passage.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, this motion is an attempt to kill the legislation. The use of the word ''promptly'' in the motion to recommit effectively kills the bill. The issue of this motion to recommit is redundant, not necessary, and I would urge its defeat and urge passage of the legislation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the motion to recommit.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to recommit.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the noes appeared to have it.

RECORDED VOTE

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 9 of rule XX, the Chair will reduce to 5 minutes the minimum time for any electronic vote on the question of passage.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 192, noes 228, not voting 12, as follows:

[Roll No. 408]

AYES—192

Aderholt
Akin
Alexander
Bachmann
Bachus
Baker
Barrett (SC)
Bartlett (MD)
Barton (TX)
Biggert
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blunt
Boehner
Bonner
Bono
Boozman
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Brown (SC)
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Buchanan
Burgess
Burton (IN)
Buyer
Calvert
Camp (MI)
Campbell (CA)
Cannon
Cantor
Capito
Carter
Castle
Chabot
Coble
Cole (OK)
Conaway
Crenshaw
Cubin
Culberson
Davis (KY)
Davis, David
Davis, Tom
Deal (GA)
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Doolittle
Drake
Dreier
Duncan
Ehlers
Emerson
English (PA)
Everett
Fallin
Feeney
Ferguson
Flake
Forbes
Fortenberry
Fossella
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Gerlach
Gingrey
Gohmert
Goode
Goodlatte
Granger
Graves
Hall (TX)
Hastert
Hastings (WA)
Hayes
Heller
Hensarling
Herger
Hobson
Hoekstra
Issa
Jindal
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, Sam
Jordan
Keller
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kirk
Kline (MN)
Knollenberg
Kuhl (NY)
LaHood
Lamborn
Latham
LaTourette
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (KY)
Linder
LoBiondo
Lucas
Lungren, Daniel E.
Mack
Manzullo
Marchant
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul (TX)
McCotter
McCrery
McHenry
McHugh
McKeon
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller, Gary
Moran (KS)
Murphy, Tim
Musgrave
Myrick
Neugebauer
Nunes
Paul
Pearce
Pence
Peterson (PA)
Petri
Pickering
Pitts
Platts
Poe
Porter
Price (GA)
Pryce (OH)
Putnam
Radanovich
Ramstad
Regula
Rehberg
Reichert
Renzi
Reynolds
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Royce
Ryan (WI)
Sali
Saxton
Schmidt
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shadegg
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Souder
Stearns
Sullivan
Tancredo
Terry
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Turner
Upton
Walberg
Walden (OR)
Walsh (NY)
Wamp
Weldon (FL)
Weller
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Wicker
Wilson (NM)
Wilson (SC)
Wolf
Young (AK)
Young (FL)

NOES—228

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Allen
Altmire
Andrews
Arcuri
Baca
Baird
Baldwin
Barrow
Bean
Becerra
Berman
Berry
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Blumenauer
Boren
Boswell
Boucher
Boyd (FL)
Boyda (KS)
Brady (PA)
Braley (IA)
Brown, Corrine
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carney
Carson
Castor
Chandler
Clarke
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Costello
Courtney
Cramer
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (IL)
Davis, Lincoln
DeFazio
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Donnelly
Doyle
Edwards
Ellison
Ellsworth
Emanuel
Engel
Eshoo
Etheridge
Farr
Fattah
Filner
Frank (MA)
Giffords
Gilchrest
Gillibrand
Gonzalez
Gordon
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutierrez
Hall (NY)
Hare
Harman
Hastings (FL)
Herseth Sandlin
Higgins
Hill
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Hirono
Hodes
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hooley
Hoyer
Inglis (SC)
Inslee
Israel
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jefferson
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Jones (NC)
Kagen
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilpatrick
Kind
Klein (FL)
Kucinich
Lampson
Langevin
Lantos
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lynch
Mahoney (FL)
Maloney (NY)
Markey
Marshall
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (NY)
McCollum (MN)
McDermott
McGovern
McIntyre
McNerney
McNulty
Meehan
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Melancon
Michaud
Miller (NC)
Miller, George
Mitchell
Mollohan
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Moran (VA)
Murphy (CT)
Murphy, Patrick
Murtha
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Obey
Olver
Ortiz
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Payne
Perlmutter
Peterson (MN)
Pomeroy
Price (NC)
Rahall
Rangel
Reyes
Rodriguez
Ross
Rothman
Roybal-Allard
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Salazar
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schwartz
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Serrano
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shuler
Sires
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Solis
Space
Spratt
Stark
Sutton
Tanner
Tauscher
Taylor
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tierney
Towns
Udall (CO)
Udall (NM)
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz (MN)
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watson
Watt
Waxman
Weiner
Welch (VT)
Wexler
Wilson (OH)
Woolsey
Wu
Wynn
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—12

Berkley
Davis, Jo Ann
DeGette
Gillmor
Hulshof
Hunter
Jones (OH)
McMorris Rodgers
Oberstar
Sestak
Shays
Stupak

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). Members are advised there are 2 minutes remaining in this vote.

□ 1638

Mr. KINGSTON changed his vote from ''no'' to ''aye.''

So the motion to recommit was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

Stated against:

Mr. SESTAK. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 408, had I been present, I would have voted "no."

Ms. BERKLEY. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 408, I was unavoidably detained in a meeting of the Ways and Means Trade Subcommittee with the Chinese trade delegation. Had I been present, I would have voted "no."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the passage of the bill.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

RECORDED VOTE

Mr. SHULER. Mr. Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 268, noes 150, not voting 14, as follows:

[Roll No. 409]

AYES—268

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Allen
Altmire
Andrews
Arcuri
Baca
Baird
Baldwin
Barrow
Bean
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
Berry
Biggert
Bilbray
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Blumenauer
Bono
Boren
Boswell
Boucher
Boyd (FL)
Boyda (KS)
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Braley (IA)
Brown, Corrine
Butterfield
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carney
Carson
Castle
Castor
Chandler
Clarke
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Conyers
Costa
Costello
Courtney
Cramer
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (IL)
Davis, David
Davis, Lincoln
DeFazio
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dent
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Donnelly
Doyle
Duncan
Edwards
Ehlers
Ellison

Ellsworth
Emanuel
Emerson
Engel
English (PA)
Eshoo
Etheridge
Farr
Fattah
Ferguson
Filner
Fortenberry
Frank (MA)
Frelinghuysen
Gerlach
Giffords
Gilchrest
Gillibrand
Gillmor
Gonzalez
Gordon
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutierrez
Hall (NY)
Hare
Harman
Hastings (FL)
Hayes
Herseth Sandlin
Higgins
Hill
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Hirono
Hodes
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hooley
Hoyer
Inglis (SC)
Inslee
Israel
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jefferson
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, E. B.
Jones (NC)
Kagen
Kanjorski
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilpatrick
Kind
Kirk
Klein (FL)
Knollenberg
Kucinich
LaHood
Lampson
Langevin
Lantos
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
LaTourette
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lewis (KY)
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lucas
Lynch
Mahoney (FL)
Maloney (NY)
Markey
Marshall
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (NY)
McCollum (MN)
McDermott
McIntyre
McNerney
McNulty
Meehan
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Melancon
Michaud
Miller (NC)
Miller, George
Mitchell
Mollohan
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Moran (KS)
Moran (VA)
Murphy, Patrick
Murtha
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Obey
Olver
Ortiz
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Payne
Perlmutter
Peterson (MN)
Platts
Pomeroy
Porter
Price (NC)
Rahall
Rangel
Reyes
Rodriguez
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Ros-Lehtinen
Ross
Rothman
Roybal-Allard
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Salazar
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Saxton
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schwartz
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Serrano
Sestak
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuler
Simpson
Sires
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (NJ)
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Solis
Souder
Space
Spratt
Stark
Stupak
Sutton
Tanner
Tauscher
Taylor
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tierney
Towns
Turner
Udall (CO)
Udall (NM)
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walsh (NY)
Walz (MN)
Wamp
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watson
Watt
Waxman
Weiner
Welch (VT)
Wexler
Wilson (OH)
Wolf
Woolsey
Wu
Wynn
Yarmuth

NOES—150

Aderholt
Akin
Alexander
Bachmann
Bachus
Baker
Barrett (SC)
Bartlett (MD)
Barton (TX)
Bilirakis
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blunt
Boehner
Bonner
Boozman
Boustany
Brown (SC)
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Buchanan
Burgess
Burton (IN)
Buyer
Calvert
Camp (MI)
Campbell (CA)
Cantor
Carter
Chabot
Coble
Cole (OK)
Conaway
Crenshaw
Cubin
Culberson
Davis (KY)
Davis, Tom
Deal (GA)
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Doolittle
Drake
Everett
Fallin
Feeney
Flake
Forbes
Fossella
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Gingrey
Gohmert
Goode
Goodlatte
Granger
Graves
Hall (TX)
Hastert
Hastings (WA)
Heller
Hensarling
Herger
Hobson
Hoekstra
Issa
Jindal
Johnson, Sam
Jordan
Keller
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kline (MN)
Kuhl (NY)
Lamborn
Latham
Lewis (CA)
Linder
Lungren, Daniel E.
Mack
Manzullo
Marchant
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul (TX)
McCotter
McCrery
McHenry
McHugh
McKeon
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller, Gary
Murphy, Tim
Musgrave
Myrick
Neugebauer
Nunes
Paul
Pearce
Pence
Peterson (PA)
Petri
Pickering
Pitts
Poe
Price (GA)
Pryce (OH)
Putnam
Radanovich
Ramstad
Regula
Rehberg
Reichert
Renzi
Reynolds
Rogers (AL)
Rohrabacher
Roskam
Royce
Ryan (WI)
Sali
Schmidt
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shadegg
Shuster
Smith (NE)
Smith (TX)
Stearns
Sullivan
Tancredo
Terry
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Upton
Walberg
Walden (OR)
Weldon (FL)
Weller
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Wicker
Wilson (NM)
Wilson (SC)
Young (AK)
Young (FL)

NOT VOTING—14

Cannon
Cooper
Davis, Jo Ann
DeGette
Dreier
Hulshof
Hunter
Jones (OH)
Kaptur
McGovern
McMorris Rodgers
Murphy (CT)
Oberstar
Shays

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). Members are advised 2 minutes remain in this vote.

□ 1646

So the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated against:

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 409 I was unavoidably detained during a hearing of the Committee on Rules. Had I been present, I would have voted "no."

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 2060

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to remove from H.R. 2060 the name of NATHAN DEAL as a cosponsor. His name was inadvertently added as a cosponsor to the bill I had sponsored.

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

There was no objection.

CHIROPRACTIC CARE AVAILABLE TO ALL VETERANS ACT

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1470) to amend the Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care Programs Enhancement Act of 2001 to require the provision of chiropractic care and services to veterans at all Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1470

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 "Chiropractic Care Available to All Veterans Act".

SEC. 2. PROGRAM FOR PROVISION OF CHIROPRACTIC CARE AND SERVICES TO VETERANS.

Section 204(c) of the Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care Programs Enhancement Act of 2001 (38 U.S.C. 1710 note) is amended—

(1) by inserting "(1)" before "The program"; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

"(2) The program shall be carried out at not fewer than 75 medical centers by not later than December 31, 2009, and at all medical centers by not later than December 31, 2011.".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER) and the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

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

We are continuing with a packet of seven bills from the Veterans' Affairs Committee that is really a thank-you in prelude to Memorial Day, a thank-you to our Nation's veterans. Memorial Day is a tribute to those who gave the ultimate sacrifice.

What we are saying is we're honoring them and all our veterans who are living with us in the United States. And as I said earlier, no matter where we are on the current debate on the war in Iraq, we are united in saying that every young woman, every young man who returns from that battle gets all the care, the attention, the love, the honor, the dignity that a grateful Nation can bestow. And that's what we are saying in these bills today.

We have already passed a bill which extends from 2 years to 5 years the ability of any returning servicemember in combat to access the VA health care system. Two years was not sufficient for those who might have brain injuries, who might have PTSD, posttraumatic stress disorder. These are, in many cases, hidden diseases. You don't know that you have it. A doctor may not diagnose it at first, and so as time goes by, you may feel the need to access the VA health care system. So we have extended that from 2 years to 5 years.

In addition, we have passed a new outreach program to meet especially the needs of rural veterans, and we will continue this package in the hour ahead.

Veterans returning home from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan should be able to depend on medical services that they want being available in the system of health care that was built to take care of them and their unique needs.

For those returning veterans seeking care in a VA health care system, we know that the most common health problems are under the category of musculoskeletal ailments, principally joint and back disorders. We hear a lot about brain injury and PTSD, and those we have to give a lot of resources to, but 42 percent of veterans coming to the health care system have been presented to the VA with the needs of joint and back disorders.

This bill, the Chiropractic Care Available to All Veterans Act, requires

that chiropractic services be made available in not fewer than 75 VA medical centers by the end of December 2009 and all the health care centers by the end of 2011.

Undoubtedly the returning servicemembers will be able to benefit from this care. I speak from experience as I have had chiropractic care a good part of my life. I am confident that with expansion of these services within VA, many veterans will be able to find relief from their pain.

Since the creation of the VA health care system, the Nation's doctors of chiropractic have been kept outside and all but prevented from providing proven, cost-effective and needed care to veterans. So we are grateful that access is becoming wider and wider.

The support for VA chiropractic service is bipartisan. Former Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony Principi released a policy directive before his departure several years ago regarding the true and full integration of chiropractic care in the VA.

Secretary Nicholson and I have developed a solid working relationship, and chiropractic care is an area where we will be working closely together. Both Republican and Democratic Members have supported the inclusion of chiropractic care in the VA.

I have worked very closely with chiropractic patients, particularly our veterans, as well as with various associations dedicated to the profession such as the American Chiropractic Association.

Veterans are returning home from combat expecting to receive needed services. Let us not disappoint them. Expansion of chiropractic services is the right thing to do, and it is the least we can do for our returning heroes.

I urge support of H.R. 1470.

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

Mr. MORAN of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, there are thousands of veterans across this country who could benefit from additional medical care and treatment, and chiropractic care is one form of that care and treatment that we believe can be expanded to meet the health care needs of our Nation's veterans.

It's an honor for me to be here today, just a few days in advance of Memorial Day, in support of legislation that I believe will benefit those veterans.

Mr. Speaker, in the year 2002, I joined my colleagues in an effort to see that chiropractic care became a significant component of the VA health care delivery system, and we have made progress in that regard. And that program has been implemented, but as the chairman indicated, as the gentleman from California indicated, it's only available in a small number of hospitals across the country.

This legislation takes what was a very good idea in 2002 and 2003 and expands it to make certain that, over time, all veterans in this country can access chiropractic care.

A recent VA study indicates that the demand for attention to back pain is only increasing, and we know that chiropractic care can address those issues. Numerous studies have demonstrated that chiropractic care is an effective therapy and would be an effective approach to low back pain, spasms, and other maladies suffered by not only all Americans but by our veterans in particular.

And so, Mr. Speaker, this is a piece of legislation that I think will benefit all veterans across the country, widely supported by those veterans service organizations who speak here in our Nation's Capitol on behalf of veterans. The Disabled American Veterans, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Vietnam Veterans of America, AMVETS, and the Paralyzed Veterans of America all speak in favor of passage H.R. 1470.

Mr. Speaker, I come from a congressional district in which access to health care is a huge issue for all of my citizens. Long distances to travel, attraction of health care providers to rural communities is a challenging task and the more we can expand the number of providers, the type of care that can be provided, the more likely it is that veterans who live in my district and rural America will have access to that care.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm here on behalf of the veterans of America. I'm here on behalf of members of the Veterans' Affairs Committee to urge my colleagues to approve H.R. 1470, the Chiropractic Care Available to All Veterans Act.

I thank the gentleman from California for his encouragement of the passage of this legislation.

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

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield as much time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from South Dakota (Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN).

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I do rise in strong support today of H.R. 1470.

I want to thank Chairman FILNER for introducing this important bill and for his efforts to advance it through committee. I also would like to thank Ranking Member BUYER and Health Subcommittee Chairman MICHAUD for their work and support in moving the bill through each step in the committee process.

Chiropractic care has been shown to be a valuable and cost-effective health care approach, which benefits millions of Americans. Passage of this bill is an important step in our efforts to broaden veterans access and options for health care services.

Currently the VA is only required to provide chiropractic services on a limited basis to veterans in each geographic service area. For veterans in rural parts of the country, as Mr. MORAN was explaining, whether it's in Kansas or my home State of South Dakota, limited access to chiropractic care has forced many veterans to either drive several hours to a VA medical center that offers chiropractic services, or to not receive the chiropractic care that they need.

So it's important that veterans be granted the same health care options as the rest of the American population, including the availability of chiropractic services.

I look forward to continue working with my colleagues on the Veterans' Affairs Committee to provide veterans with chiropractic and other health care services that they've earned and deserve.

I ask my colleagues to support H.R. 1470.

Mr. MORAN of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I would ask the balance of my time? How much time is remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Kansas has 17 minutes remaining.

Mr. MORAN of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I yield 15 minutes to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BUYER), former chairman of the committee and the ranking member.

Mr. BUYER. I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I want to thank also not only you but also in particular Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN and Mr. MICHAUD for their work on this bill.

I'm pleased to support H.R. 1470, the Chiropractic Care Available to All Veterans Act, that would require a phased implementation to provide chiropractic care in all VA medical centers by December 31, 2011.

Under a policy guidance that I gave under the House Republican alternative budget resolution for fiscal year 2008, we provided an additional $100 million for veterans medical services to support the hiring of doctors of chiropractic care at all 155 VA medical centers. I have history dating back to the 106th Congress for supporting chiropractic care.

The Military Personnel Subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee worked to include chiropractic care services as a benefit in the military health facilities and through TRICARE.

VA is currently offering chiropractic care in 30 VA medical centers and provides chiropractic care on a fee-for-service basis for veterans who are geographically distant from a VA medical facility. In fiscal year 2006, the VA paid over $1 million to fee-based chiropractic providers to treat roughly 3,000 veterans, and I support the passage of this bill.

I would also note, Mr. Speaker, that I'm very concerned because the chairman just spoke that the reason, words to the effect, that he's brought these seven bills to the floor is to represent what a grateful Nation bestows. But what I'm concerned about the seven bills being considered today under the suspension of the rules, only one, H.R. 2199, is being considered with a bill report having been filed.

I believe this is yet another way in which the majority of this Veterans' Affairs Committee is breaking with past practices. When you do not file a report with a bill that comes to the floor, you are essentially denying Members of the minority the opportunity to file supplemental, minority and additional views on legislation under House rule XI, clause 2(i).

Since the time of Sonny Montgomery, the Committee on Veterans' Affairs has filed bill reports with every veterans bill other than resolutions such as H. Res. 392 or a facility naming bill; which is what I'm asking for Mr. FILNER to do to honor the recipient of the Medal of Honor with regard to the naming of the VA medical center in Albuquerque, NM, and the minority has thus had the opportunity to file views.

The veterans bills being considered by the House today, H.R. 67, H.R. 1660, H.R. 612, H.R. 1470 and H.R. 2239, were all ordered favorably reported, with the exception of H.R. 1470, ordered reported from the Committee on Veterans' Affairs with amendments. However, the chairman of the Veterans' Affairs has filed no bill with reports on any of them. Not only does this deprive the minority of the opportunity to file views, but it deprives veterans and the rest of the interested public from having important legislative history which discusses the background of legislation and explains the committee's intent as well as the amendments.

□ 1700

All of this is compounded by the fact that most of these bills were ordered reported without hearings that would have provided an historical record for legislation. The majority also has not bothered to obtain the position of the administration on most of these bills.

There is no reason for taking such shortcuts. I would have filed additional views on H.R. 1660, in particular, if the opportunity had been available. These are not expedited pieces of legislation involving an emergency situation. There has been ample time to follow the customary regular order and do that which is right.

We will now be at a disadvantage when conferring with the Senate. I fully expect the House to pass these bills overwhelmingly, but it is not a good way to legislate on behalf of our Nation's veterans.

I understand all the committees operate under the suspension of the rules to bring legislation to the floor. I wish that there were a collegial relationship between the chairman and the ranking member. It does not exist, unfortunately.

If, in fact, he would confer and work with us, we wouldn't have to work these things out or make an attempt to work these things out on the House floor.

Once again, I will make an attempt, and I will ask Chairman FILNER if he would call up HEATHER WILSON's bill and allow us, when we return after the Memorial Day break, to have HEATHER WILSON's bill, H.R. 1474, brought to the House floor under the suspensions.

Mr. Chairman, I yield to you.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I have a parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CAPUANO). Does the gentleman from Indiana yield for a parliamentary inquiry?

Mr. BUYER. I would yield to the chairman for a parliamentary inquiry and respond to the question.

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, is it a requirement that committees have to file reports with legislation that is very straightforward?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The motion to suspend the rules obviates any point of order on such issues.

Mr. FILNER. I thank you, and I hope the ranking member heard that.

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, once again, reclaiming my time, the American people get to see the abuse of power that I have to deal with.

Rather than working collegially with us, with regard to filing reports, it's just, well, we don't have to do it. We'll just bring it to the floor. It doesn't matter. Really? Is that how we're going to legislate? We're just going to be sloppy about the Nation's business? I don't think that's a proper way of paying respect to our Nation's veterans, and it's very unfortunate.

I yield to my colleague, the chairman of the committee, to respond to my question that will you permit, under the suspension of the rules, to consider H.R. 474 when we return after Memorial Day break so that we may honor Raymond Jerry Murphy and rename the Albuquerque VA Medical Center after him.

Mr. Chairman, I yield to you.

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I have a parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Does the gentleman from Indiana yield for a parliamentary inquiry?

Mr. BUYER. I do not yield for a parliamentary inquiry. I think the purpose of my yielding to the chairman was to get a good response, whereby we have criteria, before the committee, with regard to how we name VA medical centers.

There is an individual, all the criteria have been satisfied, and I asked a very simple question of the chairman, if he would suspend the rules and bring it to the floor. I have written him twice. He doesn't respond to the letters. It has passed the Senate. A bill lays upon the desk, and I asked a very simple question.

All he wants to do is a parliamentary inquiry. So maybe we will be enlightened if I let him do a parliamentary inquiry.

Mr. Chairman, I yield to you for a parliamentary inquiry.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, am I required to engage in political debate with the ranking member when we are discussing a bill very important to veterans?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman has not stated a point of parliamentary inquiry.

Mr. FILNER. I would inform the ranking member that I am not going to respond to political debate.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Indiana has the time.

Mr. BUYER. Thank you. I would yield back to the gentleman, since he did not address a parliamentary inquiry during his question. I yield to him, if you would like to have a statement.

Mr. FILNER. It's your time.

Mr. BUYER. Pardon? I yield to the chairman.

Well, this is pretty interesting. It's pretty hard to run the Nation's business if the chairman will not even respond to somebody on the House floor.

It's also very disappointing if, in fact, this is the way we are supposed to honor America's veterans whereby the chairman of the majority party is acting like this.

I suppose what I should do is work with my good friend Mr. MICHAUD, who is the chairman of the Health Subcommittee, who has the ability to call this bill up and to mark this bill up. Obviously, even though he were to mark this up in the subcommittee, it would still be held at the full committee, if the chairman wants to continue to play politics.

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield as much time as she may need to the gentlelady from Florida (Ms. CORRINE BROWN), who has now for 15 years fought side by side with me on behalf of our Nation's veterans. She is a fighter, and we are proud of her. You have the floor, Ms. BROWN.

Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida. First of all, let me thank Chairman FILNER for shepherding the bills that we have here on the floor, for bringing these bills to the floor on this date.

Mr. Speaker, I have been on Veterans' Affairs for 15 years, and as we approach Memorial Day, we do it to honor our veterans. The entire time I have been proud to be on this committee, because it is what we do for our veterans.

One of the things, Mr. BUYER, that I have enjoyed about serving on this committee is that it has always been bipartisan. We have always worked together for the veterans in this country, and we need to continue to do that.

As we move into this Memorial Day, and I think about what I have to do next Monday, when I go home, to face those families, we need to be honoring them today here on the floor of the House of Representatives.

If we have any personal matters, it needs to be taken up at that particular time and not here on the floor of the House of Representatives.

Earlier today I had the privilege of joining the Congressional Women's Caucus at the Women in Military Service for America Memorial at Arlington

National Cemetery. Earlier today we honored four members of the United States Armed Forces, and it was my privilege to be there. The late Congresswoman Juanita Millender-McDonald, a key member in the Women's Caucus, was instrumental in organizing this year's celebration.

It wasn't until 1971 that the last Monday in May became the official national holiday, as we know today, as Memorial Day. The day itself was born from the tragedy of the Civil War when soldiers and family members in the North and the South decorated the graves of fallen soldiers with flowers.

In 1868, seeking to formalize this touching tribute, General John Logan, Commander in Chief of the Grand Army of the Republic, issued General Order Number 11 designating May 30, 1868, as Decoration Day, for the purpose of laying flowers and decorating graves of those who died in the defense of their country, our great country.

All together, these bills move benefits for veterans into the 21st century. From extending the eligible period for health care for combat service in the Persian Gulf to treating of trauma, brain injury, vocational rehabilitation benefits, chiropractic benefits and outreach activities at the VA, finally to deal with the final resting place for those who have sacrificed for the freedom of this Nation, these bills and this House honor our Nation's veterans.

I support all of these bills, and I urge my colleagues to support them as well. Let us all honor the veterans who have done so much for us and these families as we go into Memorial Day.

God bless America.

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

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 1470.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. FILNER. 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 California (Mr. FILNER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1470.

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. FILNER. 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.

TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY HEALTH ENHANCEMENT AND LONG-TERM SUPPORT ACT OF 2007

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2199) to amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide certain improvements in the treatment of individuals with traumatic brain injuries, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2199

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 ''Traumatic Brain Injury Health Enhancement and Long-Term Support Act of 2007''.

SEC. 2. SCREENING, REHABILITATION, AND TREATMENT FOR TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY.

(a) SCREENING, REHABILITATION, AND TREATMENT FOR TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 17 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new subchapter:

''SUBCHAPTER IX—TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY

''§ 1791. Screening for traumatic brain injuries

''(a) SCREENING PROGRAM.—The Secretary shall establish a program to screen veterans who are eligible for hospital care, medical services, and nursing home care under section 1710(e)(1)(D) of this title for symptoms of traumatic brain injury.

''(b) REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this section, and annually thereafter, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the House of Representatives a report containing the following information:

''(1) The number of veterans screened under the program during the year preceding such report.

''(2) The prevalence of traumatic brain injury symptoms among the veterans screened under the program.

''(3) Recommendations for improving care and services to veterans exhibiting symptoms of traumatic brain injury.

''§ 1792. Comprehensive program for long-term traumatic brain injury rehabilitation

''(a) COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM.—The Secretary shall develop and carry out a comprehensive program of long-term care for post-acute traumatic brain injury rehabilitation that includes residential, community, and home-based components utilizing interdisciplinary treatment teams.

''(b) LOCATION OF PROGRAM.—The Secretary shall carry out the program developed under subsection (a) in four geographically dispersed polytrauma network sites designated by the Secretary.

''(c) ELIGIBILITY.—A veteran is eligible for care under the program developed under subsection (a) if the veteran is otherwise eligible for care under this chapter and—

''(1) served on active duty in a theater of combat operations (as determined by the Secretary in consultation with the Secretary of Defense) during a period of war after the Persian Gulf War, or in combat against a hostile force during a period of hostilities (as defined in section 1712A(a)(2)(B) of this title) after November 11, 1998;

''(2) is diagnosed as suffering from moderate to severe traumatic brain injury; and

''(3) is unable to manage routine activities of daily living without supervision or assistance.

''(d) REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this section, and annually thereafter, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the House of Representatives a report containing the following information:

''(1) A description of the operation of the program.

''(2) The number of veterans provided care under the program during the year preceding such report.

''(3) The annual cost of operating the program.

''§ 1793. Traumatic brain injury transition offices

''(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary shall establish a traumatic brain injury transition office at each Department polytrauma network site for the purposes of coordinating the provision of health-care and services to veterans who suffer from moderate to severe traumatic brain injuries and are in need of health-care and services not immediately offered by the Department.

''(b) COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS.—The Secretary, through each such office established under subsection (a), shall have the authority to arrange for the provision of health-care and services through cooperative agreements with appropriate public or private entities that have established long-term neurobehavioral rehabilitation and recovery programs.

''§ 1794. Traumatic brain injury registry

''(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall establish and maintain a registry to be known as the 'Traumatic Brain Injury Veterans' Health Registry' (in this section referred to as the 'Registry').

''(b) DESCRIPTION.—The Registry shall include the following information:

''(1) A list containing the name of each individual who served as a member of the Armed Forces in Operation Enduring Freedom or Operation Iraqi Freedom who exhibits symptoms associated with traumatic brain injury and who—

''(A) applies for care and services from the Department under this chapter; or

''(B) files a claim for compensation under chapter 11 of this title on the basis of any disability which may be associated with such service; and

''(2) any relevant medical data relating to the health status of an individual described in paragraph (1) and any other information the Secretary considers relevant and appropriate with respect to such an individual if the individual—

''(A) grants permission to the Secretary to include such information in the Registry; or

''(B) is deceased at the time such individual is listed in the Registry.

''(c) NOTIFICATION.—The Secretary shall notify individuals listed in the Registry of significant developments in research on the health consequences of military service in the Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom theaters of operations.

''§ 1795. Centers for traumatic brain injury research, education, and clinical activities

''(a) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this section is to provide for the improvement of the provision of health care to eligible veterans with traumatic brain injuries through—

''(1) the conduct of research (including research on improving facilities of the Department concentrating on traumatic brain injury care and on improving the delivery of traumatic brain injury care by the Department);

''(2) the education and training of health care personnel of the Department; and

''(3) the development of improved models and systems for the furnishing of traumatic brain injury care by the Department.

''(b) ESTABLISHMENT OF CENTERS.—(1) The Secretary shall establish and operate centers for traumatic brain injury research, education, and clinical activities. Such centers shall be established and operated by collaborating Department facilities as provided in subsection (c)(1). Each such center shall function as a center for—

''(A) research on traumatic brain injury;

''(B) the use by the Department of specific models for furnishing traumatic brain injury care;

''(C) education and training of health-care professionals of the Department; and

''(D) the development and implementation of innovative clinical activities and systems of care with respect to the delivery of traumatic brain injury care by the Department.

''(2) The Secretary shall, upon the recommendation of the Under Secretary for Health, designate the centers under this section. In making such designations, the Secretary shall ensure that the centers designated are located in various geographic regions of the United States. The Secretary may designate a center under this section only if—

''(A) the proposal submitted for the designation of the center meets the requirements of subsection (c);

''(B) the Secretary makes the finding described in subsection (d); and

''(C) the peer review panel established under subsection (e) makes the determination specified in subsection (e)(3) with respect to that proposal.

''(3) Not more than five centers may be designated under this section.

''(4) The authority of the Secretary to establish and operate centers under this section is subject to the appropriation of funds for that purpose.

''(c) PROPOSALS FOR DESIGNATION OF CENTERS.—A proposal submitted for the designation of a center under this section shall—

''(1) provide for close collaboration in the establishment and operation of the center, and for the provision of care and the conduct of research and education at the center, by a Department facility or facilities in the same geographic area which have a mission centered on traumatic brain injury care and a Department facility in that area which has a mission of providing tertiary medical care;

''(2) provide that no less than 50 percent of the funds appropriated for the center for support of clinical care, research, and education will be provided to the collaborating facility or facilities that have a mission centered on traumatic brain injury care; and

''(3) provide for a governance arrangement between the collaborating Department facilities which ensures that the center will be established and operated in a manner aimed at improving the quality of traumatic brain injury care at the collaborating facility or facilities which have a mission centered on traumatic brain injury care.

''(d) FINDING OF SECRETARY.—The finding referred to in subsection (b)(2)(B) with respect to a proposal for designation of a site as a location of a center under this section is a finding by the Secretary, upon the recommendation of the Under Secretary for Health, that the facilities submitting the proposal have developed (or may reasonably be anticipated to develop) each of the following:

''(1) An arrangement with an accredited medical school that provides education and training in traumatic brain injury care and with which one or more of the participating Department facilities is affiliated under which medical residents receive education and training in traumatic brain injury care through regular rotation through the participating Department facilities so as to provide such residents with training in the diagnosis and treatment of traumatic brain injury.

''(2) An arrangement under which nursing, social work, counseling, or allied health personnel receive training and education in traumatic brain injury care through regular rotation through the participating Department facilities.

''(3) The ability to attract scientists who have demonstrated achievement in research—

''(A) into the evaluation of innovative approaches to the design of traumatic brain injury care; or

''(B) into the causes, prevention, and treatment of traumatic brain injury.

''(4) The capability to evaluate effectively the activities of the center, including activities relating to the evaluation of specific efforts to improve the quality and effectiveness of traumatic brain injury care provided by the Department at or through individual facilities.

''(e) PEER REVIEW PANEL.—(1) In order to provide advice to assist the Secretary and the Under Secretary for Health to carry out their responsibilities under this section, the official within the central office of the Veterans Health Administration responsible for traumatic brain injury care shall establish a peer review panel to assess the scientific and clinical merit of proposals that are submitted to the Secretary for the designation of centers under this section.

''(2) The panel shall consist of experts in the fields of traumatic brain injury research, education and training, and clinical care. Members of the panel shall serve as consultants to the Department.

''(3) The panel shall review each proposal submitted to the panel by the official referred to in paragraph (1) and shall submit to that official its views on the relative scientific and clinical merit of each such proposal. The panel shall specifically determine with respect to each such proposal whether that proposal is among those proposals which have met the highest competitive standards of scientific and clinical merit.

''(4) The panel shall not be subject to the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.).

''(f) AWARD OF FUNDING.—Clinical and scientific investigation activities at each center established under this section—

''(1) may compete for the award of funding from amounts appropriated for the Department of Veterans Affairs medical and prosthetics research account; and

''(2) shall receive priority in the award of funding from such account insofar as funds are awarded to projects and activities relating to traumatic brain injury.

''(g) DISSEMINATION OF USEFUL INFORMATION.—The Under Secretary for Health shall ensure that information produced by the research, education and training, and clinical activities of centers established under this section that may be useful for other activities of the Veterans Health Administration is disseminated throughout the Veterans Health Administration. Such dissemination shall be made through publications, through programs of continuing medical and related education provided through regional medical education centers under subchapter VI of chapter 74 of this title, and through other means. Such programs of continuing medical education shall receive priority in the award of funding.

''(h) SUPERVISION OF CENTERS.—The official within the central office of the Veterans Health Administration responsible for traumatic brain injury care shall be responsible for supervising the operation of the centers established pursuant to this section and shall provide for ongoing evaluation of the centers and their compliance with the requirements of this section.

''(i) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—(1) There are authorized to be appropriated to the Department of Veterans Affairs for the basic support of the research and education and training activities of centers established pursuant to this section such sums as may be necessary.

''(2) In addition to funds appropriated for a fiscal year pursuant to the authorization of appropriations in paragraph (1), the Under Secretary for Health shall allocate to such centers from other funds appropriated for that fiscal year generally for the Department of Veterans Affairs medical services account and the Department of Veterans Affairs medical and prosthetics research account such amounts as the Under Secretary for Health determines appropriate to carry out the purposes of this section.

''(j) ANNUAL REPORTS.—Not later than February 1 of each of year, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives a report on the status and activities of the centers for traumatic brain injury research, education, and clinical activities during the preceding fiscal year. Each such report shall include the following:

''(1) A description of the activities carried out at each center and the funding provided by the Department for such activities.

''(2) A description of the advances made at each of the participating facilities of the center in research, education and training, and clinical activities relating to traumatic brain injury care and treatment.

''(3) A description of the actions taken by the Under Secretary for Health pursuant to subsection (g) to disseminate information derived from such activities throughout the Veterans Health Administration.

''(4) The evaluation of the Secretary as to the effectiveness of the centers in fulfilling the purposes of this section.

''(k) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—(1) There are authorized to be appropriated to the Department of Veterans Affairs for the basic support of the research and education and training activities of centers established pursuant to this section amounts as follows:

''(A) $10,000,000 for fiscal year 2008.

''(B) $20,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2009 through 2011.

''(2) In addition to funds appropriated for a fiscal year pursuant to the authorization of appropriations in paragraph (1), the Under Secretary for Health shall allocate to such centers from other funds appropriated for that fiscal year generally for the Department of Veterans Affairs medical services account and the Department of Veterans Affairs medical and prosthetics research account such amounts as the Under Secretary for Health determines appropriate to carry out the purposes of this section.

''§ 1796. Committee on Care of Veterans with Traumatic Brain Injury

''(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary shall establish in the Veterans Health Administration a committee to be known as the 'Committee on Care of Veterans with Traumatic Brain Injury'. The Under Secretary for Health shall appoint employees of the Department with expertise in the care of veterans with traumatic brain injury to serve on the committee.

''(b) RESPONSIBILITIES OF COMMITTEE.—The committee shall assess, and carry out a continuing assessment of, the capability of the Veterans Health Administration to meet effectively the treatment and rehabilitation needs of veterans with traumatic brain injury. In carrying out that responsibility, the committee shall—

''(1) evaluate the care provided to such veterans through the Veterans Health Administration;

''(2) identify systemwide problems in caring for such veterans in facilities of the Veterans Health Administration;

''(3) identify specific facilities within the Veterans Health Administration at which program enrichment is needed to improve treatment and rehabilitation of such veterans; and

''(4) identify model programs which the committee considers to have been successful in the treatment and rehabilitation of such veterans and which should be implemented more widely in or through facilities of the Veterans Health Administration.

''(c) ADVICE AND RECOMMENDATIONS.—The committee shall—

''(1) advise the Under Secretary regarding the development of policies for the care and rehabilitation of veterans with traumatic brain injury; and

''(2) make recommendations to the Under Secretary—

''(A) for improving programs of care of such veterans at specific facilities and throughout the Veterans Health Administration;

''(B) for establishing special programs of education and training relevant to the care of such veterans for employees of the Veterans Health Administration;

''(C) regarding research needs and priorities relevant to the care of such veterans; and

''(D) regarding the appropriate allocation of resources for all such activities.

''(d) ANNUAL REPORT.—Not later than June 1 of 2008, and each subsequent year, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives a report on the implementation of this section. Each such report shall include the following for the calendar year preceding the year in which the report is submitted:

''(1) A list of the members of the committee.

''(2) The assessment of the Under Secretary for Health, after review of the initial findings of the committee, regarding the capability of the Veterans Health Administration, on a systemwide and facility-by-facility basis, to meet effectively the treatment and rehabilitation needs of veterans with traumatic brain injury.

''(3) The plans of the committee for further assessments.

''(4) The findings and recommendations made by the committee to the Under Secretary for Health and the views of the Under Secretary on such findings and recommendations.

''(5) A description of the steps taken, plans made (and a timetable for the execution of such plans), and resources to be applied toward improving the capability of the Veterans Health Administration to meet effectively the treatment and rehabilitation needs of veterans with traumatic brain injury.''.

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents at the beginning of such chapter is amended by adding at the end the following new items:

''SUBCHAPTER IX—TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY

''1791. Screening for traumatic brain injuries.
''1792. Comprehensive program for long-term traumatic brain injury rehabilitation.
''1793. Traumatic brain injury transition offices.
''1794. Traumatic brain injury registry.
''1795. Centers for traumatic brain injury research, education, and clinical activities.
''1796. Committee on Care of Veterans with Traumatic Brain Injury.''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The Secretary shall implement the requirements of subchapter IX of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 3. PILOT PROGRAM FOR DELIVERY OF CERTAIN SERVICES TO VETERANS THROUGH MOBILE VET CENTERS.

(a) PILOT PROGRAM.—Chapter 17 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by inserting after section 1712B the following new section:

''§ 1712C. Pilot program for delivery of certain services through mobile Vet Centers

''(a) PILOT PROGRAM.—To improve access to mental health services in rural areas, the Secretary shall carry out a pilot program under which the Secretary shall provide readjustment counseling, related mental health services, benefits outreach, and, to the extent practicable, assistance with claims for benefits under this title through the use of mobile centers (as that term is defined in section 1712A(i)(1)), to be known as 'mobile Vet Centers'. In carrying out the pilot program, the Secretary shall determine the most effective manner in which to operate the mobile Vet Centers.

''(b) SCOPE AND LOCATION.—(1) The Secretary shall establish two mobile Vet Centers in each of the following five Veterans Integrated Service Networks:

''(A) Veterans Integrated Service Network 1.

''(B) Veterans Integrated Service Network 16.

''(C) Veterans Integrated Service Network 19.

''(D) Veterans Integrated Service Network 20.

''(E) Veterans Integrated Service Network 23.

''(2) Within each Veterans Integrated Service Network under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall determine the area to be serviced by each mobile Vet Center. In making that determination, the Secretary shall give priority to areas in which limited mental health and outreach services are available.

''(3) If the Secretary determines that mobile Vet Centers in addition to such centers required under paragraph (1) are warranted, the Secretary may establish additional mobile Vet Centers and may establish such centers in Veterans Integrated Service Networks other than the Veterans Integrated Service Networks referred to in that paragraph. Upon such a determination by the Secretary, the Secretary shall notify the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives of such determination.

''(c) TERMINATION.—The authority to carry out a pilot program under this section shall terminate on the date that is three years after the date of the enactment of this section.

''(d) REPORT.—Not later than 90 days after the date on which the pilot program terminates under subsection (a), the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives a report on the pilot program. Such report shall describe how the Secretary established and carried out the pilot program and include an evaluation of the Secretary of the benefits and disadvantages of providing readjustment counseling, related mental health services, benefits outreach, and claims assistance through the use of mobile Vets Centers.

''(e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section $7,500,000 for fiscal year 2008 and each subsequent fiscal year.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting after the item related to section 1712B the following new item:

''1712C. Pilot program for delivery of certain services through mobile Vet Centers.''.

SEC. 4. ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON RURAL VETERANS.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMITTEE.—Subchapter III of chapter 5 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

''§ 546. Advisory Committee on Rural Veterans

''(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—(1) The Secretary shall establish an advisory committee to be known as the 'Advisory Committee on Rural Veterans' (hereinafter in this section referred to as 'the Committee').

''(2)(A) The Committee shall consist of members appointed by the Secretary from the general public, including—

''(i) representatives of rural veterans;

''(ii) individuals who are recognized authorities in fields pertinent to the needs of rural veterans, including specific or unique health-care needs of rural veterans and access issues of rural veterans;

''(iii) individuals who have expertise in the delivery of mental health care in rural areas;

''(iv) individuals who have expertise in the delivery of long-term care in rural areas;

''(v) at least one veterans service organization representative from a rural State; and

''(vi) representatives of rural veterans with service-connected disabilities.

''(B) The Committee shall include, as ex officio members—

''(i) the Secretary of Health and Human Services (or a representative of the Secretary of Health and Human Services designated by that Secretary);

''(ii) the Director of the Indian Health Service (or a representative of that Director); and

''(iii) the Under Secretary for Health and the Under Secretary for Benefits, or their designees.

''(C) The Secretary may invite representatives of other departments and agencies of the United States to participate in the meetings and other activities of the Committee.

''(3) The Secretary shall determine the number, terms of service, and pay and allowances of members of the Committee appointed by the Secretary, except that a term of service of any such member may not exceed three years. The Secretary may reappoint any such member for additional terms of service.

''(b) RESPONSIBILITIES OF COMMITTEE.— The Secretary shall, on a regular basis, consult with and seek the advice of the Committee with respect to the administration of benefits by the Department for rural veterans, reports and studies pertaining to rural veterans, and the needs of rural veterans with respect to primary care, mental health care, and long-term care needs of rural veterans.

''(c) REPORT.—(1) Not later than September 1 of each odd-numbered year until 2013, the Committee shall submit to the Secretary a report on the programs and activities of the Department that pertain to rural veterans. Each such report shall include—

''(A) an assessment of the needs of rural veterans with respect to primary care, mental health care, and long-term care needs of rural veterans and other benefits and programs administered by the Department;

''(B) a review of the programs and activities of the Department designed to meet such needs; and

''(C) such recommendations (including recommendations for administrative and legislative action) as the Committee considers appropriate.

''(2) The Secretary shall, within 60 days after receiving each report under paragraph

(1), submit to Congress a copy of the report, together with any comments concerning the report that the Secretary considers appropriate.

''(3) The Committee may also submit to the Secretary such other reports and recommendations as the Committee considers appropriate.

''(4) The Secretary shall submit with each annual report submitted to Congress pursuant to section 529 of this title a summary of all reports and recommendations of the Committee submitted to the Secretary since the previous annual report of the Secretary submitted pursuant to that section.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by adding at the end the following new item:

''546. Advisory Committee on Rural Veterans.''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER) and the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BUYER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 3 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, I would point out this is one of the most important bills on the floor today or at any time. It's called the Traumatic Brain Injury Health Enhancement and Long-Term Support Act of 2007.

The wounded from wars in Afghanistan and Iraq are returning with multiple injuries due to the use of improvised explosive devices, or IEDs. This often results in servicemembers and veterans needing polytrauma care, and has caused an increase in veterans with brain injury, or TBI.

We are going to have tens of thousands of these young men and women with these injuries. Among veterans and servicemembers that return from OEF and OIF and treated at Walter Reed for injuries of any type, approximately 65 percent have TBI or a comorbid, as they call it, diagnosis. Survivors of TBI experience physical, cognitive, emotional and community integration issues. Because of their injury, their capacity and initiative to seek appropriate care on their own is diminished.

We are also faced with thousands of veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan with milder cases of brain injury. This milder case often is missed and goes untreated, and symptoms may often mirror that of PTSD. Indeed, according to the Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center, in prior military conflicts, TBI was present in up to 14 to 20 percent of surviving casualties. The numbers for operations in OEF/OIF are predicted to go much, much higher.

We must ensure that the health care and services that meet the needs of returning servicemembers are available and accessible, while never forgetting the needs of veterans from previous conflicts. This bill provides for mandatory screening of veterans for traumatic brain injury. It requires the Secretary to establish a comprehensive program of long-term care, of postacute traumatic brain injury rehabilitation at four geographically disbursed polytrauma network sites. It provides for the establishment of TBI transition offices at each Department polytrauma network site to coordinate health care and services to veterans who suffer from moderate to severe traumatic brain injuries. It requires the Secretary to establish a registry of those who served in Iraq who exhibit symptoms associated with TBI.

This legislation establishes centers for TBI research, education and clinical activities, and requires the Secretary to establish a committee on the care of veterans with TBI. In addition to the provisions that address health care, research and treatment for veterans, this legislation also provides for veterans who reside in rural areas.

Mr. Speaker, it is a very important bill. We will hear soon from Mr. MICHAUD, the chairman of our Health Subcommittee, who was the primary author of this, who has been a leader to make sure that we serve the veterans who come back with these incredible injuries, that they receive the proper care that they need.

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

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

Let me first take this opportunity to thank the chairman of the Subcommittee on Health, Mr. MICHAUD, as well as the subcommittee's ranking member, Mr. MILLER, for their leadership in developing this legislation.

H.R. 2199, as amended, the Traumatic Brain Injury Health Enhancement and Long-Term Support Act of 2007, seeks to improve the treatment of veterans suffering with traumatic brain injuries, often referred to as TBI, and the care for veterans who live in rural communities.

□ 1715

However, I would comment that several of the provisions included in this legislation are similar to initiatives that already exist or are getting underway. For example, section 2 of the bill would require the VA to screen eligible veterans for symptoms of traumatic brain injury and create a TBI registry. These are also the recommendations of the President's task force on returning global war on terror heroes. In addition, in March 2007, Secretary Nicholson directed a number of changes to improve the way the VA provides care to our newest combat veterans.

These veterans initiatives include screening all OEF and OIF combat patients for TBI and for PTSD; providing each polytrauma patient with an advocate to assist them and their family; mandatory training for all VA health care personnel to recognize and care for patients with TBI; and establishing an outside panel of clinical experts to review the VA polytrauma system of care.

Additionally, the bill would provide five new centers for TBI research, education, and clinical activities. During the 108th Congress, we recognized the frequency and unique nature of the polytrauma/blast injuries resulting from the global war on terror. These injuries require an interdisciplinary program to handle the medical, psychological, rehabilitation, and prosthetic needs of the injured servicemember.

Public Law 108–422, the Veterans' Health Programs Improvement Act of 2004, directed VA to establish ''an appropriate number of centers for research, education, and clinical activities to improve and coordinate rehabilitative services for veterans suffering from complex multitrauma from combat injuries, and to coordinate these services with the Department of Defense.''

The centers required in Public Law 108–422 became the Polytrauma System of Care. There are four centers located in Richmond, VA; Tampa, FL; Minneapolis, MN; and Palo Alto, CA. The committee strongly recommends that the new TBI centers be colocated with the VA's polytrauma rehabilitation centers. In this way, we can capitalize on the experience and expertise available at the polytrauma centers and enhance the ability to understand and treat the entire spectrum of the TBI injury from mild to most severe.

I want to thank Mr. MICHAUD for recognizing that we can actually get some benefits by the colocation of these services where TBI is already located. Because we take and concentrate such expertise, the colocation can only have benefits. And the gentleman worked with me, and I think because TBI have a number of comorbidities such as PTSD, depression, anxiety disorders, and while these issues may appear with TBI, they may also exhibit themselves separately from TBI, and I think that is exactly what Mr. MICHAUD is trying to get to. So I want to thank the gentleman for his leadership and for bringing this bill to the committee, along with your staff, for their good work.

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

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I recognize the chairman of our subcommittee who has taken such a great leadership role on these issues, the gentleman from Maine (Mr. MICHAUD) for 4 minutes.

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding.

H.R. 2199 is a bipartisan effort to address the challenges presented by traumatic brain injury and to improve the quality of care for our rural veterans.

TBI is considered to be the signature wound of this war. TBI is complex and frequently overlooked or misdiagnosed.

We also have very little understanding of the long-term consequences of TBI. We must make sure that the VA is doing all they can to provide for these wounded soldiers. This is only the beginning, we still have more work to do, but this is a good first step.

H.R. 2199 also includes two provisions to improve the quality of care provided

to our rural veterans. With so many veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan living in rural areas, and an already existing population of older veterans in these areas, we need to explore innovative ways to improve VA accessibility and quality of care, especially on mental health issues. You heard both from the chairman and ranking member as far as what this legislation does.

I would like to recognize the hard work of a group of Members on both sides of the aisle who helped craft this legislation. This truly is bipartisan legislation. I do want to start with my good friend, Mr. MILLER of Florida, who is the ranking member of the Health Care Subcommittee, who has been extremely helpful in getting this legislation introduced and moved through the full committee; also, Mr. ALTMIRE of Pennsylvania, who has taken a real leadership role in traumatic brain injury, and for his focus on TBI with his legislation, H.R. 1944, which is included in H.R. 2199; Mr. WALZ of Minnesota, for his legislation to establish centers for TBI research, education, and clinical activities, which are now also included in H.R. 2199, who also served on the Veterans' Affairs Committee; and Mr. MCNERNEY of California, his legislation was included in H.R. 2199 to create the Committee on Care for Veterans with TBI; Mr. DONNELLY, who sits on the Veterans' Affairs Committee, of Indiana, for his bill which was included in section 4 of H.R. 2199, to create an advisory committee on rural veterans; Mr. WELCH of Vermont, for his bill and efforts to establish a pilot program for mobile vet centers, which are extremely important for rural areas; Mr. LAMBORN of Colorado, for his amendment to include providing benefits outreach and assistance with claims for benefits as part of the mission of mobile vet centers. He also sits on the committee and was very helpful in making this bill a better bill.

So this truly has been a real bipartisan piece of legislation that took a lot of components of other bills that were through, that were introduced and we had hearings on, to be part of this bill.

I also would like to thank Ranking Member BUYER for his focus on this issue, and for his understanding of the importance of long-term research and the pursuit of the best practices for TBI care. He definitely has been very helpful with this legislation.

And, finally, I would like to thank and congratulate Chairman FILNER for his strong bipartisan leadership on this bill and other veterans bills on the floor as well, and look forward to tackling other veterans issues as we move forward in the 110th Congress.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2199.

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank Mr. MICHAUD because he did his committee work. He did his committee work because we brought a bill to the floor. Yes, under suspension, Mr. FILNER, but he did his committee work. He filed a report which allowed us to work with him. When you don't file a report, you deny the minority their opportunity to be heard.

So I want to thank Mr. MICHAUD for working with us and for his leadership.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN).

Mr. BOOZMAN. The only thing I would say is that, again, I am very much in support of the bill and I appreciate the leadership that was shown, as Mr. BUYER just said, in getting the bill forward. I think it is a great example of everybody working together which, again, our committee very often does demonstrate. So I am very much in support, and urge a ''yes'' vote.

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1¼ minutes to the chairwoman of our Economic Opportunity Subcommittee, the gentlelady from South Dakota, STEPHANIE HERSETH SANDLIN.

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 2199, the Traumatic Brain Injury Health Enhancement and Long-Term Support Act. I would like to thank the chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Health Subcommittee, Mr. MICHAUD, for introducing this important bill, and to thank Chairman FILNER and the ranking member for their support of this legislation.

Among other provisions, H.R. 2199 requires screening of veterans for TBI, establishes a comprehensive program for long-term TBI rehabilitation to be located at the polytrauma centers, and creates TBI transition offices at each of the polytrauma network sites. In addition, the bill creates an advisory committee on rural veterans. These are important steps toward helping the young men and women who have suffered traumatic brain injury, and ensuring the needs of our rural veterans are addressed.

Working closely with a National Guard soldier from South Dakota who suffered a traumatic brain injury while serving in Iraq, and having visited him and his family at the Minneapolis polytrauma center, I witnessed both the good and the bad of the VA's efforts to deal with these wounded servicemembers. While we have made remarkable strides in treating veterans with brain injuries, there is much room for improvement, especially when it comes to the long-term support of these servicemembers.

I believe the Traumatic Brain Injury Health Enhancement and Long-Term Support Act will tremendously improve the services available to veterans suffering from TBI. I look forward to continuing working with my colleagues on the Veterans' Affairs Committee to address these and other issues related to treating veterans suffering from traumatic brain injury.

Again, I thank Representative MICHAUD for introducing and advancing this bill, and I ask my colleagues to support H.R. 2199.

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

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, we have had many people contribute to this legislation, as Mr. MICHAUD said. I would like to recognize a great new Member from Indiana who has worked hard on this legislation, Mr. DONNELLY, for 2 minutes.

Mr. DONNELLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 2199.

Mr. Speaker, this bill will help us better care for America's wounded warriors suffering from traumatic brain injury, the signature wound of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. This important legislation will require the VA to better screen veterans for symptoms of TBI, devise a long-term care strategy, and promote better understanding of TBI and how we can provide the best care possible.

I also want to thank my good friend, Mr. MICHAUD, for including my bill, H.R. 2190, establishing an advisory committee on rural veterans, as a provision of this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, over 40 percent of returning Iraq and Afghanistan veterans are coming home to rural communities, and countless older veterans live in rural America, places like Pulaski County and Starke County, Indiana. The health care needs and services rural veterans require are very, very unique. These veterans often have increased barriers to obtaining the same quality of care as their urban and suburban counterparts. We must do better by them.

It is critical that the VA have direct input from rural veterans at the highest level of policymaking. The Advisory Committee on Rural Veterans will work with and advise the VA Secretary on how policies and programs affect them, and how services can be improved for rural veterans and their families.

I urge my colleagues in the House to pass this bill to improve care for our wounded warriors and America's rural veterans.

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, I would also like to express my support for a provision in the bill that would require the VA to establish a TBI transition office at each of the polytrauma network sites. Not only is this vital for the DOD and the VA to provide for a seamless transition from active duty to veteran status, but it is also important for VA to aid in the coordination of veteran care between VA and other health care providers for services that could possibly not be provided by the VA. These transition offices would help coordinate veterans care for services not offered by the VA, and have the authority to arrange care with public or private entities to establish long-term neurobehavioral rehabilitation and recovery programs.

The bill also includes two rural health initiative provisions, one of which would establish a pilot program for vet centers in rural areas. H.R. 2199, as amended, included an amendment

offered by Mr. LAMBORN of Colorado, the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs. This amendment will expand the role of the mobile vet center pilot program to include helping veterans in need of assistance in the filing of benefits claims.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. LAMBORN).

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 2199, the Traumatic Brain Injury Health Enhancement and Long-Term Support Act of 2007. I thank Chairman FILNER, Ranking Member BUYER, and Health Subcommittee Chairman MICHAUD, the sponsor of this legislation, for their leadership in bringing this excellent legislation to the floor. I especially want to thank the gentleman from Maine for working with me on a bipartisan basis to include my amendment in this bill.

One of the provisions of H.R. 2199, as introduced, is a pilot program of mobile vet centers which would provide veterans with readjustment counseling and related mental health services. My amendment would require that these mobile vet centers have trained staff to provide veterans with benefits outreach and help them with their claims applications and questions.

Mr. Speaker, much of the trouble associated with the claims processing system is related to a veteran's difficulties in filing a correct and complete claim. Veterans may have an incomplete understanding of the claims system.

□ 1730

That could easily lead to an imperfectly completed application. My amendment would help solve this problem by placing qualified VA employees in the mobile vet centers to educate the veteran and help him or her to correctly fill out their paperwork the first time.

H.R. 2199 could have significant impact on reducing the growing backlog of compensation and pension claims. I ask my colleagues to support this legislation. It will help veterans with traumatic brain injury get the care they need. At the same time, it will help veterans seeking to apply for the benefits they have earned in service to their Nation.

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield 2 minutes to another hardworking new member from our committee, the gentleman from California (Mr. MCNERNEY).

Mr. MCNERNEY. Mr. Speaker, traumatic brain injury is the signature injury of the war in Iraq.

Let me explain a little bit what happens to a veteran soldier with a traumatic brain injury. They remove part of your skull so that your brain can expand into that while it's swelling up. They give you blood thinners so that you don't have blood clots. They give you antibiotics, and they put on a vest that keeps your body temperature cold, again so that you don't swell up and cause more injury. So this is the kind of thing that these veterans, these soldiers are going through.

And we estimate that there's approximately 12,000 servicemembers with some degree of traumatic brain injury. That's why I was motivated, along with Mr. BOOZMAN from Arkansas, to introduce the Caring for Veterans with Traumatic Brain Injury Act of 2007.

H.R. 2199 ensures that the VA will develop the infrastructure necessary to meet the needs of an increasing number of veterans diagnosed with TBI. Among other things, the bill requires the VA to screen all veterans for TBI. It creates a registry for veterans with TBI so that we don't lose track of them once they're diagnosed, and it also creates transition offices for patients with TBI who live in areas where the Veterans Administration isn't able to meet their needs.

I'm thankful for the leadership of Mr. MICHAUD and Mr. FILNER on this issue, and for the opportunity to speak in favor of 2199.

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, I reserve my time.

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield 2 minutes to another hardworking new member of our committee, the highest-enlisted man ever to be elected to Congress, Command Sergeant Major TIM WALZ from Minnesota.

Mr. WALZ of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2199. I want to thank my colleague from Maine for sponsoring this piece of legislation; also thank my colleague from Maine (Mr. MICHAUD), who's been a leader on this issue and veterans issues in general; grateful that he introduced this piece of legislation, and grateful that he allowed a piece of legislation that I had introduced establishing the five TBI centers around the country.

I'd also like to thank the ranking member, the gentleman from Indiana, for his thoughtful guidance on the colocation of those facilities. I think it's absolutely the right thing to do. I think it concentrates our resources and our expertise. So I thank him for that addition to it.

The colocation at the polytrauma centers is the right thing to do. The research that's being done there is world class. And I think an example of how we can enhance that comes from, and you just heard one of my colleagues speaking about this injury.

I visit the VA centers every Veterans Day for the last quite some time. And several years ago there was a young man from Michigan there, and he had suffered a traumatic brain injury. He had survived a shrapnel wound, but his brain had literally been turned inside of his head. And because of the great care he was receiving there, he was stabilized, and he was starting to rehabilitate. This bill will allow us to enhance his recovery, starting to reintegrate him back to the life that he knows and that he should be able to live.

On this floor we're going to continue to debate the wars. We're going to continue to see the debates divide us on the war in Iraq. This Congress, and I thank the ranking member, and the chairman for allowing the care of our veterans to bring us back together. Regardless of how we feel on this war, this Congress and this committee is proving that the 110th Congress can and will advance crucial legislation like H.R. 2199. So I thank you both. I thank my colleagues.

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman who just spoke. As a retired sergeant major, we benefit by his expertise not only on the Veterans' Affairs Committee, but also in Congress. We have a lot of people here who have been enlisted, and we have had officers and generals and admirals, but when you get a sergeant major, they speak softly. And there's a reason the sergeant major speaks softly, because he doesn't have to speak loudly because they are so well respected. And so, Sergeant Major, your contributions to the committee are recognized and appreciated.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve my time.

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, how much time do we have left?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from California has 6½ minutes.

Mr. FILNER. I would now recognize another great new Member from Pennsylvania (Mr. ALTMIRE) for 2 minutes. He has taken the lead on dealing with traumatic brain injury.

Mr. ALTMIRE. Mr. Speaker, our brave service men and women are returning from Iraq and Afghanistan with TBI at an alarming rate. Sixty-five percent of the soldiers at Walter Reed today have been diagnosed with traumatic injury, and thousands of veterans have mild TBI, but have not been diagnosed. And I'm concerned that the VA has not been properly diagnosing and treating those veterans with traumatic brain injury.

As has been mentioned today, traumatic brain injury is the signature injury for the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. This is why I introduced the Veterans Traumatic Brain Injury Treatment Act, which has been included in its entirety in this legislation we're debating today. My bill would improve the diagnosis and treatment of TBI for our Nation's veterans by requiring the VA to screen veterans for symptoms, develop and operate a comprehensive program of long-term care for postacute TBI rehabilitation, establish TBI transition offices at all polytrauma network sites, and create and maintain a TBI health registry.

In addition to improving the diagnosis and treatment of traumatic brain injury, this bill will improve the VA's research of TBI and ensure that the VA provides better care to veterans in rural communities.

I want to thank the subcommittee chairman, Mr. MICHAUD, and the full

committee chair, Mr. FILNER, for their leadership on this issue, for including my legislation in its entirety in this bill, and I want to urge my colleagues to support this piece of legislation.

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman's comments that he just made. Before you take off, this issue, and I appreciate your interest in it because this is one of our great challenges. We've got the best helmet that we put on our soldiers and marines in the field and even some of the Air Force personnel, Navy personnel. And it protects them against ballistics, and it's the best in the world. But when it comes to blasts and crash, what it does to the brain, we're now on the forefront, and we are pushing the boundary of our knowledge.

And some of the world's experts now are not only at the polytrauma centers, but in particular, when these soldiers end up at Landstuhl, Germany, that's where they are. So they can immediately deal with these neurotraumas.

And when the gentleman said that there could possibly be thousands, what we do know is that at the polytrauma centers, those who are actually being treated for traumatic brain injury, there's less than 400 cases.

But the gentleman is right with regard to individuals who may have had a concussion. Yet, how severe is the concussion?

And if the science is unknown, and we're trying to understand that. That's the purpose of Mr. MICHAUD's bill. And I appreciate the gentleman's interest, would love to continue to work with you in your interest.

I'd bring to your attention the Veterans Health Administration Directive 2007–013 released April 13, 2007, establishes the VA policy and procedure for screening and evaluation of possible TBI in OEF and OIF veterans. This directive states, ''Not all patients who screen positive have TBI. It is possible to respond positively to all four sections due to the presence of other conditions such as PTSD, cervical cranial injury with headaches and inner ear injury, for example. Therefore, it's critical that patients not be labeled with a diagnosis of TBI on the basis of a positive screening test. Patients need to be referred for further evaluation.''

So we are in an area of science whereby the sand shifts directly under our feet, and I would look forward to working with the gentleman.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve my time.

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to yield 2 minutes to the fighting gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PASCRELL), who we like to call an honorary member of the Veterans' Committee since he fights so hard for veterans and is cochair of the Traumatic Brain Injury Caucus in the Congress.

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise in favor of H.R. 2199, the Traumatic Brain Injury Health Enhancement and Long-Term Support Act.

As cochair of the 8-year-old Congressional Brain Injury Task Force of over 110 members, I commend the committee under Chairman FILNER's leadership. You've never, ever acted, through the Speaker, to do favors for veterans. You've always handled it in terms of your own responsibility. I salute you for that.

For his ongoing endeavors to explore and thoughtfully legislate for the benefit of our Nation's many veterans suffering from TBI, I want to thank JACK MURTHA, Congressman MURTHA, for all his work over the last 5 years on this issue when it wasn't popular to talk about.

The Veterans Administration has shown tremendous effort in addressing the needs of our returning vets, our returning troops on its own; however, I believe the large volume of returning TBI victims, the need for timely treatment and the immediate need for rehab, expertise and capacity require additional resources. Flexibility for the VA to form partnerships to ensure top-notch care for our service personnel is essential. 2199 is an excellent first step to ensuring our Nation's veterans the care they need and deserve.

The bill establishes five new Veterans Administration research centers for TBI, which, without a doubt, produce new and exciting prevention and treatment techniques. A comprehensive TBI treatment program within the VA is long overdue.

I want to commend the TBI screening program for veterans. We recommended it. Football teams throughout the United States screen students before they put on football equipment. I think that's important that we do that with our vets. I worked to establish it in the civilian realm. We should have it in the military.

On behalf of the task force, I look forward to working with the Veterans Committee on this and other TBI issues in the future.

I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of H.R. 2199.

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

At the May 9, 2007, full committee hearing on the results of the President's Task Force on Returning Global War on Terror Heroes, in response to my questioning about the actual number of TBI cases treated in VA as inpatients, Secretary Nicholson responded that VA has treated 369 veterans in its polytrauma centers so far for TBI.

Secretary Nicholson also commented that the VA has the capacity in their polytrauma centers, and that many of the patients in the polytrauma centers are active duty military.

Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve my time.

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to yield 2 minutes to another great new Member fighting for veterans, Congressman WELCH from Vermont.

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Veterans' Affairs Committee, the openness of that committee, to let anyone with a good idea to help veterans to come in and have an opportunity to do that. Mr. FILNER, Mr. MICHAUD, and, of course, Mr. BUYER and Mr. MILLER, thank you.

Rural Americans have always served the Nation's armed services, National Guard and Reserves in very great numbers. In fact, though only 19 percent of the Nation lives in rural America, 44 percent of the current U.S. military recruits come from rural areas, and nearly one-third of those who died in Iraq are from small towns and communities across the Nation, Vermont very much among them.

And unfortunately, access to health care for many of our veterans in rural areas is limited by mileage, distance and just the difficulty of transportation. Especially true, the provision of mental health care in rural settings has historically been a challenge for all health care systems and providers, including the VA. And therefore, what we recognize in this legislation is that we need to help the VA develop innovative solutions to address the need for mental health services in remote areas, TBI being the big injury that's been discussed by my colleagues.

This legislation takes a significant step towards improving the mental health services available to geographically isolated veterans. It creates a pilot program where at least two mobile vet centers will provide readjustment counseling and mental health services to veterans in at least five Veterans Integrated Service Networks that have the highest concentration of rural veterans.

□ 1745

One of these covers New England and my home State of Vermont. These mobile vet centers will also provide information and outreach concerning veterans benefits and, when practicable, assistance with claims for benefits.

Rural individuals and their families have strong bonds and ties to their communities. These mobile vet centers will allow veterans to stay in their communities and prevent endless hours of car rides for the care they receive.

I urge support and passage of this legislation and thank the committee for its indulgence.

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, I believe that it is conceivable that at some point one of these needed Traumatic Brain Injury Centers of Excellence could be located in the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Albuquerque, New Mexico, which could be named the Raymond G. ''Jerry'' Murphy Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center, if Chairman FILNER would clear either H.R. 474 or take up Senate bill 229 for consideration on the floor of which that Senate bill, Mr. Speaker, sits at your desk.

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

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, let me just conclude by saying like everything else about this war, the administration did not prepare either for the fighting, the aftermath, or the treatment of the

veterans coming back. We simply left thousands of our veterans without adequate resources to treat these brain injuries or PTSD or other issues that arise. No matter what denial that comes from the minority party, no matter what denial comes from the administration, we have not prepared for adequate treatment of these veterans. We are passing legislation today to do that, and we will not deny that there will be thousands and thousands of brain-injured veterans. We should bring them home now and we should treat them well when they get back.

Mr. SPACE. Mr. Speaker, I rise again today in support of H.R. 2199, the Traumatic Brain Injury Health Enhancement and Long-Term Support Act. This bill offers a comprehensive legislative solution to confronting our servicemembers' increasing suffering from Traumatic Brain Injury.

Our brave men and women who serve in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom are faced with daunting physical and mental challenges every day as they carry out their duties. Troops deployed in Iraq, specifically, encounter the widespread use of IEDs, which can cause Traumatic Brain Injury. Extended deployments put our troops at risk for longer periods of time.

H.R. 2199 brings together solutions to begin addressing the needs of our wounded warriors who have been diagnosed with TBI. The bill requires the VA to establish five centers for TBI research, education, and clinical activities. It also instructs the VA to establish a TBI screening program that would provide critical information to Congress regarding the number of veterans screened, the prevalence of TBI symptoms, and recommendations for improving care. H.R. 2199 dictates that the VA should create a comprehensive program for the long-term care and rehabilitation for veterans who suffer from TBI. The bill also requires the VA to create a Traumatic Brain Injury Veterans Health Registry to generate a list of those who served in Iraq and/or Afghanistan, who have symptoms of TBI, and who apply for VA medical care or file a disability claim. The VA can then notify those on the registry of significant developments in research on health consequences of serving in Iraq and/or Afghanistan.

Additionally, this bill authorizes funding for a pilot program of mobile VA centers for rural areas. These mobile VA centers would improve access to readjustment benefits as well as mental health services. The mobile centers would also assist veterans in making disability claims.

I represent a rural district comprised of small towns and villages. I know that my rural veterans' constituency desperately needs better access to VA services and care, and these mobile VA centers could be part of the solution.

I strongly urge my colleagues to support this bill because it makes great strides in providing comprehensive care for our Nation's wounded warriors suffering from Traumatic Brain Injury.

Mr. HARE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 2199, the Traumatic Brain Injury Health Enhancement and Long-Term Support Act. As a Member of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, I had the privilege of working on this bipartisan bill, which I believe provides critical resources to our heroes with combat-related brain injuries. I commend Representative ALTMIRE who initiated this effort and I thank VA Subcommittee Chairman MICHAUD, and VA Chairman FILNER for quickly bringing this bill to the floor.

Traumatic brain injury (TBI) is the most common wound suffered by troops returning from Iraq and Afghanistan; unfortunately it is often undetected until it is too late. The bill before us today ensures we preemptively screen all veterans for brain injury and that we have the facilities and research necessary to provide the best care possible.

Additionally, this bill addresses the needs of the 44 percent of service members who live in rural areas, like those in my district, by establishing an Advisory Committee on Rural Veterans. It also creates a pilot program for mobile counseling and mental health services.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud we took up this bill in the Veterans' Affairs Committee because it is a strong investment in timely healthcare for our returning troops. I urge my colleagues to support our military heroes by voting for the Traumatic Brain Injury Health Enhancement and Long-Term Support Act.

Mr. REYES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2199, the Traumatic Brain Injury Health Enhancement and Long Term Support Act of 2007. As a Vietnam combat veteran, I have seen the long term effects that war-related wounds and illnesses can have on the lives of our returning soldiers.

As Agent Orange sickness and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) came to typify the Vietnam War, I believe that Traumatic Brain Injuries (TBI) have become a signature wound of the current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. Advances in body armor and battlefield medicine have allowed our troops to survive head wounds that once would have been fatal. However, the number of identified traumatic brain injuries is alarming. Of the 23,000-plus troops who have been wounded in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, two-thirds reportedly have been diagnosed with traumatic brain injuries. These numbers may even be higher since many cases are often undiagnosed and go untreated. Some reports suggest that 150,000 veterans of the war in Iraq have suffered a traumatic brain injury of some kind.

Many of those affected by these devastating injuries are unable to perform the most basic cognitive functions and have great difficulties with the tasks of everyday life. These injured soldiers will require quality care and treatment for the rest of their lives.

While it is our obligation to ensure that our military forces have all the necessary arms and equipment to safely carry out their missions, we are also responsible for making sure that our troops know that we will take care of them when they return home. Today we have an opportunity to demonstrate to our wounded veterans our appreciation for their sacrifices and our firm commitment to providing them with the means for living a full and rewarding life. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this important bill.

Mr. FILNER. 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 California (Mr. FILNER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2199, 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. FILNER. 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.

EARLY ACCESS TO VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AND EMPLOYMENT BENEFITS ACT

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2239) to amend title 38, United States Code, to expand eligibility for vocational rehabilitation benefits administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2239

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 ''Early Access to Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Benefits Act''.

SEC. 2. EXPANSION OF ELIGIBILITY FOR VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION BENEFITS ADMINISTERED BY THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

Section 3102 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)(B), by striking ''or'' at the end;

(2) in paragraph (2), by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; or''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(3) the person—

''(A) at the time of the Secretary's determination under subparagraph (B), is a member of the Armed Forces who is hospitalized or receiving outpatient medical care, services, or treatment;

''(B) is determined by the Secretary to have a disability incurred or aggravated in the line of duty in the active military, naval, or air service that is likely to be rated at 10 percent or more; and

''(C) is likely to be discharged or released from such service for such disability.''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER) and the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

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

This bill, the Early Access to Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Benefits Act, was authored by my good friend from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN), and we appreciate his efforts over many years on behalf of our veterans. I was glad that we could get this bill to the floor today. It is the last of seven that say thank you to our Nation's veterans as we come up on Memorial Day.

This would extend vocational rehabilitation and employment benefits to members of the Armed Forces who are

determined to have a disability incurred while on active duty of at least 10 percent and likely to be discharged from service due to that disability. The servicemembers would still have to qualify under usual vocational rehabilitation and employment criteria of at least 20 percent, with an employment handicap of 10 percent with a serious employment handicap.

H.R. 2239 will help veterans begin their rehab earlier and will be very beneficial to those veterans in extended convalescence which could be over a year. This is the ideal time, as veterans will still be on active duty, continuing to receive their military pay, making it easier to support his or her family. One of the factors that leads to servicemembers dropping out of vocational rehabilitation and employment is the need to support their families.

Due to the severity of the injury or injuries, most veterans will be expected to experience a drop in pay once they are discharged. However, if a veteran begins their rehab immediately, they may be able to enter the job market much earlier.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2239. It is an important bill. This is the least we can do for these brave men and women. It will ease the transition from the military to civilian employment market. And, again, I thank Mr. BOOZMAN for his leadership on this issue.

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

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

H.R. 2239, the Early Access to Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Benefits Act, implements a commonsense involvement in the speed with which we provide vocational rehabilitation to injured servicemembers. This bill makes it clear that active duty servicemembers are entitled to begin using vocational rehabilitation benefits prior to discharge.

The bill directs the Department of Veterans Affairs to coordinate with the military services to determine the likelihood that a servicemember undergoing hospitalization or outpatient treatment will be discharged or returned to active duty. If the member is likely to be discharged and will likely have a disability rating of at least 10 percent, VA is authorized to evaluate and award the full range of vocational rehabilitation benefits prior to the servicemember's discharge. Such a decision would be made using the current statutory and regulatory processes to determine eligibility.

Mr. Speaker, it makes no sense to delay access to benefits that will speed an injured servicemember's return to productive civilian life. For severely injured servicemembers, these benefits often make the difference between whether or not they are able to live independently. Many of those wounded in the global war on terror spend 2 or 3 years recovering from their injuries and often find themselves with significant free time outside of their therapy sessions. That free time offers an ideal opportunity to make use of their vocational rehabilitation and employment benefits to prepare them for the civilian job market. I am happy to let my colleagues know that CBO has said that this bill ''would have no direct impact on direct spending.'' The bill simply affects the timing of when our servicemembers receive the benefits.

All of us have gone over to Bethesda and Walter Reed to visit injured troops. And, again, this is an effort to give them the best of both worlds, the best that we can offer them being on active duty, but to go ahead and start those vocational rehab services so that we can get vocational counselors in there and then, again, as they pursue their getting stronger and heal physically, to go ahead and direct them in such a way that we can provide a new occupation for them in the future.

So I appreciate Chairman FILNER, Ranking Member BUYER, Chairwoman HERSETH SANDLIN, and especially the chairwoman in the sense that she was instrumental in helping us amend the bill to improve it.

So, again, I would urge that my colleagues support this legislation.

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

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the dynamic chair of our Economic Opportunity Subcommittee, the gentlewoman from South Dakota (Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN).

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Mr. Speaker, again I thank the chairman for yielding.

I rise today in strong support of H.R. 2239, the Early Access to Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Benefits Act.

I want to thank the ranking member of the Economic Opportunity Subcommittee, my good friend and trusted colleague, Mr. BOOZMAN, for introducing this important bill and for working with me prior to the committee markup to strengthen the bill. I also want to thank Chairman FILNER and Ranking Member BUYER for their support of the bill as well.

While current law requires servicemembers to be discharged from active duty prior to applying and receiving benefits from the VA, H.R. 2239 would extend vocational rehabilitation and employment benefits to members of the U.S. Armed Forces who are determined to have a disability of at least 10 percent or more, incurred or aggravated while on duty, and likely to be discharged from service due to that disability.

This important legislation would help veterans begin their rehabilitation earlier and could be very beneficial for those who are in extended convalescence, which may last more than a year for some servicemembers. As the chairman explained, today we do find that a major factor for new veterans dropping out of the VR&E program is the immediate need to financially support the family. We can reduce the risk of these individuals dropping out of the program prematurely if we extend the benefits while they are still on active duty.

Now, in some cases, due to the severity of their injuries, a number of veterans may likely experience a drop in pay after their discharge and when they enter the civilian workforce. However, if a veteran begins his or her rehabilitation immediately, he or she may be able to enter the job market much earlier with a level of readiness and a set of skills to command a higher-paying position than otherwise might be obtained.

I look forward to continuing to work in a bipartisan manner with Mr. BOOZMAN on the Economic Opportunity Subcommittee to ensure Federal services are available to help our fighting men and women successfully transition to civilian life.

I ask my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 2239 so that we may ensure our servicemembers are more readily afforded the benefits they need to heal and succeed after their service to our country.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield for the purpose of making a unanimous consent request to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BUYER).

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

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the bill and compliment Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN for her work and Mr. BOOZMAN.

Mr. Speaker, the bill, as amended does two important things. First, it lowers the existing eligibility for servicemembers undergoing treatment prior to discharge to 10 percent vice the current 20 percent. Second, it clarifies existing law to reaffirm Congress' intent that VA provide vocational rehabilitation and employment benefits to eligible service members undergoing what is normally long-term convalescence.

This bill will be especially important to service members being treated at our major trauma centers such as Walter Reed, Bethesda, Palo Alto and Tampa Bay. Many of these service members are facing what may be years of physical and emotional therapy and it makes good sense to begin the process of reintegration into the workforce prior to discharge from active duty. Voc rehab benefits available under this bill will also provide positive reinforcement to DoD and VA therapy sessions by concentrating on issues other than any residual disability(s) they may have from their injuries.

Mr. Speaker, this is an excellent bill and I strongly urge my colleagues to support it.

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. Speaker, again, I would like to urge the passage of H.R. 2239. I appreciate the work of my chairman and ranking member and especially the work of the staff on this bill.

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

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FILNER. 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 both H.R. 2199 and H.R. 2239, as amended.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, we have come to the end of a day of thanks to our Nation's veterans. We have seven bills, all of which will go to really improve our services, our health care, our sense of commitment to our Nation's veterans. We have had seven good bills today, and I think they will all be approved by this body.

I was a professor of European history before I became a Congressman, and I used to talk about the Roman world. And there was this famous Roman senator named Cato. And Cato would end all his speeches, no matter on what subject, which they might be about the sewer system of Rome or they might be about gladiator games or war against the Parthians or whoever, but he would always end his speech, no matter what the thing was, and everybody would expect it and he sort of became the laughingstock of the senate because they would know he would end all his speeches with ''and we must destroy Carthage.'' And nobody paid any attention to his speeches because they were all waiting for that conclusion no matter on what subject.

So with that little history lesson, I urge my colleagues to unanimously support H.R. 2239.

Mr. SPACE. Mr. Speaker, I rise again today in support of H.R. 2239, the Early Access to Vocational Rehabilitation Benefits Act.

Currently, vocational rehabilitation benefits provided by the VA are not available to veterans until after they have been discharged from military service. This bill extends eligibility for vocational rehabilitation benefits to current members of the armed forces who are hospitalized or are undergoing out-patient medical care, who have a disability of at least 10 percent incurred or aggravated while on active duty, and who are likely to be discharged from service due to that disability.

As a member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, I am dedicated to providing our Nation's veterans with every service that they have earned and that they were promised. Access to vocational rehabilitation is part of what our Nation's heroes are entitled to, and this bill is a step in the right direction.

By supporting this bill, we are ensuring that wounded servicemembers can access rehabilitational benefits more quickly without having to wait for their paperwork to catch up to them. This bill will get our wounded vets back on their feet and reintegrated into the workforce sooner than is currently possible by providing them with vocational benefits while they are awaiting military discharge. Reintegration into the workforce is a key part of easing stability back into the lives of our servicemembers who have often spent months in incredibly tense and mentally-exhausting environments. Re-establishing a "normal" working routine at a pace that better suits our servicemembers is beneficial to all parties involved.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2239 because the bill provides our Nation's veterans with more timely access to a promised service as they transition back to civilian life.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 2239, to expand eligibility for vocational rehabilitation benefits administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs. I would like to take some of my time to express my deepest appreciation for our Nation's veterans. It is with this that I strongly ask you to expand eligibility for vocational rehabilitation benefits for all of our veterans. Every day, we find more and more of our veterans returning home with severe physical and mental disabilities. This legislation is a step in the right direction and will act as a cornerstone necessity for providing the medical care, services and treatment that all of our country's finest deserve.

This Congress to must ensure that our injured soldiers, sailors, airmen and any other veterans who have returned home with a disability not only receive the basics in terms of medical attention, but also receive proper rehabilitation so that suitable employment in the future can become a viable option. The act of a person once again living independently is the highest goal that this legislation can achieve. Services that provide counseling, education, financial aid, and job assistance are the best tools for our veterans to use in order to get back on their feet and live a life of independence and dignity. Let us not revisit the fatal mistakes made after Vietnam. To quote my good friend and colleague, DICK DURBIN, "We owe our disabled veterans more than speeches, parades and monuments." Let's do our best to convey our appreciation for their sacrifices.

Mr. FILNER. 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 California (Mr. FILNER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2239, 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. FILNER. 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.

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. 67, H.R. 612, H.R. 1470, H.R. 2199, and H.R. 2239, in each case 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.

VETERANS OUTREACH IMPROVEMENT 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. 67, 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 California (Mr. FILNER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 67, as amended.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 421, nays 0, not voting 11, as follows:

[Roll No. 410]

YEAS—421

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Aderholt
Akin
Alexander
Allen
Altmire
Andrews
Arcuri
Baca
Bachmann
Bachus
Baird
Baker
Baldwin
Barrett (SC)
Barrow
Bartlett (MD)
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 (PA)
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
Cubin
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (IL)
Davis (KY)
Davis, David
Davis, Lincoln
Davis, Tom
Deal (GA)
DeFazio
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Donnelly
Doolittle
Doyle
Drake
Dreier
Duncan
Edwards
Ehlers
Ellison
Ellsworth
Emanuel
Emerson
Eshoo
Etheridge
Everett
Fallin
Farr
Fattah
Feeney
Ferguson
Filner
Flake
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Frank (MA)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Gerlach
Giffords
Gilchrest
Gillibrand
Gillmor
Gingrey
Gohmert
Gonzalez
Goode
Goodlatte
Gordon
Graves
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutierrez
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
Inglis (SC)
Inslee
Israel
Issa
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jefferson
Jindal
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jones (NC)
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 (FL)
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
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Neugebauer
Nunes
Obey
Olver
Ortiz
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Paul
Payne
Pearce
Pence
Perlmutter
Peterson (MN)
Peterson (PA)
Petri
Pickering
Pitts
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
Tancredo
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
Wasserman Schultz
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—11

Davis, Jo Ann
DeGette
Engel
English (PA)
Fossella
Granger
Hulshof
Hunter
Jones (OH)
McMorris Rodgers
Oberstar

□ 1822

Mr. STUPAK 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.

RETURNING SERVICEMEMBER VA HEALTHCARE INSURANCE 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. 612, 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 California (Mr. FILNER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 612, as amended.

This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 419, nays 0, not voting 13, as follows:

[Roll No. 411]

YEAS—419

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Aderholt
Akin
Alexander
Allen
Altmire
Andrews
Arcuri
Baca
Bachmann
Bachus
Baird
Baker
Baldwin
Barrett (SC)
Barrow
Bartlett (MD)
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 (PA)
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
Cubin
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (IL)
Davis (KY)
Davis, David
Davis, Lincoln
Davis, Tom
Deal (GA)
DeFazio
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
Fattah
Feeney
Ferguson
Filner
Flake
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Frank (MA)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Gerlach
Giffords
Gilchrest
Gillibrand
Gillmor
Gingrey
Gohmert
Gonzalez
Goode
Goodlatte
Gordon
Graves
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutierrez
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
Inglis (SC)
Inslee
Israel
Issa
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jefferson
Jindal
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jones (NC)
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
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (CA)
McCarthy (NY)
McCollum (MN)
McCotter
McCrery
McDermott
McGovern
McHenry
McHugh
McIntyre
McKeon
McNerney
McNulty
Meehan
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Melancon
Mica
Michaud
Miller (FL)
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
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Neugebauer
Nunes
Obey
Olver
Ortiz
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Paul
Payne
Pearce
Pence
Perlmutter
Peterson (MN)
Peterson (PA)
Petri
Pickering
Pitts
Platts
Poe
Pomeroy
Porter
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Pryce (OH)
Putnam
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
Tancredo
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
Wasserman Schultz
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—13

Davis, Jo Ann
DeGette
Engel
Fossella
Granger
Hulshof
Hunter
Jones (OH)
Marshall
McCaul (TX)
McMorris Rodgers
Oberstar
Radanovich

□ 1830

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.

CHIROPRACTIC CARE AVAILABLE TO ALL VETERANS ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1470, 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 California (Mr. FILNER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1470.

This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 421, nays 1, not voting 10, as follows:

[Roll No. 412]

YEAS—421

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Aderholt
Akin
Alexander
Allen
Altmire
Andrews
Arcuri
Baca
Bachmann
Bachus
Baird
Baker
Baldwin
Barrett (SC)
Barrow
Bartlett (MD)
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 (PA)
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
Cubin
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (IL)
Davis (KY)
Davis, David
Davis, Lincoln
Davis, Tom
Deal (GA)
DeFazio
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
Fattah
Feeney
Ferguson
Filner
Flake
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Frank (MA)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Gerlach
Giffords
Gilchrest
Gillibrand
Gillmor
Gingrey
Gohmert
Gonzalez
Goode
Goodlatte
Gordon
Graves
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutierrez
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
Inglis (SC)
Inslee
Israel
Issa
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jefferson
Jindal
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jones (NC)
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 (FL)
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
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Neugebauer
Nunes
Obey
Olver
Ortiz
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Paul
Payne
Pearce
Pence
Perlmutter
Peterson (MN)
Peterson (PA)
Petri
Pickering
Pitts
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
Stearns
Stupak
Sullivan
Sutton
Tancredo
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
Wasserman Schultz
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—1

Stark

NOT VOTING—10

Davis, Jo Ann
DeGette
Engel
Fossella
Granger
Hulshof
Hunter
Jones (OH)
McMorris Rodgers
Oberstar

□ 1838

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY HEALTH ENHANCEMENT AND LONG-TERM SUPPORT 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. 2199, 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 California (Mr. FILNER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2199, as amended.

This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 421, nays 0, not voting 11, as follows:

[Roll No. 413]

YEAS—421

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Aderholt
Akin
Alexander
Allen
Altmire
Andrews
Arcuri
Baca
Bachmann
Bachus
Baird
Baker
Baldwin
Barrett (SC)
Barrow
Bartlett (MD)
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 (PA)
Brady (TX)
Braley (IA)
Brown (SC)
Brown, Corrine
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Buchanan
Burgess
Burton (IN)
Butterfield
Buyer
Calvert
Camp (MI)
Campbell (CA)
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
Cubin
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (IL)
Davis (KY)
Davis, David
Davis, Lincoln
Davis, Tom
Deal (GA)
DeFazio
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
Fattah
Feeney
Ferguson
Filner
Flake
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Frank (MA)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Gerlach
Giffords
Gilchrest
Gillibrand
Gillmor
Gingrey
Gohmert
Gonzalez
Goode
Goodlatte
Gordon
Graves
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutierrez
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
Inglis (SC)
Inslee
Israel
Issa
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jefferson
Jindal
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jones (NC)
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 (FL)
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
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Neugebauer
Nunes
Obey

Olver
Ortiz
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Paul
Payne
Pearce
Pence
Perlmutter
Peterson (MN)
Peterson (PA)
Petri
Pickering
Pitts
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
Tancredo
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
Wasserman Schultz
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—11

Cannon
Davis, Jo Ann
DeGette
Engel
Fossella
Granger
Hulshof
Hunter
Jones (OH)
McMorris Rodgers
Oberstar

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). Members are advised 2 minutes remain in this vote.

□ 1844

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.

EARLY ACCESS TO VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AND EMPLOYMENT BENEFITS ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2239, 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 California (Mr. FILNER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2239, as amended.

This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 414, nays 0, not voting 18, as follows:

[Roll No. 414]

YEAS—414

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Aderholt
Akin
Alexander
Allen
Altmire
Andrews
Arcuri
Baca
Bachmann
Bachus
Baird
Baker
Baldwin
Barrett (SC)
Barrow
Bartlett (MD)
Barton (TX)
Bean
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
Berry
Biggert
Bilbray
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blumenauer
Blunt
Boehner
Bonner
Bono
Boozman
Boren
Boswell
Boustany
Boyd (FL)
Boyda (KS)
Brady (PA)
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
Cubin
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (IL)
Davis (KY)
Davis, David
Davis, Lincoln
Davis, Tom
Deal (GA)
DeFazio
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
Fattah
Feeney
Ferguson
Filner
Flake
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Frank (MA)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Gerlach
Giffords
Gilchrest
Gillibrand
Gillmor
Gingrey
Gonzalez
Goode
Goodlatte
Gordon
Graves
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutierrez
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
Inglis (SC)
Inslee
Israel
Issa
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jefferson
Jindal
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jones (NC)
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
Meeks (NY)
Melancon
Mica
Michaud
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller (NC)
Miller, Gary
Miller, George
Mitchell
Mollohan
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Moran (KS)
Moran (VA)
Murphy (CT)
Murphy, Patrick
Murphy, Tim
Musgrave
Myrick
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Neugebauer
Nunes
Obey
Olver
Ortiz
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Paul
Payne
Pearce
Pence
Perlmutter
Peterson (MN)
Peterson (PA)
Petri
Pitts
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.
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
Sutton
Tancredo
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
Wasserman Schultz
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—18

Bilirakis
Boucher
Davis, Jo Ann
DeGette
Engel
Fossella
Gohmert
Granger
Hulshof
Hunter
Jones (OH)
McMorris Rodgers
Meek (FL)
Murtha
Oberstar
Pickering
Sanchez, Loretta
Sullivan

□ 1851

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.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 1649

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to remove the name of Congressman JAMES MORAN of Virginia as a cosponsor to H.R. 1649, who was added inadvertently as a cosponsor to that bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HALL of New York). Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from South Dakota?

There was no objection.

HONORING JACK BORMAN

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

Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the achievements of Jack Borman. In a few days, Jack will be retiring from the Kenton County Sheriff's Department, and I

think this is the ideal time to honor his dedication and lifetime of service to our Nation.

As a young man from Silver Grove, Kentucky, Jack joined the military and was deployed to fight in the Korean War. He bravely fought in missions at Triangle Hill, in Operation Smack and in the now infamous battle at Pork Chop Hill. For his bravery and valor at the Battle of Pork Chop Hill, one of the most deadly battles of the Korean War, he was awarded the Silver Star and a Purple Heart.

Several years ago, MGM Studios released a film about this battle, and Jack added movie star to his long list of lifetime accomplishments. From fighting in Korea to serving Kenton County, he has selflessly served and protected us. Jack, we thank you for your service and wish you much success in your retirement.

Jack is a busy grandfather to 19 grandchildren. I'm sure his life will continue to be a great adventure. For all that, thank you for your service.

PLEASE OPPOSE THE IRAQ WAR SUPPLEMENTAL

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

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, the Iraq War supplemental on the floor tomorrow will in no way pressure the President to end the war in Iraq, despite the fact that voters gave our majority last November the responsibility to do that, end the war.

The benchmarks in the war supplemental force the Iraqis to privatize, or turn over to multinational oil interests, their oil industry by demanding passage of the Iraqi Hydrocarbon Act. I spoke on the House floor today for an hour documenting the evidence.

But if the Iraqis refuse to turn over the oil resources, the terms of the bill are blackmail. The war supplemental demands passage of the Iraqi bill by blocking over $1 billion in reconstruction funds if the Iraqis refuse to comply.

We need to send a message to the voters that we do not support privatizing Iraqi oil by force, nor do we support the continued funding of this war.

It is not credible to maintain that one opposes the war and yet continues to fund it. Continuing to fund the war is not a plan. It would represent the continuation of a disaster. A better approach is the 12-point plan established in H.R. 1234.

EXPAND ELIGIBILITY FOR THE ARMY'S COMBAT ACTION BADGE

(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, in 2005, the Department of the Army authorized the creation of the Army Combat Action Badge. This important badge provides recognition to our soldiers who personally engaged the enemy in combat. However, the Army's current policy limits eligibility to those who meet its criteria after September 18, 2001.

As such, the Combat Action Badge overlooks thousands of veterans who made similar sacrifices in previous wars. I've heard from many veterans who feel slighted by the Army's failure to recognize their own heroism.

In response, I've reintroduced my legislation, H.R. 2267, to expand eligibility for this award to those soldiers who served during the dates ranging from December 7, 1941, to September 18, 2001. This expansion would be a fitting tribute to countless individuals who made sacrifices for our country.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. 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.

□ 1900

RECOGNIZING THE WORK OF TERRY ERICKSON

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

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Terry Erickson, a man who has dedicated his life's work to helping children. Terry has tirelessly served western Wisconsin youth for over 40 years, mainly as the executive director of the Boys and Girls Club of Greater La Crosse, a place I proudly called my second home while growing up on the north side of La Crosse.

For over 100 years, the Boys and Girls Club of America has been fostering an environment of hope and opportunity for all children. In addition to promoting character development and educational progress, the club creates a safe environment so kids can simply play and enjoy themselves. In fact, some of my fondest childhood memories are a result of my participation in the La Crosse club.

At a time when many temptations existed in our neighborhoods for children and when there were plenty of opportunities for us to get into trouble, I found the club to be a safe haven for me and many other students for playing sports or just hanging out with our friends.

Since the creation of the Boys and Girls Club of Greater La Crosse in 1966, Terry has been a champion for youth programming and a father-like figure for many of us. Terry's devotion to the club's goal of inspiring all young people to realize their full potential is unrivaled. It is this passion and enthusiasm that has resulted in unprecedented growth for the organization.

Under Terry's leadership, the Boys and Girl Club of Greater La Crosse has flourished, growing from a small organization into one of the premier clubs throughout the country. The organization has expanded to six different locations, including a partnership with Viterbo University. Recently, Terry's university president, Bill Medlandis, and the Mathy family's dedication to this partnership resulted in the Amie L. Mathy Center, a club located on the campus of Viterbo University that enriches academic support for children.

The number of lives Terry has positively affected throughout the years is impossible to quantify. I know my two boys have greatly benefited from their experiences with the club and from Terry's selfless example. Because of Terry's guidance, the Boys and Girls Club of Greater La Crosse has created a haven for youth and a sense of community in the area.

Terry simply brings out the best in people, whether they are young children and students who benefited from the club's many activities, or the countless adults who have volunteered their time to make the La Crosse club one of the premier models in our country.

It has been said that great teachers enjoy a special immortality because their influence never stops radiating. I just hope that upon his retirement, Terry appreciates the wonderful teaching that he has done and the countless lives that he has influenced.

I am proud to count myself as one of Terry's products, and I am even prouder to call him my friend. Although Terry's service and commitment to the children of the La Crosse area will be deeply missed upon his retirement, the solid foundation he has laid for the club will empower children for decades to come.

I also want to congratulate my childhood friend and classmate Kevin Johnston, who was chosen to take over for Terry at the club. I couldn't imagine a better selection, given Kevin's history with the club, his passion for youth of our community and his close relationship with Terry throughout the years. I know Kevin will excel in his new position.

I commend Terry for his unyielding service and dedication to the community. As in any lengthy undertaking, Terry's service to our children required tremendous personal time and sacrifice by himself and his entire family. That's why, on behalf of all the children in the La Crosse area, I would like to thank Terry, Sue and their entire family for the impact that they have had in the La Crosse community. I wish Terry and Sue all the best as they close this chapter in their lives and begin a new one. But knowing Terry, I am sure the best interests of our youth will be close at hand.

Congratulations, Terry. Thank you for a job well done. We all wish you Godspeed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HALL of New York). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

NEW AL QAEDA TAPES FEATURE U.S. CAPITOL UNDER ''ATTACK''

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

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, President Bush today gave a speech, and he talked about the terrorist threat, and he talked about the attempts on the United States that have taken place since 9/11. He talked a little bit about the attempted attack last week at Fort Dix.

Yet I don't believe any of the media is paying any attention to that. It seems like every time the President talks about the threat, it just never makes the television networks.

That is very troubling to me, because after 9/11, the President said we are in a world war against terrorism, and it may go on for a long, long time. It may go on for more than my tenure in office. It may go on for decades.

When you are fighting a war of terrorism like that, you have to be resolute of purpose. There's no question that the war that's going on in Iraq and Afghanistan has been very trying on the American people, but this is a war against terrorism, and we must be resolute of purpose.

This week on the Internet, al Qaeda had put out a new message to possible recruits for them around the world. I would like to read to you what was on the Internet.

It says, al Qaeda has a new opening graphic for its propaganda tapes, the U.S. Capitol, that's this place right here, under attack. His quote, ''The Islamic State of Iraq . . . March Towards Washington,'' reads the headline in English superimposed over a digitally created scene of the U.S. Capitol under attack in the introductory sequence of one tape released on the Internet this week.

Another from al Qaeda's ''as Sahab'' production arm announces, ''Holocaust of the Americans in the land of Khorasan,'' and shows an image of the U.S. Capitol. They introduce a short clip of al Qaeda fighters.

''This is a disturbing trend,'' says Laura Mansfield, an Arabic expert who monitors jihadi videos on the Internet. ''Recall that in January of 2006, Osama bin Laden said that plans for attacks in the U.S. were in progress,'' Mansfield told the Blotter on ABCNews.com. ''It may be that this new imagery is designed to motivate terrorist activity in the U.S., but it is certainly intended as a recruiting tool and perhaps intended to reassure al Qaeda's jihadi followers that they haven't forgotten their goal of an al Qaeda attack on Washington, D.C.,'' this city.

I don't tout television shows very often, but occasionally I urge my colleagues to watch something that I think is important. I just say to my colleague, I understand that tonight on the O'Reilly show on Fox Network, he is going to talk about a poll that was taken among Muslims in the United States. There are approximately 6 million Muslims in the United States, and I believe that 99 percent of them or 95 percent of them are very patriotic Americans. But in this poll they found that the Muslims between the ages of 18 and 29, approximately around 20 percent of them, are sympathetic to the terrorists who kill themselves, blow themselves up in an attack on American targets. This is a very disturbing poll that was taken.

This is a very trying time for Americans and for this country. I urge all of my colleagues to remember what the President said after 9/11. Remember, this is a world war against terrorism. Remember what I just read here that was on the Internet, that their ultimate goal is to attack Washington, D.C., and remember that there is a growing number of young men in America, Muslims, who are very sympathetic to the terrorists who blow themselves up.

We need to make sure that the American people understand the gravity of this situation. To back down to the terrorists now would be a big mistake. It's very important that we stay our ground in Iraq and throughout the world and send a message to the terrorists that we will not surrender and we will not be defeated.

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

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

BUSH AUTHORIZES COVERT ACTION AGAINST IRAN

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, the President and the Vice President have vowed to repeat the mistakes of history, and they have put into motion a plan to do just that in Iran, even as the House is about to send the President a box of blank checks for Iraq against the will of the American people.

History is worth noting. In 1953, the United States and the United Kingdom launched Operation Ajax, a covert CIA operation to destabilize and remove the democratically elected Government of Iran, including Prime Minister Mossadegh. Why? Oil.

Under Mossadegh, the Iranian Government decided to reclaim Iran's rightful ownership to its national oil treasure, which had been exclusively controlled by the British, who were taking 85 percent of the profits. Oh, by the way, the United Kingdom also kept the books secret, merely telling Iran what its 15 percent take was.

As soon as Mossadegh began to reclaim Iran's oil, it was all over. Operation Ajax was set into motion. The U.S. Embassy in Tehran provoked phony and internal Iranian dissent, while the Brits engineered an Iranian financial crisis by orchestrating a global boycott of Iranian oil. We brought down the Iranian Government and installed the Shah. For two decades we propped him up against the will of the Iranian people. It was all about controlling Iran. It still is.

Today ABC News is reporting exclusively that this President has authorized a new covert CIA plot to bring down the Iranian Government. I ask to submit for the RECORD the report produced by the chief investigative reporter Brian Ross and Richard Esposito of ABC News. This is the lead sentence in their story: ''The CIA has received secret Presidential approval to mount a covert 'black' operation to destabilize the Iranian Government, current and former officials in the Intelligence Community tell the Blotter on ABCNews.com.''

[From ABC News, May 22, 2007]

BUSH AUTHORIZES NEW COVERT ACTION AGAINST IRAN

(By Brian Ross and Richard Esposito)

The CIA has received secret presidential approval to mount a covert ''black'' operation to destabilize the Iranian government, current and former officials in the intelligence community tell the Blotter on ABCNews.com.

The sources, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because of the sensitive nature of the subject, say President Bush has signed a ''nonlethal presidential finding'' that puts into motion a CIA plan that reportedly includes a coordinated campaign of propaganda, disinformation and manipulation of Iran's currency and international financial transactions.

''I can't confirm or deny whether such a program exists or whether the president signed it, but it would be consistent with an overall American approach trying to find ways to put pressure on the regime,'' said Bruce Riedel, a recently retired CIA senior official who dealt with Iran and other countries in the region.

A National Security Council spokesperson, Gordon Johndroe, said, ''The White House does not comment on intelligence matters.'' A CIA spokesperson said, ''As a matter of course, we do not comment on allegations of covert activity.''

The sources say the CIA developed the covert plan over the last year and received approval from White House officials and other officials in the intelligence community.

Officials say the covert plan is designed to pressure Iran to stop its nuclear enrichment program and end aid to insurgents in Iraq.

''There are some channels where the United States government may want to do things without its hand showing, and legally, therefore, the administration would, if it's doing that, need an intelligence finding and

would need to tell the Congress,'' said ABC News consultant Richard Clarke, a former White House counterterrorism official.

Current and former intelligence officials say the approval of the covert action means the Bush administration, for the time being, has decided not to pursue a military option against Iran.

Vice President Cheney helped to lead the side favoring a military strike,'' said former CIA official Riedel, ''but I think they have come to the conclusion that a military strike has more downsides than upsides.''

The covert action plan comes as U.S. officials have confirmed Iran had dramatically increased its ability to produce nuclear weapons material, at a pace that experts said would give them the ability to build a nuclear bomb in two years.

Riedel says economic pressure on Iran may be the most effective tool available to the CIA, particularly in going after secret accounts used to fund the nuclear program.

''The kind of dealings that the Iranian Revolution Guards are going to do, in terms of purchasing nuclear and missile components, are likely to be extremely secret, and you're going to have to work very, very hard to find them, and that's exactly the kind of thing the CIA's nonproliferation center and others would be expert at trying to look into,'' Riedel said.

Under the law, the CIA needs an official presidential finding to carry out such covert actions. The CIA is permitted to mount covert ''collection'' operations without a presidential finding.

''Presidential findings'' are kept secret but reported to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence and other key congressional leaders.

The ''nonlethal'' aspect of the presidential finding means CIA officers may not use deadly force in carrying out the secret operations against Iran.

Still, some fear that even a nonlethal covert CIA program carries great risks. ''I think everybody in the region knows that there is a proxy war already afoot with the United States supporting anti-Iranian elements in the region as well as opposition groups within Iran,'' said Vali Nasr, adjunct senior fellow for Mideast studies at the Council on Foreign Relations. ''And this covert action is now being escalated by the new U.S. directive, and that can very quickly lead to Iranian retaliation and a cycle of escalation can follow,'' Nasr said. Other ''lethal'' findings have authorized CIA covert actions against al Qaeda, terrorism and nuclear proliferation.

Also briefed on the CIA proposal, according to intelligence sources, were National Security Advisor Steve Hadley and Deputy National Security Advisor Elliott Abrams. ''The entire plan has been blessed by Abrams, in particular,'' said one intelligence source familiar with the plan. ''And Hadley had to put his chop on it.''

Abrams' last involvement with attempting to destabilize a foreign government led to criminal charges. He pleaded guilty in October 1991 to two misdemeanor counts of withholding information from Congress about the Reagan administration's ill-fated efforts to destabilize the Nicaraguan Sandinista government in Central America, known as the IranContra affair. Abrams was later pardoned by President George H. W. Bush in December 1992.

In June 2001, Abrams was named by then National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice to head the National Security Council's office for democracy, human rights and international operations. On Feb. 2, 2005, National Security Advisor Hadley appointed Abrams deputy assistant to the president and deputy national security advisor for global democracy strategy, one of the nation's most senior national security positions.

As earlier reported on the Blotter on ABCNews.com, the United States has supported and encouraged an Iranian militant group, Jundullah, that has conducted deadly raids inside Iran from bases on the rugged Iran-Pakistan-Afghanistan ''tri-border region.''

U.S. officials deny any ''direct funding'' of Jundullah groups but say the leader of Jundullah was in regular contact with U.S. officials.

American intelligence sources say Jundullah has received money and weapons through the Afghanistan and Pakistan military and Pakistan's intelligence service. Pakistan has officially denied any connection.

A report broadcast on Iranian TV last Sunday said Iranian authorities had captured 10 men crossing the border with $500,000 in cash along with ''maps of sensitive areas'' and ''modem spy equipment.'' A senior Pakistani official told ABCNews.com the 10 men were members of Jundullah.

The leader of the Jundullah group, according to the Pakistani official, has been recruiting and training ''hundreds of men'' for ''unspecified missions'' across the border in Iran.

We are back in 1953, and it worked so well then. Of course, the Vice President wanted to invade Iran, so we can be sure he will spin new tales of fear in coming days to keep his preferred option, invasion, by land or by air, very much alive. The President knows only one way: My way or the highway. His Vice President knows only one way: Invade and seize control of what you want. And he wants the oil treasure of Iraq and Iran to become wholly owned subsidiaries of the Western oil companies he favors.

With Iraq in civil war, the President has authorized a secret plan to repeat the doomed mistakes of history in Iran. How many billion dollars of reconstruction money from Iraq will be siphoned off to deconstruct Iran?

The American people are virtually shouting at us to pay attention and get our soldiers out of Iraq now. Vast sums of U.S. money are flowing into Iraq, and billions of U.S. dollars are missing. The Special Investigator for Iraq Reconstruction told a San Antonio newspaper last week that corruption in Iraq is endemic and debilitating.

But Prime Minister Maliki has granted Ministers and former Ministers immunity from prosecution by Iraq's Commission of Public Integrity, and, in turn, the Ministers can shield their own employees from prosecution, a government that has been told by this President and Vice President to pass an oil law that transfers control and profits to Western oil companies, just like the good old days in Iran. Overthrowing Iran in 1953 was all about oil. Invading Iraq was all about oil, and the new secret plot against Iran is all about oil.

Oil is the only benchmark this President and Vice President want, and they will keep American soldiers fighting and dying until an oil law is passed in Iraq that gives Western oil companies total control of the spigot and the profits. It's time to unmask the latest doomed plot to overthrow Iran, and it is past time to get our soldiers out of Iraq.

Nothing less than protecting our troops is acceptable.

NIGHT LIFE IN SALT LAKE CITY

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

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, almost a fortnight ago, one of our colleagues, the gentleman from Massachusetts, was waxing eloquent about congressional experts, which he considered to be an oxymoron, as he said, similar to jumbo shrimp or Salt Lake City night life.

I have the opportunity of representing the central and western side of Salt Lake City, along with my colleague, who hopefully will be here later, who lives in and represents the east side of Salt Lake City, Mr. MATHESON. Now, it's true I don't live in Salt Lake City. I live in a much quieter area 60 miles north of a town appropriately called Brigham City. But in my younger, wilder college days, I did live in areas that I now represent in Central City and Capitol Hill in Salt Lake, an area similar to this except about 4,000 feet closer to the heavens.

I want you to know in the night life, every evening when you went out, on almost every corner you could find an ice cream parlor. If I ever wanted to forget my worries and drown my sorrows, I could easily have a second glass of warm milk. There are some nights we put our pajamas on before 8:00, the one without the feet. Even now we will occasionally stay up long enough to watch Letterman go through his top 10. Our night life, and he says there is no night life, when we wanted to go out at night, we would take off the working Wranglers, put on the clean Wranglers and go down to 7–Eleven and find the new Slurpee flavors of the month.

For a gourmet night, we could even load up the minivan and supersize number 5 with extra mayo, for everyone except for the driver, because we don't allow drinking and driving. That's why some of our cabbies die of thirst. And you say we have no night life?

It's true our happy hours are determined by how much green Jell-O is available, because a party is not a party without green Jell-O and carrot bits. Indeed, if you order a mixed drink, it will definitely involve chocolate syrup and milk, but you still have to stir vigorously with the straw. And he says we have no night life?

Our baseball fans, after the seventh inning, can order all the root beer they want. Admittedly, it causes road rage. I remember the last time I came out when my buggy was cut off by a buckboard wagon, and I have to admit, I said some expletives, like, oh my,

heck, move that frigging nag. But to say we have no night life?

Now, lest any other myths continue on here, I do want to tell the gentleman from Massachusetts, if he wants to see Tony Award-winning regional drama, he will have to come to Utah, and he will fly into one of the busiest hubs in the Nation, which is Salt Lake International.

If he finds himself seated at Pioneer Memorial Theater or Kingsbury Hall or Rose Wagner Theater, Capitol Theater, he will be seeing Broadway-quality plays all done by equity actors, or he will be listening to some of the finest music done by the Utah Opera Company or the premiere ballet of the West, which is Ballet West, which is headquartered in Utah, or watching the award-winning Repertory Dance Theater.

If he finds himself in Abravenal Hall, he will be listening to one of the best symphony orchestras in the Nation. If he is at Franklin Covey Field, he will watch the sun shine on the eastern mountains in the Wasatch over the left field berm as he sits in probably what has been considered one of the nicest and most beautiful baseball stadiums, watching the AAA-Division-leading Salt Lake Bees. He can find private clubs and dance clubs and comedy clubs and concerts and even, although I don't recommend it, get drunk in Salt Lake City.

□ 1915

He might even be able to listen to a debate between a publicity-seeking mayor and a radio talk show host about Iraq, in which case he would probably want to be drunk. It may just have been under those night lights that he didn't see much going on; that it was one of the nights when the Utah Jazz, even though they have had two rough difficult nights, were still involved in the hunt for the NBA title, something which a team in his State can't say.

In short, I would simply recommend and invite the good gentleman from Massachusetts to come and visit our State. I would suggest, perhaps, though, he should bring an interpreter with him, because in Utah we still do not put an R at the end of our vowels.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HALL of New York). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PETERSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

DEAMONTE'S LAW

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

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to announce that I have introduced Deamonte's Law, a bill to establish a dental home for every American child by increasing dental services in the community health centers and training more individuals in pediatric dentistry.

The legislation is named for Deamonte Driver, a 12-year-old Maryland boy who died on February 25, 2007 when a tooth infection spread to his brain. A routine dental checkup might have saved his life, but Deamonte was poor and homeless and he did not have access to a dentist.

When I learned of this senseless tragedy, I was deeply shaken. I simply cannot comprehend how in this country, where we have sent men to the Moon, we let a little boy's teeth rot so badly that his infection became fatal.

I often say that as adults we have a responsibility to provide for and to protect our children, and we failed miserably to meet that responsibility for little Deamonte. I think we all should be ashamed by that fact. I know I am.

That is why I have made a commitment to addressing this issue from every single angle. I knew that if Deamonte was suffering in my home State of Maryland, other little boys and girls like him were probably also suffering.

To be clear, Deamonte's case was rare and extreme. However, even the most casual investigation reveals that children across this great Nation are living with painful, untreated tooth decay, many of them dangerously close to acquiring life-threatening infections.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that tooth decay in baby teeth has increased 15 percent among United States toddlers and preschoolers 2 years old to 5 years old between 1988 to 1994, and 1994 to 2004. Tooth decay is the single most common childhood chronic disease, and it disproportionately affects poor and minority children. Eighty percent of dental decay occurs in just 25 percent of children, and parents are three times more likely to report that their children's dental needs are unmet when compared to the general medical care needs.

A silent epidemic of dental disease is plaguing our children, and our inability to address this issue has simply been horrifying. That is why I have introduced Deamonte's Law, which would address two critical factors contributing to the inability of children like Deamonte to access a dentist.

Deamonte's Law would ensure that children like Deamonte have access to dental services in communities where they live. Community health centers provide a health safety net to underserved areas, such as rural and urban communities. However, an estimated 42 percent have gaps in their capacity to provide dental care. Deamonte's Law would address this issue by establishing a 5-year, $5 million pilot program to provide funds for dentists, equipment, and construction for dental services at community health centers. The program would also provide support for contractual relationships between centers and private practice dentists.

Deamonte's Law would also address the dentist shortage. The United States Department of Health and Human Services estimates that there is a shortage of 4,650 dentists, and pediatric dentists are even more scarce. Deamonte's Law would address this issue by establishing a 5-year, $5 million pilot program to enhance training and academic programs in pediatric dentistry, recruit and train dentists to study pediatrics, and provide continuing education for practicing dentists.

The legislation is endorsed by the American Dental Association. I was joined in introducing this legislation by my good friend, Chairman HENRY WAXMAN of California, and Subcommittee Chairman DENNIS KUCINICH of Ohio. I want to thank both Congressmen for their leadership and dedication to this issue.

On May 2, 2007, at my request, we conducted an oversight hearing entitled ''Evaluating Pediatric Dental Care under Medicaid to Investigate Deamonte Driver's Death.'' At the hearing, it became apparent that the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services has categorically failed to meet its oversight responsibility with regards to ensuring the State health departments and the managed care organizations that they contract with are in compliance with the law.

Section 1905(r)(3) of the Social Security Act ensures that every Medicaid-eligible child will have access to medically necessary dental care under the early and periodic screening, diagnostic, and treatment provision. However, it is evident from our investigation that this has not been the case, and so I urge my colleagues to join in sponsoring this legislation.

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

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

PREFERENCE POLICY PLAN FOR ILLEGALS

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

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, the Senate's new repackaged immigration proposal, the ''Give America Away Act,'' has a provision that should be of concern to college students and parents who foot the bill for college. It gives the illegals in the United States a better deal than U.S. citizens or legal immigrants when it comes to the cost of college tuition for State universities.

If this idea becomes law, besides granting amnesty to 12 million to 20 million illegals in the United States, it will treat those illegals better than U.S. citizens and legal immigrants when it comes to college costs. The idea is to grant all illegals a status so they can attend State universities as an in-State tuition even though they illegally entered the United States.

Some States already allow illegals to attend State universities and pay in-State tuition. Unfortunately, my State of Texas was one of the first, along with California.

Currently there are about a dozen States that allow this absurd policy of preference. Some States are considering opposite laws that require illegals to pay out-of-State tuition. No matter what the people want or the States want, a proposal in this new immigration policy plan will require all States that allow illegals to attend State universities to pay only in-State tuition, not out-of-State tuition.

So, what's the difference in cost? Well, if you are an in-State resident in Texas and attend the University of Texas, you pay about $1,500 for 12 semester hours. If you are an out-of-State student, say a student from Tennessee, you pay over $4,000 for 12 semester hours. So this proposal will discriminate against American citizens and legal immigrants, and favor and prefer illegals.

An example. If you are from New York and you want to get admitted to the University of Texas, you have to pay out-of-State tuition because, simply, you are not from Texas. Or, as we say, ''You're not from around here.'' But if you are an illegal and get admitted to the University of Texas, you will get to pay in-State tuition.

If the Senate plan passes, this preference policy will be law and apply to every State, whether they like it or not. This is blatant discrimination against Americans and legal residents. So American students and parents, get your checkbooks out, because you are going to pay more for college than people who illegally enter the United States. You will be discriminated against by your own government. So, if you want to attend a State college somewhere in America other than your own State, and you don't have the money to pay the extra tuition, well, it's just too bad.

Mr. Speaker, this is just another reason this so-called new immigration reform proposal is a bad idea for America. It is nothing more than a preference policy for people illegally in the United States.

And that's just the way it is.

HONORING THE LIFE OF RABBI ROLAND B. GITTELSOHN AND HIS STIRRING EULOGY ON IWO JIMA

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

Mr. BRALEY of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today during Jewish American Heritage Month to honor the life and memory of Rabbi Roland B. Gittelsohn, who was the first Jewish chaplain ever appointed by the Marine Corps.

Most Americans don't recognize the name of Rabbi Gittelsohn, but they should. Rabbi Gittelsohn delivered a stirring eulogy to the war dead on Iwo Jima that is second only to the Gettysburg Address of President Lincoln as a stirring ode to the principles of democracy that are the bedrock of this country and the young men and women who paid the ultimate price for our freedom.

During World War II, Rabbi Gittelsohn was assigned as a Jewish divisional chaplain of the 5th Marine Division. During the Battle of Iwo Jima, Rabbi Gittelsohn was right in the heart in the action, ministering to the needs of Marines of all faith, with the knowledge that his life was in grave danger.

After the fighting was over, Rabbi Gittelsohn was asked to give a sermon at an ecumenical memorial service dedicating the 5th Marine Division cemetery on Iwo Jima, but due to prejudice he only gave remarks at a small Jewish service. Here are his words.

''Here before us lie the bodies of comrades and friends, men who until yesterday or last week laughed with us, joked with us, trained with us, men who fought with us and feared with us. Somewhere in this plot of ground there may lie the man who could have discovered the cure for cancer. Under one of these Christian crosses or beneath a Jewish Star of David, there may now rest a man who was destined to be a great prophet, to find the way perhaps for all to live in plenty, with poverty and hardship for none. Now they lie here silently in this sacred soil, and we gather to consecrate the earth in their memory.

''It is not easy to do so. Some of us have buried our closest friends here. To speak in memory of such men as these is not easy. No, our poor power of speech can add nothing to what these men have already done. All that we can even hope to do is to follow their example, to show the same selfless courage in peace that they did in war; to swear that by the grace of God and the stubborn strength and power of the human will, their sons and ours will never suffer these pains again. These men have done their job well. They have paid the ghastly price of freedom.

''We dedicate ourselves, first, to live together in peace the way they fought and are buried in this war. Here lie officers and men, Negroes and whites, rich men and poor, together. Here, no man prefers another because of his faith or despises him because of his color. Here, there are no quotas of how many from each group are admitted or allowed. Among these men there is no discrimination, no prejudices, no hatred. Theirs is the highest and purest democracy.

''Any man among the living who fails to understand that will thereby betray those who lie here dead. Whoever of us lifts up his hand in hate against a brother or thinks himself superior to those who happen to be in the minority makes of this ceremony and the bloody sacrifice it commemorates an empty, hollow mockery. To this, then, as our solemn, sacred duty, do we the living now dedicate ourselves to the rights of Protestants, Catholics, and Jews, of white men and Negroes alike, to enjoy the democracy for which all of them have paid the price.

''When the last shot has been fired, there will be those whose eyes are turned backward, not forward, who will be satisfied with wide extremes of poverty and wealth in which the seeds of another war can breed. We promise you, our departed comrades, this too we will not permit. This war has been fought by the common man. Its fruits of peace must be enjoyed by the common man. We promise, by all that is sacred and holy, that your sons, the sons of miners and millers, the sons of farmers and workers, the right to a living that is decent and secure.

''When the final cross has been placed in the last cemetery, once again there will be those to whom profit will be more important than peace. To those who sleep here silent, we give our promise: We will not listen. We will not forget that some of you paid the ultimate price for men who profit at your expense. We will remember you as you looked when we placed you reverently, lovingly, in the ground.

Thus do we memorialize those who, having ceased living with us, now live within us again. Thus do we consecrate ourselves to the living to carry on the struggle they began. Too much blood has gone into this soil for us to let it lie barren. Too much pain and heartache have fertilized the earth on which we stand. We here solemnly swear, this shall not be in vain. Out of this, and from the suffering and sorrow of those who mourn this, will come, we promise, the birth of a new freedom for the sons of men everywhere.''

My father served in the 5th Marine Division on Iwo Jima, and it is to his memory and the memory of Rabbi Gittelsohn that I offer these poignant words.

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

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

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THE CONSTITUTION CAUCUS

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

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I am a member of the Constitution Caucus, and we take it as an important responsibility

to come to the floor every week to talk about an issue related to the Constitution.

Tonight, we are here to talk about the Federal Government's role in education through the No Child Left Behind Act. But I question whether the premise of Federal involvement is even legitimate.

The tenth amendment to the Constitution that enumerates States' rights throws Federal involvement in education into question.

The tenth amendment tells us that the powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.

No Child Left Behind has a problem. The problem is that the individual States have learned that Federal Government involvement in local education is often uninformed, inefficient and unnecessarily burdensome.

What many Americans don't know or don't remember is that No Child Left Behind is simply a reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, a law first passed in 1965 and signed into law by President Lyndon Johnson. It has been revised and reauthorized so many times that it barely resembles the original law.

Today the law spawned by the repeated tinkering over four decades is increasingly complicated and burdensome. It attempts to tie Federal money to disparate yardsticks that may or may not make sense for the thousands of local school districts around the country.

How can one law effectively regulate both a rural school in North Carolina and an inner-city school in L.A.? I believe it cannot. Accountability needs be a State and local issue left to parents and teachers. It should not be delegated to Washington bureaucrats who don't even step inside the thousands of schools that are scrambling to comply with cookie-cutter regulations that often don't make sense on the local level.

According to the Congressional Research Service, the Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965 was primarily concerned with the relationship between poverty and low educational achievement. That is, indeed, a noble goal. But the law has since gone far afield. Now it infringes on States rights to oversee school systems and strays into unconstitutional areas.

Again, the 10th amendment to the Constitution says, ''The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved for the States respectively, or to the people.''

The Constitution does not give the Federal Government the express right to dabble in local education. We need to give States back their full constitutional right to set education policy and encourage innovative solutions to the unique education issues faced by every State.

Tens of billions of Federal dollars cannot fix faulty schools. Broken schools need to be held accountable on the local level. By pushing accountability to the Federal level, we've produced a counterproductive system that is not responsive to the local needs of students, parents and teachers.

As we look towards the next reauthorization of this law, we must take States rights into account, lest we again fail the most important people in this equation, our Nation's children.

BRING THE TROOPS HOME FOR MEMORIAL DAY

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

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, the sacrifices of those who have dedicated their lives in defense of our country are an important reminder of the price of freedom. These brave heroes have served this country with distinction, and it is our absolute responsibility to honor them.

Memorial Day is an opportunity to reflect on how we must support our troops, which means honoring our responsibility to provide the best protection and support for the men and women who serve in our Nation's Armed Forces. It means honoring our promise to provide lifelong health care and benefits for our veterans when they return home, and it means doing everything we can to bring our troops home from Iraq, out of harm's way.

As we reflect on the sacrifices and the accomplishments of our veterans, it's vitally important to reaffirm our support for our troops on Memorial Day. And Memorial Day is an opportunity to commend all who have defended our country and safeguarded the values cherished by every single American. It's a chance to repeat that while we strongly disagree with this administration and its continuing occupation of Iraq, we support our troops.

This administration refuses to hear the calls of the vast majority of Americans demanding that we bring the troops home. It continues to believe that the only way forward in Iraq is to spend more money, send more troops for an open-ended debacle. This administration maintains its strategy for delay and denial, refusing to plan for an end to the Iraq occupation, a blank check and no accountability.

As the administration stubbornly refuses to accept that we cannot win an occupation, the men and women serving in Iraq are suffering the consequences of these mistakes. Nearly 20 percent of the soldiers returning from Iraq experience some symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD, which puts them at significantly higher risk for suicide and drug addictions. More than 34,000 of our servicemembers have been injured in Iraq, and more than 3,400 have been killed.

Sending our soldiers back into an increasingly deadly civil war on extended tours with worn-out equipment is not supporting the troops. We cannot let this neglect for our veterans become the hallmark of the occupation. We must strengthen our commitment to our troops. We must provide them with the support they deserve.

That's why I've introduced H.R. 508, the Bring the Troops Home and Iraq Sovereignty Restoration Act, which will end the occupation within 6 months of passage and will provide for full physical and mental health care for all of our Nation's veterans. Our troops deserve no less.

Mr. Speaker, this Memorial Day is an opportunity, an opportunity to celebrate the honorable service of those who were in past wars, those who have served in between wars, and those who are serving today. And we can do that by providing our veterans with the support that they need. It's an opportunity on this Memorial Day to support the troops who are in Iraq by demanding that they come home.

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

(Ms. GRANGER addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

OPENNESS IN THIS INSTITUTION

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

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. Speaker, one of the hallmarks of this institution is openness. Every minute of debate in this Chamber is captured on C–SPAN cameras. Every minute of debate and dialogue in the committee rooms are transcribed and recorded. This practice is premised on the principle that the public has a right to know what factors go into our decisions here.

I don't think the public would be very pleased to learn how much of this decisionmaking process is moving behind closed doors, particularly as it relates to earmarks.

Over the past several years it became common practice for appropriators to include earmarks in committee and conference reports, rather than the text of the bills. Frequently, a committee report containing thousands of earmarks would come to the floor only hours before the final vote on the bill. At times the committee report would be made public only after the bill had already passed.

The bottom line is that, over several years, earmarks endured very little scrutiny from this body. I think the voters have become very aware of this failing on our part. My party, the Republican Party, allowed the practice of earmarking to get out of hand. Taxpayers have paid the price. This institution has paid the price. Finally, we

Republicans paid the price at the polls this November.

When the new majority took over in January of this year, they moved to include more transparency in the earmarking process. Members of Congress would, at long last, have to put their names next to the earmarks. We Republicans had done this in the fall, but only after the appropriations season was nearly done. This was a good move by the majority party in January. As I said at the time, they had the guts to do what we hadn't when it mattered, at the beginning of the appropriation process.

There is reason now, however, to doubt the sincerity of these moves. House rules are only as good as our willingness to enforce them. And we have, as yet, not been willing to enforce these rules.

When a bill comes to the floor now, there must be a list of earmarks with Member names next to them, or a certification that the bill contains no earmarks.

When the supplemental came to the floor, there were clearly earmarks in the bill, yet there was a certification that there were no earmarks contained in the bill.

The problem is, a point of order can only lie against the bill if there is no certification. So a certification, even though it might be patently wrong, has to be accepted by the Speaker or the Parliamentarians.

The intelligence authorization bill came to the floor without a list of earmarks. The list of earmarks only came after the deadline to submit amendments to the Rules Committee; so then, again, there was no opportunity to challenge any of the earmarks in the bill. Then, despite the fact that there were more than 680 earmarks in the defense authorization bill, no amendments related to earmarks were allowed by the Rules Committee, even though some of the earmarks clearly had no relationship to defense.

Now, we hear that the Appropriations Committee plans to keep earmarks secret until the appropriation bills this year have passed the House floor. Those earmarks would later be ''air-dropped'' into the conference report where no amendments are possible, where no scrutiny of these amendment or, I'm sorry, of these earmarks is possible.

The vaunted sunlight that we said we were going to bring into this process is gone. We closed the drapes. We've snuffed out the candle.

Mr. Speaker, this institution deserves better than this. We can do better. We should, on a bipartisan basis, bring this sunlight back. We need to subject earmarks to the scrutiny that they should have. No spending should occur in this body without the Members' knowledge, and that's what happens when earmarks are ''air-dropped'' into a conference report.

Mr. Speaker, I'm convinced that in the end, the majority party will pay the political price. I hope that we would move before that time. I hope that we can, on a bipartisan basis, simply move forward and bring sunlight back into the process. That is what I think the citizens of this country deserve. It's what the taxpayers need to have.

□ 1945

SURGING GASOLINE PRICES

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

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, surging gas prices at the pump surely tell us, just before Memorial Day, that something has gone wrong again with the rigged oil markets.

We've seen gasoline prices in our country set all-time highs. Ohio families are paying $3.50 to $3.93 a gallon, with no end in sight. And when President Bush took office, they were paying $1.46 a gallon. In fact, when Vice President CHENEY was sworn in, Halliburton's stock was worth one-fourth of what it's worth today.

So we think about America's families and our consumers. They're being hurt. Car and truck sales are being hurt. Our economy is being hurt. It's all so unnecessary.

When you fuel up, the chances are 7 out of 10 that the crude oil for the gasoline came from an undemocratic foreign country, Saudi Arabia, Nigeria, Venezuela, Angola, Mexico, maybe even trafficked out of Iraq, places that do not exactly love thriving democracy.

Meanwhile, in oil-rich Iraq, this week, eight more American soldiers were killed in roadside bomb attacks near Baghdad. And this brings to nearly 3,400 U.S. service-member deaths in Iraq, plus additional Department of Defense civilian employees, and the death toll keeps mounting.

The major oil pipeline and refinery in Iraq is now being guarded by our best, the 82nd Airborne, and sundry private contractors. They're guarding oil lines and the refinery. In fact, some of that oil has been stolen and even trafficked throughout the war.

Meanwhile, a new hydrocarbon law is being pushed in Iraq, which boasts the second largest oil reserves in the world, that would privatize the majority of oil in that country to who? That's the trillion-dollar question. That's the $23 trillion question.

How disgusting to me that our finest military have to die in an oil war. When will the American people begin to connect undemocratic oil regimes, imported oil, and the lives of our sons and daughters while our gasoline-consuming public is subjected here to the oil marketeers?

I don't think anybody would admit it is a free market in oil. It's a cartelized market. It has been for half a century.

Exxon and the other major oil companies are raking in historic profits at the expense of our sons and daughters. We see U.S. military power fully projected in Kuwait, in Iraq, benefiting their neighbors, too, like Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, who have had to hire growing legions of private security firms to hold up their kingdoms and emirates. Saudi Aramco is the largest privately held company in the world, and Exxon Aramco the most profitable oil company in history. Are you starting to see the picture?

Let me ask a critical question: Would any of the oil profits made off the pocketbooks of Americans be going to hire more security guards in Saudi Arabia, or in Bahrain, or in Kuwait? As Will Rogers would say, ''You betcha.''

Our Nation's military power is now fully projected in the deserts over there, and here in Washington sits Congress and a President who say they want to break oil addiction from imported sources. But since President Bush took office, we are importing a billion more barrels a year, a billion more barrels a year every year since 2001. It is projected we will spend a trillion dollars on the war in Iraq, and it is not anywhere close to over. Yet we passed a bill out of the House a few months ago that just put a thimble full of additional resources in renewable energy. Is there any dispatch here? Is there any urgency? Is there any seriousness? Let the American people tell us. Do you see it? Do you hear it? Do you feel it in your pocketbooks?

Citizens are expressing their frustration with our inability to rein in the abuses of the oil companies. And I have got a partial solution. This week I am introducing a bill to give something back to the American people tired of being gouged by the oil companies. It is called the ''Give America Something Act of 2007,'' the GAS Act, G–A–S. Give every American a one-time immediate $100 gas payment refund. They can use it to pay for higher gas prices. They can use it to pay for higher transit costs. And we pay for it by imposing a windfall profits tax on oil revenue to provide the revenue to finance the program. This is long overdue.

HONORING OFFICER ROB TARGOSZ

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HALL of New York). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. FRANKS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona. Mr. Speaker, in the very earliest days of this Nation, Edmund Burke said, ''All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.''

That belief became the personal creed and call to action of Officer Rob Targosz. Mr. Speaker, this man was a hero and a model human being determined to utilize every ounce of his mind, soul, and body to protect the lives of thousands of his fellow Americans so that we could all live in a safer, more peaceful Nation. Rob Targosz was a second lieutenant in the 12th Airborne Special Forces. He was a member

of the SWAT team, and he was a police officer of the Gilbert Police Department in Gilbert, Arizona, for 12 years. He served there on the DUI Task Force because Rob felt that one of the greatest purposes of his life was to combat and prevent drunk driving.

The license plate on the back of his police motorcycle displayed the title ''Agent of Justice.'' He defended our citizens and our laws, and he sought justice with a determination so real that it led him face to face with the very tragedy he had dedicated his life to protect others from. In one of life's great paradoxical mysteries, while on duty, Rob Targosz was killed by a drunk driver.

Mr. Speaker, drunk driving is the embodiment of apathy, callousness, and selfishness, which is the very opposite of everything that personified Officer Rob Targosz. The enemy that took Rob's life was the very thing that broke his heart and fueled his desire to battle against it. But it did not defeat him, because Rob Targosz was a man of abiding faith in Jesus Christ, whom he held as his eternal Savior. And Rob left behind him in this life a legacy of heroism, love for America, and countless Americans whose lives are preserved because he protected them with his own.

Therefore, his battle continues and his search for justice pulsates in the hearts of other Americans, who, like him, continue to defend and protect us all. Rob's life also continues in the lion heart of his beloved wife, who walked by his slain body, picked up his armor and weapons, and continues his fight by educating the public about the unspeakable destruction caused by drunk driving.

Mr. Speaker, one of the many reasons that human life is so precious is because it allows the world to see when a single man can live and do and live his life, however short it might be, so that others may be the better for it. Americans are alive and families are whole because of the life and work of Officer Rob Targosz. And the world is better because he showed us an example of a truly noble and excellent soul. May his example fire the souls of us all to continue his enduring quest to protect the innocent.

God bless Rob Targosz and his family.

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

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

EVERYONE DESERVES A SECOND CHANCE

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

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, the United States of America has more of its people in prison per capita than any other developed nation in the world, more than 2 million. The vast majority, 95 percent, of the men and women in our prisons will eventually return to the community. This means that every year more than 650,000 offenders are released from State and Federal prisons and return back to civilian life.

These men and women deserve a second chance. Their families, spouses, and children deserve a second chance. And their communities deserve a second chance. A second chance means an opportunity to turn a life around, a chance to break the grip of a drug habit; a chance to support a family, to pay taxes, to be self-sufficient.

Today, few of those who return to their communities are prepared for their release or receive any supportive service. When the prison door swings open, an ex-offender may receive a bus ticket and spending money for a day or two. Many leave prison to return to the same environment which saw them offend in the first place. But as they return, they often face additional barriers to reentry: serious physical and mental health problems, no place to stay, and lack of education or qualifications to hold a job. As a result, two out of three will be rearrested for new crimes within the first 3 years after their release. Youthful offenders are even more likely to reoffend.

One-third of all correction departments provide no services to released offenders, and most departments do not offer a transitional program, placing a heavy burden on families and communities. Considering the cost of incarceration, as much as $40,000 per year, and all the social and economic costs of crime to the community, it is just plain common sense to help ex-offenders successfully reenter our communities and reduce recidivism.

That is why I have sponsored the bipartisan Second Chance Act of 2007, H.R. 1593, along with Representatives CANNON, CONYERS, COBLE, SCOTT of Virginia, SMITH of Texas, JONES of Ohio, FORBES, SCHIFF, SENSENBRENNER, CHABOT, JACKSON-LEE of Texas, CUMMINGS, JOHNSON of Georgia, CLARKE, and 75 other Members of Congress.

A companion bill, S. 1060, has been introduced in the Senate by Senators BIDEN, DURBIN, SPECTER, BROWNBACK, LEAHY, OBAMA, and 10 others.

The Second Chance Act will provide transitional assistance to assist ex-offenders in coping with the challenges of reentry. It will reduce recidivism. It will help reunite families and protect communities. It will enhance public safety and save taxpayer dollars. It is the humane thing to do. It is the responsible thing to do. And, of course, it is the right thing to do.

The Judiciary Committee held hearings on the bill last month and quickly voted to send the bill to the full House. I fully expect it to pass soon. The bill has the support of more than 200 criminal justice, service provider, faith-based, housing, governmental, disability, and civil rights organizations. President Bush has signaled his support of the legislation as well.

No single piece of legislation is going to solve the reentry crisis we are facing, but the Second Chance Act is a good start. I hope that with passage of this bill, we will begin a new era in criminal justice.

Mr. Speaker, I am convinced that any serious effort to facilitate the reentry of men and women with criminal records to civil society must be prepared to do two things. First, we must be prepared to help with drug treatment on demand for everyone who requests it. Second, we need to find work for ex-offenders. Programs don't supply jobs. After ex-offenders have undergone rehabilitation and received appropriate training, employers will have to open their hearts and put these men and women back into the workforce. They do not belong in prison.

Many of them don't need prison, but they do need a second chance. Congress can give them that. And we should.

THE A-PLUS ACT

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

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, as a member of the Constitution Caucus, I am convinced that today, at a time when our Nation lags behind other countries in math and science testing and the Federal Government has a larger role in education than ever before, this Congress must find a way to give our schools greater flexibility, reduce the bureaucracy involved in education, and ensure these opportunities really are being given to our children.

In years past Congress has attempted to solve problems in education by simply throwing piles of Federal money into the education system. The original purpose of No Child Left Behind was to return some education policymaking authority to the States. Unfortunately, during the process of crafting, passing, and enacting this legislation, No Child Left Behind took the form of a massive spending bill that increased the Federal Government's presence in classrooms.

As a December 22, 2006 editorial in the Detroit News stated, ''What our Federal legislators come up with in the Nation's Capital doesn't always translate well into the classroom.''

The editorial continues: ''Michigan should have the flexibility to decide how and when to measure student progress.''

My daughter-in-law is a hardworking and talented teacher who has experienced firsthand the problems No Child Left Behind creates for teachers, parents, and students. As a classroom teacher forced to teach to the tests required by local, State, and No Child

Left Behind, she actually considered quitting because of the paperwork and restrictions imposed upon her. She struggled to have time to give individual attention to each of her ''special needs'' students.

Ironically, she obtained her teaching position due to her performance the year prior as a permanent substitute teacher in a classroom. Because she was not required to fill out all the forms and paperwork required by No Child Left Behind, she excelled and the school offered her a permanent position.

In its origin, No Child Left Behind attempted to provide greater school choice and reduce Washington's involvement in education. But instead this expensive and largely unsuccessful legislation has broadened the scope of the Federal Government's role in education. Enshrined in our Constitution is the 10th amendment, which reads, ''The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved for the States respectively, or to the people.'' Federal control of education is listed nowhere in the Constitution. And in accordance with the 10th amendment, education should be the responsibility of State and local governments.

Because I believe each child's educational path should be determined by a child's parents and not by the Federal Government, I am an original cosponsor of the A-Plus Act. The A-Plus Act would give States, teachers and parents the freedom and authority to determine what educational path a student should take.

As part of this legislation, States can opt out of Federal programs, and State leaders can decide how to use Federal education funds to improve student achievement.

We all are seeking the best possible educational opportunities for our children, and the way to achieve this is to let States and local communities be accountable for academic achievement and educational reforms.

With that, I yield back, Mr. Speaker.

□ 2000

IN HONOR OF THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF ST. JOSEPH'S CHURCH

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

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share with my colleagues a small story from a small corner of America called Rowena, Texas.

The 20th century began with a tremendous movement of people to west Texas in search of good land, opportunity and prosperity. Among these intrepid travelers were many Czech and German Americans whose forefathers had come to Texas to farm, ply trades and create better lives. Their descendants found these lives in Rowena.

In 1906, four Rowena Catholics, William Glass, Mike Feist, Frank Schwertner and John Jansa, sought to erect a church to serve their community and better practice their faith. After a year of toil, the church opened and celebrated its first mass, a wedding, on November 20, 1907. The church was aptly dedicated to St. Joseph, the patron of immigrants, families and working people.

St. Joseph's grew rapidly during its early years, reflecting its growing significance in the community. In 1916, the church opened St. Joseph's School, with the Sisters of the Divine Providence serving as teachers. And in 1924, a new church in the gothic style was dedicated, and the annual fall festival was begun to support the church. To this day, the gothic church still stands, and the fall festival is still celebrated each year.

Soon the church began to host community-service organizations and social clubs as well. The Knights of Columbus, St. Ann's Altar Society, Catholic Daughters of America, the KJT, KJZT and the Immaculate Conception Society would all call the church home through the coming decades.

The Great Depression and World War II would see an especially important role for St. Joseph's and its parish organizations to play as they led their rural community through troubling times.

As the church aged in the 1950s and in the 1960s, it prospered. It marked its 50th anniversary in 1957, and a new community space was constructed in 1961. And all the while, the high school continued to educate and graduate the youth of Rowena.

Unfortunately, as with all institutions, the church inevitably faced a period of decline. As the small town of Rowena began to lose population, difficult times ensued for the church. The parish school finally closed in the late 1970s, and church membership shrunk.

Shaken by these developments, the parish renewed its commitment to the sacraments, its members and its community. They reestablished religious instruction, revitalized their parish organizations, and moved into the modern age. Today, St. Joseph's is fittingly led by another immigrant, Father Bhaskar Morugudi from India.

2007 marks St. Joseph's centennial celebration. The belief of four men led to the creation of the parish, but it took the faith of a community to sustain it. Throughout the last 100 years, St. Joseph's has been the rock for the people of Rowena. It has educated their children, guided them through trouble and saved their souls.

As the parishioners of St. Joseph's look to the future, I urge them to remember the rich history that lies in their past. The legacy of their founders created in Rowena through service, education and salvation is inspiring. The church is woven into the threads of Rowena itself and highlights the history of America herself, and I feel privileged to share this story with you all.

No matter who we are or where we're from, we can all find common ground in the story of St. Joseph's parish. It is a story of individuals seeking and creating a better life for themselves and their descendants, and of a people of deep devotion seeking to practice their beliefs and enrich their community. We should all strive to be so noble in our ambitions and generous in our spirits.

Today I celebrate and honor the parishioners of St. Joseph's in Rowena, Texas as they reflect on the past and embark on another 100 years of ministry and service.

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 WAR IN IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, the war in Iraq, since its beginning, has gone against every traditional conservative position I've ever known, especially fiscal conservatism. There is nothing conservative about the war in Iraq. So it should have been no surprise when William F. Buckley, often called the ''Godfather of Conservatism,'' wrote in 2004 that if he had known in 2002 what he knew then by 2004, he would have been against the war. But listen to what he wrote in June of 2005, 2 years ago.

William F. Buckley. ''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 his main point was, quote, ''A point is reached when tenacity conveys not steadfastness of purpose, but misapplication of pride.'' Unfortunately, we are losing our young soldiers at a much faster rate than the 500 a year that Mr. Buckley said would move the American people from skepticism to contempt; 103 U.S. soldiers killed in April alone, at least 71 more killed through May 21, including 15 this past weekend, and someone told me 8 more today.

Saddam Hussein was an evil man, but he had a total military budget only a

little over two-tenths of 1 percent of ours, most of which he spent protecting himself and his family and building castles. He was no threat to us whatsoever.

Mr. Speaker, we all respect, admire and appreciate those who serve in our Nation's Armed Forces. As I said a few days ago on this floor, serving in our military is certainly 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 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 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're 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, and, I might add, unconservative, for us to be the policemen 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.

The majority of the Iraqi Parliament has now signed a petition 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.

Mr. Speaker, President Bush, when he ran for office in 2000, campaigned strongly against nation building. Unfortunately, that is exactly 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.

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

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

U.S. SHOULD NOT SELL ARMS TO PAKISTAN

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor this evening to discuss a contract recently awarded by the U.S. Government to Lockheed Martin for 18 Sniper Advanced Targeting Pods, or ATPs, to be sold to the Government of Pakistan. Sniper ATPs allow aircrews to perform intelligence, targeting, surveillance and reconnaissance missions from extended standoff ranges.

Mr. Speaker, I believe it is irresponsible for the U.S. Government to sell high-grade weapons technology to Pakistan, a nation that has turned a blind eye to the increasingly dangerous Taliban insurgency in the western region of its country.

Numerous press accounts in recent months have discussed the growing presence of Taliban training camps and bases in the tribal regions of western Pakistan that border Afghanistan. Just last week, in the port city of Karachi, over 40 people were killed, with even more injured during 2 days of gun battles and mayhem in response to an antigovernment rally. Most reports claim that this violence against protesters was perpetrated by the Muttahida Quami Movement, or MQM, which is an ethnically based Mafia allied with Pakistani President Musharraf.

In a country that claims to be somewhat democratic, the actions of the MQM and President Musharraf seem to be just the opposite. Coupled with the Pakistani President's refusal to put forth a good-faith effort to root out Taliban insurgents in his country, it hardly seems like a good idea for the United States to be selling arms to the Government of Pakistan.

Earlier this year, Democrats passed H.R. 1, which implemented the recommendations of the bipartisan 9/11 Commission. Included in this bill was language that would end U.S. military assistance and arms sales licensing to Pakistan in the 2008 fiscal year unless Pakistani President Musharraf certifies that the Islamabad government is ''making all possible efforts to end Taliban activities on Pakistani soil.''

I believe that the U.S. should live up to this commitment by ceasing the sale of arms to the Government of Pakistan. I fear that if we do, in fact, provide these weapons technologies to countries in unstable regions, such as Pakistan, they could be used against U.S. allies, such as India.

This U.S. policy of military sales to Pakistan will contribute to increasing security concerns throughout South Asia. The U.S. has no way of knowing if these technologies will be used against al Qaeda and the Taliban, and not against India or other peaceful nations. In fact, the government has simply watched while terrorist groups like Lashkar-e-Tayyaba, or LET, committed terrorist acts in Jammu and Kashmir and other parts of India. The actions within its own country prove themselves not fit for, in this case Pakistan, for receiving these weapons.

Mr. Speaker, although Pakistan has claimed to be an ally in the global war on terror, it clearly has not taken the necessary steps to end terrorism in its own backyard. I strongly believe that economic assistance is necessary to support economic restructuring that will stop Pakistan from becoming a breeding ground for terrorists.

At the time after 9/11, when we decided that we would allow economic assistance to Pakistan and development assistance, I was all for it because I think it makes sense; that's the way to lead to a democratic and stable Pakistan. But military assistance is another matter. Allowing this sale sends the wrong message, I think, particularly in the climate that we live in here today, and what Pakistan has been doing in not living up to its part of the deal in fighting the Taliban.

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO BOARD OF VISITORS TO THE UNITED STATES MERCHANT MARINE ACADEMY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to 46 U.S.C. 51312(b), and the order of the House of January 4, 2007, the Chair announces the Speaker's appointment of the following Members of the House to the Board of Visitors to the United States Merchant Marine Academy:

Mrs. MCCARTHY, New York

Mr. KING, New York

□ 2015

THE 30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to be here on the floor tonight. It is like old times, Mr. RYAN and Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. And we have the gas pump there, and it is just, you, know a wonderful feeling.

Mr. Speaker, just to see you in the Chair there inspired me as an American to continue to be a part of this great democracy of ours. Our good friends from the Clerk's office and the Capitol Police and all the folks that make it possible for us to be here tonight, we are just forever appreciative.

As you know, in the 109th and 108th Congress, this was the trio here. Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ brought quite a bit of class to our operation. She came in the 109th Congress, and, Mr. RYAN, we started to wear better ties and study more so that we could keep up with an educated policymaker.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I started wearing pink ties, because we had the whole goddess thing going on.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. RYAN started wearing his pink ties, which my daughter always says, real men wear pink. That is actually salmon, but we won't talk about it.

Mr. Speaker, in all seriousness, we have an awful lot of business that will be taking place in the next 24 hours. We are approaching Memorial Day, and there have been a lot of reports about the Iraq emergency supplemental. There has been a lot of discussion about lobbying reform. There has been a lot of discussion about the reauthorization of the agriculture bill. But I can tell you one thing, Mr. Speaker: Unlike previous Congresses, the work is being done here by those of us that are under the dome, doing what the people of America sent us up here to do.

As we talk about the war, I think it is important to know that the issues in Iraq and Afghanistan are very, very serious to all of us here, to all of us in Washington, D.C., and Americans throughout the country, and especially the family members of those serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. We always give this report. As of 10 a.m. this morning, the death toll in Iraq as it relates to the men and women in uniform is 3,424; wounded in action and returning to duty is 14,073; and wounded in action and not returning to duty is 11,476. I think it is very important that we pay very close attention to those numbers.

The days of six supplementals passing off of this floor, half a trillion dollars spent and no strings attached to any of those appropriation dollars, those days are over. I am very proud of the leadership in the House and the Senate in fighting with the White House and bringing about the kind of accountability that the American people have called for.

You heard me say here on this floor in the past, Mr. Speaker, that there have been bills that in the spirit of the bill, I voted for those bills, but as it relates to the substance of those bills, I have had a few problems with the lack of accountability. That is paramount now in this bill that hopefully will pass the House floor tomorrow. There are benchmarks. There are reporting periods that the President has to report back to the Congress. In September, we will be coming in for a landing and making some real decisions.

The Iraqi Parliament, as you know, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, they have been holding quite a few conversations, as a matter of fact, talking about going on vacation for 60 days. The Defense Minister called his Ministers together to plan for an immediate U.S. withdrawal of troops, because I believe they know with this new Congress in place, the days of the Iraqi Government drawing down on the taxpayer dollars, the U.S. taxpayer dollars, without accountability, are over; and if they are not willing to reform themselves, then we should not be willing to have our men and women on the streets of Iraq fighting on behalf of safety and patrolling the streets, when the Iraqis are not doing what they are supposed to be doing.

With that, I will yield to one of my good friends. I will yield to Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, who is a very good friend, and then Mr. RYAN comes in after her in my friendship.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. You have just known me longer.

Thank you, Mr. MEEK. It is a pleasure to be here. We have been trying to get the three of us back together again. It is a good problem to have. We have a lot more on our plate now that the Democrats are in the majority. The other good part of our problem is that we have expanded the active members of the 30–Something Working Group, with the Speaker that is in the chair this evening and a number of other Members, Mr. ALTMIRE, and we are really happy about that.

But I am glad the three of us were able to come back together this evening to continue our effort to speak to both our generation and to the American people, the rest of the American people, about our concerns and the Democratic new direction that we have been successful in moving in since November 7th when we were victorious in the election and when the American people indicated to this Congress that they wanted to move in a new direction.

We struggled through the last number of years. Gradually, and unfortunately a cloud hung over this institution and this Capitol, a culture of corruption had developed, Mr. RYAN, and we just could not allow it to continue any longer. The American people were fed up with it, and that is why tomorrow we are going to be considering lobbying reform and ethics reform, so that we can inspire the confidence of the American people once again in their leaders, both as individuals, because traditionally they have said to pollsters that they support their Member of Congress, they like their Member of Congress, but they can't stand the institution.

That is a sad state of affairs. We need to make sure that our institution, the one we are proud to serve in, is one that the American people can be proud of as well. There has been too much corruption here, unfortunately led by individuals formerly in the leadership in this institution on the other side of the aisle for far too long, and we need to take some significant steps to clean it up, which is why we are going to be considering this legislation on the floor tomorrow.

We also talked about during the campaign and leading up to, and now since NANCY PELOSI, our Speaker, took office, that we are going to implement the priorities that were important to the American people, including the minimum wage. We passed our ''Six in 06'' agenda in the first 100 hours that we were in the majority. The minimum wage was part of that. The implementation of the 9/11 Commission recommendations was a part of that. Making sure that we could repeal the $14 billion in subsidies that we gave away to the oil industry under the Republican leadership, that was a part of that package, and a number of other provisions.

Our priorities since taking control of the House of Representatives have been a reflection of the priorities of the American people.

We have been interacting with this President, which in my experience the only thing I can analogize it to, Mr. RYAN, is like trying to move an iceberg. This is a person who occupies the White House now that seems to have no respect for the system of checks and balances, no respect for the fact that the Founding Fathers created three branches of government that were considered coequal, and that he was not elected king of this country. The Founding Fathers very definitely intended for us not to have a monarchy, not to establish a monarchy, and he doesn't get to just decide what is going to happen, particularly when it comes to war and executing the powers of the Presidency. He does have to have input from us.

I can tell you from my perspective, I think from your perspective, Mr. MEEK, and Mr. RYAN as well, that this is the beginning of the end. The actions we have taken, insisting upon him not having a blank check and ending the blank check and the open-ended commitments that have been there, it is the beginning of the end.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. While we are hitting on the war, I think it is important for us to maybe go back and reevaluate

why the Democrats have the position of redeploy out, wind this thing down, and I think it is important for us to go through some of the numbers.

Mr. MEEK had already mentioned the number of troops killed. We have had another nine that were killed in the last couple of days, and our hearts and prayers go out to all the families that have been affected by this and who have lost soldiers over there. The most heartbreaking thing we have to do is go to these funerals and see a 20-year old kid who has been married for a year with a 7-month-old son or daughter.

It is heartbreaking when we don't even know what winning is. Ask the President. What is winning this war? What does that mean now? We can't really get an answer from the President.

But a couple of things, why we think the President and his policies have made this situation worse. The number of insurgents in Iraq in 2003 was 5,000. The number of insurgents in Iraq in March of 2007 is 70,000, all Sunni, mostly Sunni. What I love now is the President is starting to say, Mr. Speaker, ''bin Laden is now saying we need to attack Americans in Iraq. See why we got to stay there?''

No kidding. Right? No kidding. Bin Laden? Of course. We have 150,000 soldiers in a war zone. Of course, bin Laden is going to say go hit them over there.

But the problem is that we are creating more terrorists. And if you are trying to win the hearts and minds of people, okay, the number of civilian casualties in Iraq since the invasion, estimates range from 54,000 to 76,000. Those are innocent civilians in Iraq. Do you think we are going to be able to go over there and win their hearts and minds if we are killing innocent civilians with the bombs we are dropping? This needs to be won diplomatically. When it needs to be won diplomatically, it becomes very difficult when you have 50,000 to 75,000 civilian casualties.

One more thing, and then I will wrap my portion up here. The average daily number of daily attacks by insurgents in July of 2003 was 16 daily attacks in 2003. The number of daily attacks by insurgents between November of 2006 and February of 2007, 149. From 16 to 149. We are aggravating the situation. We are making it worse, and the surge is making it worse.

I yield back to my friend.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Thank you. What we are doing, you are absolutely right, Mr. RYAN, is creating an incubator for al Qaeda. That is exactly what has occurred. In fact, if you recall, we heard a few years ago a lot of back and forth from the President about whether he did or didn't say that the reason that we actually went into Iraq was because of the connection, supposed connection, between Saddam Hussein and al Qaeda. Then I know Tony Snow, the White House Communications Director, has said no, we never did say there was any connection between Saddam Hussein and al Qaeda. Now, yesterday and this morning at the Coast Guard Academy graduation, now, finally, how many years into it, he can hang his hat on there being a connection between al Qaeda and our involvement in Iraq.

Why? Because he created that situation there. Because we created an incubator and a hotbed that is an environment for that. Of course, if you have a culture like that, and I mean the culture in which bacteria will grow, just like a petri dish, if you create a petri dish like that and culture it, of course you are going to see the bacteria grow. If you create an environment in which bacteria can grow, it is going to explode like wildfire.

No wonder. It boggles my mind why he believes that what he is saying is not transparent to the American people. It certainly is transparent and evident in the polling numbers, because he has literally an approval rating in terms of the way he has handled this war that is below 30 percent now.

You would think that politically we would delight in that as Democrats. But it actually makes me sad, because how can a President be effective on any other issues when he clearly won't even be able to get the American people to listen to what he is saying because they are so soured on the direction that he has taken this country? That makes it very difficult for us to even reach out in a bipartisan way and attempt to work with him, because he has no credibility at all. He has his own party Members who are finding it very difficult to do anything in terms of their agenda domestically, and we don't see any outreach. He has created an impossible situation, Mr. MEEK.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. If I could just say, as we have increased the number, the incubation that a lot of our friends on the other side have supported, where more and more not only insurgents, but as Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ has said, more and more al Qaeda, more and more terrorists; so if you have a situation where you only have, for the sake of the example, 100 al Qaeda, and then we have the war, and now we have 1,000 al Qaeda, and then the President says well, we need to fight them over there or they are going to come over here, we have 900 more coming gunning for the United States because of the inability to actually execute this war.

□ 2030

To say we are making progress, and we have some amazing ability to find some of this information out, the number of hours per day of electricity in Baghdad prior to the war was between 16 and 24 hours a day. Now in May of 2007, the number of hours per day average 5.6 hours per day. That is feeding the problem that we are having over there.

Production of barrels per day prior to the war, 2.5 million. Production of barrels per day in May 2007, 2.16 million, so almost 400,000 less than prewar production.

Unemployment rate in Iraq went from 20 up to 40 percent in December of 2006. This problem has increased. I know our friends on the other side of the aisle continue to try to tell us there are improvements, but the statistics tell us otherwise.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Thank you, Mr. RYAN. Mr. RYAN, you gave one great floor speech when you came down and said these are the same people who told us we will be greeted as liberators. These are the same people who told us oil revenues will be used to pay for the war. These are the same people who told us this will be a sweeping mission. These are the same people that told us there were weapons of mass destruction. These are the same people that told us there was a connection between Saddam Hussein and al Qaeda. These are the same people that went on and on and on. You can go on YouTube and watch it. I remembered and watched it, and I thought it was one of your better speeches on the floor. I will reserve comment on how many you have made, but that is one of the better ones.

Mr. RYAN, it is very unfortunate that right now we are breeding terrorists, people that will dislike the United States of America for the rest of their lives. That wasn't our mission in Iraq, and that is the reason why, before the election, a majority of Democrats were saying, and some Republicans were saying, that we should redeploy our troops to the peripheral and not do the street patrols in Iraq.

How are we losing our troops? Going door to door, kicking in doors, riding down the streets. IEDs are blowing up and killing many of our men and women. They are not being killed in the training missions. I haven't heard one casualty, maybe there has been one, but I haven't heard of one casualty of any of our men and women training Iraqi troops in how to protect their country and how to protect their own streets.

Case in point, let me paint this picture because I think it is important as we debate this emergency supplemental. When you look at the fact that the U.S. troops with the flag on their shoulder kicking the door searching for the three that were missing, going door to door, those children, that son, that grandfather, that mother will say that the United States kicked my door in. How do we get to this point, I am innocent and we are laying on the floor at 2 a.m. with semiautomatic weapons pointed at my family? Those individuals end up listening to the rhetoric of radical terrorist groups that are saying, they are not here for you, they are here to terrorize your family.

That is why we have to get out of the position of this door-to-door and street-to-street combat in Iraq when the Iraqis themselves should be carrying out that mission. It is so very, very important.

Like I said, six emergency supplementals, half a trillion dollars of

blank checks to this administration; no more. That is the reason why we are having benchmarks. That is why the White House has to come here and report to Congress.

I heard one of the Republican Members say we are supposed to receive reports. Well, that is a revelation. Here we are in charge of the Federal purse. We are responsible. We are the board members, if you want to put it that way, over the U.S. Treasury, and all of a sudden now many of our Republican Members are saying, yes, we are supposed to receive reports.

That should have been happening from the beginning. Maybe then the death toll wouldn't be what it is, and maybe we may have more coalition partners in this effort if it was run right from the beginning versus send us a blank check and don't ask any questions.

So the President can say what he wants to say. Memorial Day is coming up. We have men and women who have laid down and sacrificed. Many of them have paid the ultimate sacrifice. Many of the men and women that fought with them remember those who paid the ultimate sacrifice, and still we are here playing games with the democracy that they allow us to celebrate today, under what we may call kingdom politics of the President feeling that you shouldn't ask any questions; I trust my advisors, and I trust the generals in the field.

Well, I trust the generals in the field, too. And I have a level of trust for the administration, but the track record doesn't support don't ask any questions; we don't need any strings attached; you are trying to take my power away. We are not trying to take power away, we are just trying to make sure that the Federal tax dollar is spent in an appropriate way and we save as many American lives as possible.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, no one, Democrat or Republican, should apologize for what is going on right now in Washington, DC. I think many of our friends who believe we should be out of Iraq tomorrow, we should send every plane we can possibly send, take our troops out, redeploy our troops and just leave it as is, there is a process in doing that. We are going through that process right now. A lot of it is very painful.

Some say, why are you giving the President another opportunity to continue this war and continue to fight this war? Haven't you learned over the last 5 years that the strategy they are using is a combat strategy, not a diplomatic strategy, not making sure there are benchmarks on the Iraqi Government, and they had that opportunity.

I encourage, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, when we do get a bill on the floor, we do have a number of Republicans voting on behalf of this next supplemental, and a number of Democrats voting on behalf of the supplemental. And those that feel the war should end tomorrow should understand that this is a major accomplishment in the effort in taking away what the President has had for the last 5 years: a blank check, do as you want to do, Donald Rumsfeld and all of them.

As Mr. RYAN says, as I close on this point, the real issue here is the truth will surface. Some of it has already surfaced, and a lot of it will continue to surface as we learn more about what the Congress was not told and as we learn more about what we were told incorrectly. And as Americans reflect back on this time, they will see some of the worst misinformation and secrecy at a time of war and a time of economic strain on this country.

We have borrowed more from foreign nations than we have ever borrowed in the history of the Republic; and still, we have Members standing here asking what is wrong. Well, the reason we are in the majority on this side of the aisle, we are very busy leading on behalf of the American people, is a perfect example of what is wrong.

The American people know what is going on. I am not talking about a bunch of proud Democrats. I am talking about Independents and Republicans and those who have never voted before in their life, they decided to get involved and vote. If this was just about politics, we would just go home or be in our offices doing the things we need to do for tomorrow, and let the Democratic majority get bigger and bigger because we would lead the Republicans to doing and saying what they have been doing all along.

But this is bigger than politics. This is about our democracy. This is about our finances here in the country, and this is about saving U.S. lives that are in harm's way right now when we can work out a better plan and force the Iraqi Government to take the responsibility of their streets, take the responsibility of their patrols, and make sure that they meet benchmarks just like every U.S. mayor has to meet with Federal dollars, just like every U.S. Governor has to meet when they are spending Federal dollars. Just like every U.S. agency should be accountable to the taxpayer dollars, the Iraqi Government and those in the Iraqi Government should be just as accountable and greater with the U.S. taxpayer dollars.

I don't want to get all emotional, like Mr. RYAN said, but I can't help but do it when I think about Memorial Day coming up and when I think about the veterans' benefits that we have in the emergency supplemental.

We have some folks saying we shouldn't have any domestic spending in here, and we have troops coming back and still waiting a long time to get their service. It was the Democrats that put forth the dollars to make sure that Walter Reed was repaired. That is also in this emergency supplemental. We will talk a little more about that as we move along.

I know we are going to talk about gas prices in the time left. Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, I think we should commend every American for being focused on this issue of Iraq and encourage a discourse.

I was out behind the Chamber today on the balcony, and I noticed a person out there on a bullhorn saying, ''Stop the war.'' I wasn't bothered by that because the men and women that we are going to celebrate on Monday fought for that lady to be out there saying what she was saying.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. That is what it is all about.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. That is right. That is what it is all about. And this is not a kingdom, this is a democracy, we have to tolerate one another now and then, but we have to make sure that we make sound decisions on behalf of the Republic.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, I yield to you.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Thank you, Mr. MEEK.

I have to tell you, I have thought recently when people come up to me, you would think that there are people that would say, DEBBIE, KENDRICK, TIM, what does it really matter? We have been spending billions of dollars for the last 5 years. We are over there in Iraq. Yeah, the American people are opposed to this, and we are in a pretty bad situation over there, and there doesn't appear to be any end in sight, but how does this affect my life? At the end of the day I am eating, my children are eating, they are going to school. Iraq is far away, and it is not impacting me whether we continue the war in Iraq or don't continue the war in Iraq.

Gradually day by day, the percentage of people that don't feel that way, that get it, that understand what the impact is, not just on the perception of America in the world, but what the domestic day-to-day impact is, is growing.

Besides the President's popularity ratings, which are in the toilet, we have a situation here where people are realizing, for example, that our National Guard is unable to be 100 percent ready to take care of us and do the job that we actually created the National Guard to do.

Mr. MEEK, next Friday is June 1, the official start of hurricane season, even though we have had activity a few weeks in advance of the beginning of hurricane season. And yesterday NOAA came out with their prediction on how busy this storm season is likely to be, and their prediction is 10 to 14 named storms, and a good chunk to be in the category 3, 4 or 5 category.

We have a National Guard that has equipment that is still over in Iraq, and when it does come back, it comes back in such terrible shape, it isn't going to be ready to take care of Americans who are in need after the aftermath of a natural disaster. That is a direct result of our inability to extricate ourselves from Iraq, our inability to hold the Iraqi Government accountable, to establish benchmarks, to make

sure that there is some progress made, and that they don't have an open-ended commitment and a blank check even after the Iraqi Parliament, Mr. RYAN and Mr. MEEK, have indicated that they don't want us there anymore.

There was a resolution that came out of the Iraq Parliament that indicated they didn't want us there. There is an incredible frustration among the Iraqi people about our being there. There is a worldwide concern about our presence there; and, most importantly, the American people want us to bring the troops home so that we can refocus the attention that we are paying in Iraq on training those troops to stand up on their own and for the Iraqi Government to function on their own.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. I have a question for Mr. RYAN.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. And, Mr. MEEK, I would have segued into the issue of our skyrocketing gas prices.

□ 2045

Mr. MEEK of Florida. We will.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Chief cardinal, too, so if she wants to talk about gas, I want to talk about gas.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. You know what they say. They have Democrats and Republicans and members of the Appropriations Committee, and I happen to be on the floor with two of them. One is a cardinal and one thinks that he's actually running the country, but I would say that as we continue to talk about this, especially in Armed Services, and Chairman Ike Skelton has done an excellent job in the defense authorization bill, getting us to a readiness stage where we can deal with the issues, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, that you outlined.

These are very important issues, especially the Gulf Coast States or any State that has a, Kansas for instance, it has a natural disaster or have a disaster where they need the National Guard to have the equipment that they need, it's in that authorization bill, and I want to thank not only my colleagues on the committee but also Mr. SKELTON for all of his hard work on the authorization end.

But I think it's also important for us to note that our mission, we talk about redeployment. We're talking about redeployment and deploying a diplomatic corps to work with the Iraqi Government and have a surge in diplomacy or an escalation in diplomacy. Why can't we get other countries to join us? Well, why would they want to join something that is going to create more terrorism or terrorists in their country? That's what we're doing, and so I think it's important for everyone to understand that.

And I share that with my constituents when I go out to speak to them. We're in here having this meeting here, we're sitting in this living room, and someone kicks in the door and come in and do a security search; how would you feel? Who would be responsible for that? You would be outraged.

Iraq is not the United States, by far, but I want to share with you that many of our men and women are following the duty that we've asked them to carry out, and they trust us that we will ask the questions that we should ask here in Washington, DC and carry it out.

I just want you to respond to that because I know that you have some words of wisdom, especially on that end, in all seriousness, because it's just simple common sense to do the things we should be doing. It does not take a rocket scientist, and you don't have to be a four-star general to understand that what we're doing is not working. And to say let's keep doing it and declassifying information and saying this is the reason why I did this, this is the reason why I did that, it still does not equate to why we're still doing the same thing and expecting different results.

I will use this analogy before I yield to you. It's almost like going to the refrigerator and taking out a carton of milk, taking a smell of the milk and saying, wow, it's sour, I will put it back in and maybe it'll be fresh tomorrow. It works against logic.

And what's happening now is that the strategy that the White House has works against logic, but unfortunately, it would be okay if it was just an individual, but it's dealing with U.S. lives. I know all of us want to save lives, but we have to make sure that we do everything we can to send a message to the White House, and also man up and woman up here in Congress, and be leaders in that direction towards safety and accountability and moving the Iraqi issue in a new direction.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. All we really have to do is talk to some of the soldiers who are over there and who have come back, which I'm sure most of us have. And when they explain what's going on on the ground, it's mind-boggling to think in cities of 140, 150, 160, 170,000 we've got American troops, for example, on the west side of the city, with 1,000 Iraqi troops on the west side of the city, and 1,000 on the east side and 1,000 Iraqis; 2,000, 4,000 total for the whole city, 2,000 of the 4,000 being American. How are you going to control a city of 170,000 people? And a surge of an extra 1,000 or 2,000 is not going to make a difference. It's going to make it worse.

This surge is not the first time we've tried this. This is like the fourth time, and every time that we've tried a surge in certain areas there has been an increase in the number of daily attacks, not a decrease, because it incites the area, and you still don't have enough.

And we've all said from the beginning, if we went in there with 3- or 400,000 troops, where we were able, after the statue fell, to secure the State, to secure the country of Iraq, that would have been a different story, and all the looting was going on and the museums and everything, and then Secretary Rumsfeld said, well, they're just blowing off steam. At that point, you lost control and it went all downhill from there.

But my point is that you talk to these soldiers who are on the ground, and they see that they can't handle this situation the way it is and that the only way to do it is through diplomacy, is to try to patch up some of these political problems, which gets worsened because of the innocent civilians that are dying in Iraq, which makes them not like us.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Like happens to you sometimes, my blood is starting to boil because all that it takes, I'm sitting here listening to this back and forth that we're going through here and example after example about the reasons for the American people's outrage, for our outrage, for our persistence in trying to move this iceberg and get some progress and end the blank check and establish some accountability.

You know, it's very simple. All the President has to do is be a diplomat himself and agree to come to the table and compromise and negotiate and end the my-way-or-the-highway politics. He is not king. Yes, he was elected President, but he was elected to one branch of the government, which, the way our government is set up, is designed to work coequally with this branch of government.

He has disdained the legislative branch, and this is the representative body of the United States of America. The people who elect us elect us to be their voice. They elect one person, an executive, and they elect 435 of us so we can have a collective diversity of opinion and that the result in terms of the outcome of policy is a combination of that diversity. And he has no respect for it, and that's why his numbers are where they are. That's why the support for this President, the bottom has dropped out of it.

And that's why over the next several months we will push this iceberg with all our might, and I can feel it, that their ability to continue unabated with the disdain and disregard that this administration has shown for the American people and our opinion, it will come to an end and it's going to come to an end in a fashion that we will help bring about the change that the American people ask for. And that is the only way that this is going to happen, if we continue to fight, we continue to push hard, we make sure that we go out to our communities like we will all do next week.

I know I'm having a town hall meeting next Wednesday in my district to talk specifically about the war in Iraq and how people feel about it, get their feedback, talk about the other issues that are important to them, because people are tired. They're tired of the war. They're sick of the deaths. They're sick of the death toll, and they want us to be able to talk about how we're going to expand health care.

We have the SCHIP program that we need to reauthorize later this year. We

have 9 million kids that we need to find the money to cover. We have to make sure we can reduce the cost of health care for small businesses. We have a deficit that has ballooned out of control, that we're trying to get a handle on, no thanks to our friends on the other side of the aisle.

We have a lot to do, a long to-do list, and it would be great if the President would just recognize that we all need to work together and end his disrespect for the American people and for the democratic process because it's gone on for far too long. And we have a lot at stake here.

And I just have reached my level of frustration. I know my constituents have, and that's why I'm proud of our caucus because we have hung together. We have stuck together and pushed and pushed and pushed each other so that we can get behind a policy that not all of us are 100 percent behind. Everybody didn't get their way with the legislation that we put forward with benchmarks and timelines. But you know what? That's what this representative body that we were elected to is all about. It's about compromise and it's about standing up for the people who don't have a voice. They elected us to be their voice and I have been very proud to be a Member of this institution, really proud of our Democratic leadership.

And I'm just hopeful that we can get beyond this war and start talking about things like the $3.22 a gallon that our constituents are paying, on average, for their gas as we approach the summer season as well.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. In a very practical way, we're pushing. I mean, I think this Congress has done everything that it can do, but if we're not getting any help from our Republican friends, a couple have shown great courage to try to end this thing, but not getting the support where we can override the President's veto.

Now, this is the stark reality that is frustrating for all of us, the Speaker I know for sure, and all of us, is that we're trying to end this war. The first bill we passed had a hard deadline. The second bill we passed had a goal to get out. The President still vetoed that, Mr. Speaker, and we're trying the best we can within this institution to move this iceberg, as you say.

But the President consistently vetoes these bills that we're trying to pass. And so now we're to the point where we've got to figure out what's the best we can do, and it looks like the best we can do is try to get him to at least have these benchmarks that are in there, report back in September, July and September, with some of this, and get our veterans the support and the funding they need.

Nobody likes that. I don't like it. I don't even know if I'm going to vote for it, to be quite honest. I'm so frustrated with the President at this point, but we've got decisions to make as to can we take a step in the right direction even though it's not as far as we want to go.

But I think this is a call, Mr. Speaker, for the citizens of this country to step out and step up, not the ones that we see wearing the pink, not the ones that we see with the bull horn, but if we're going to end this war, it's going to be average people who support our philosophy but have yet to say anything, and not in your district or my district but in districts where their representatives come down here and support the President.

You can't sit on the sidelines on this one, not as a politician, but as a citizen you've got to come out here and help us do this, and I think there needs to be a direct call to a action.

Just to let you know, Mr. Speaker, we are sending a letter to the U.S Conference of Catholic Bishops from me and several other Members, asking them to reengage the war issue; that this is the issue of our day and that they need to be more active and they need to get involved in their local parishes and demand that their citizens get off the pews and start participating and getting legislators to move off the dime. We've got to do this by September, or in the fall while we're beginning the process for 2008. Or we're going to continue to be here and legislators are going to continue to get away with voting to support the President when 71 percent of the American people don't think he's handling this job properly.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. I think you are right. I think also, as the summer begins and then wears on and we have an opportunity in the summertime to go home and spend some time in our districts and interact with our constituents, that the issues that pile up, at we're going to have a difficult time dealing with, because we are still mired in this hopeless war in Iraq, are going to continue to fray the patience of the American people, and I think our friends on the other side of the aisle will hear from their constituents.

I keep wanting to move a little bit and talk about gas prices, and I'm chomping at the bit to do that because you've heard me talk about this before. I'm one of those minivan moms. I drive my kids around in my minivan to soccer games and to school. And last summer when we were frustrated with the rise in gas prices, I remember exploding on the floor here talking about how it cost over $55 to fill up my gas tank. And then, of course, conveniently, right before the election, the prices came down again. I'm sure it had nothing to do with the fact that an election was imminent, and I'm sure the oil industry didn't do anything deliberate to ensure that that would happen.

But amazingly it is now May and those gas prices have not just crept but leapt back up, and I want to just share with you the timeline that has existed since this administration took over in the executive branch.

We are now paying more than double for gas than when President Bush first took office. This chart will illustrate that the average price per gallon on January 22, 2001, at the beginning of the Bush administration, was $1.47, and then as of May 21, 2007, just a couple days ago, the average price per gallon today is $3.22.

Now, what that means is that amounts to real money. When you're talking about it costing 20 or so dollars to fill up your tank or $25 to fill up your tank, that's a manageable amount of money.

□ 2100

But when you get to $50, $50, Mr. MURPHY, is an amount that I think about. I mean, when I am faced with paying a bill that's $50, that's real money to me. To me, that gives me pause. I have to make a decision, normally, about other things unrelated to things that I absolutely have to have like gas, about whether or not I am going to actually spend $50. Do I have the money? What else will I not be able to buy if I spend $50 on this item?

Gas is not like that. Gas is something that's not optional. You have to drive your kids to school. You have to make sure you can get your car to the grocery store. If you don't go to the grocery store because you don't have gas, your family doesn't eat. If your kid is sick and you can't fill the gas tank, then you can't take them to the doctor, and they get sicker. How are you going to get them to the emergency room if they get so sick that you need that kind of health care? Those are real problems that Americans face when gas prices reach that point.

What we are doing in the Democratic Caucus and as we continue to fight to move this country in a new direction is we are working on an energy package that we will bring to the floor by July 4, an energy independence package that will ensure that we can crack down on price gouging, like the legislation that we passed off this floor yesterday, that we can really start to respond to the oil cartel and make sure that they are pursued for the antitrust violations that they engage in, and that we really invest in alternative energy.

The President's remarks during the State of the Union last year were just words. When he referenced his desire to see America end our addiction to foreign oil, nice words, but no action to speak of. Nothing that I can see in any policy is reflective of the words that we heard in this Chamber during that State of the Union. We, on the other hand, are going to make a difference.

Mr. MURPHY.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Thank you for letting me come down here for just a couple of seconds and add my voice to the chorus here.

You are absolutely right. When you are talking about something as essential as gas for people driving to and from work bringing their kids back and forth to school, it's not an optional expenditure. Now, in Connecticut we love to say there is another choice, people

could get on some train or get on some bus, but they don't exist. They don't exist because unfortunately in some parts of this country we have neglected our mass transit infrastructure, and we have forced people to rely on their vehicles to get themselves around.

I just saw a statistic today that said in Waterbury, Connecticut, in the heart of my district, that one in six people in public housing are spending 66 percent of their income on rent, 66 percent of their income on rent. There is not much left for food. There is not much left for medicine. We know they have to pay more for medicine because less of them have health care. There is certainly not a lot left for transportation costs. This is hitting at the heart of the American middle class, at the heart of the American working class.

In just a second we will show a chart that would suggest that the reason for these increased prices at the pump is certainly not that the oil companies are crying poverty, certainly not because the bottom lines of American oil companies and national oil companies are hurting. It is hard to understand with the record profits, year after year. The last 3 or 4 years, every year, comes new record profits for these oil companies. How on Earth can we continue to see these prices go up?

I just want to say one more thing that was touched on. We have to talk about what national independence means, dependence on oil means for national security as well, over 170,000 barrels of oil from Saudi Arabia in 2006 and other OPEC countries. If you want to talk about why we can't bring a country like Saudi Arabia to the table, have a conversation about why they are creating a society in which their most marginalized members feel that their only resort is to extremism and violence; if you want to find out why we can't hold some of these Middle Eastern countries accountable for the societies that they are creating and the terrorism they are helping fuel, it's because we rely on their oil. It's because in the end we can't make them angry, because if we do, they are going to cut off the food that our cars eat.

Now, energy independence is about lowering gas prices. Antitrust legislation, price-gouging legislation, is about getting to the heart of the problem for middle-class consumers and drivers, the prices at the pump. But ultimately we have to figure out how to walk away from some of these quagmires we are in with countries that provide oil to us. We have got to understand that energy independence is about doing the right thing for middle-class families, to minivan moms.

It is also about doing the right thing for national security. It's also making sure that my future kids and grandkids are going to grow up in a society that's safe. That's why it's a triple whammy. Energy independence is about lowering energy prices, it's about cleaning up our environment, and it's also about national security. That's why I had to drag Mr. RYAN up to the rostrum to allow me get down here and say my 2 cents on this.

This is what the Democratic majority is going to deliver. It's going to go from a time when we could complain about gas prices and not see much action at all from Congress to a time now where we are still going to complain about it, but we are actually going to have a group of people here in the House and Senate and step up to the plate and do something about it.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. We are wrapping up in a few minutes, but I have got this gas tank replica here, which is pretty ancient-looking. It's actually decrepit itself. I bring it with me to the floor because it is the only explanation that I can find as to why our good friends on the other side of the aisle and this President seem totally unresponsive in trying to address this problem and work with us.

My only explanation is that perhaps they don't pump their own gas, or perhaps the last time they actually filled their own tank, and saw that ticker, and realized how much it cost to fill up a tank is when gas pumps look like this. That's my only explanation, given this is the 30-something Working Group. Maybe it has been since the 1950s that they filled their own tank, unlike the people that we represent, who are trying, struggling to fill their tank every day.

We are going to continue to back up our words with action. I look forward to working with my colleagues in the 30-something Working Group under the leadership of our Speaker, NANCY PELOSI.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Very good. As we close, I know that we have our Web site that we need to give out. Well, we don't have time, but let me just do this. Mr. MURPHY talked about this.

These are another record year for oil company profits, in 2007, record profits, $30.2 billion they have been able to achieve, and $6.5 billion in 2002; and 2007, $30.2 billion. I think those are pretty good years for oil companies. It seems to happen, and I am not a Member of Congress with a conspiracy theory, but, with the Bush administration and the White House, looked like oil companies have done better than many Americans have done.

As I talk to my friends and those that have F–10 pickup trucks, what have you, it's costing upwards of $80 just for a small business to run that truck, which is going to end up costing the U.S. taxpayers even more when they go for goods and services. We do have our Web site, and we will give that real quick, and we will close.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. We encourage you, any of the Members, anyone listening, to sign onto our Web site. The charts that we have been describing tonight are up on that Web site. You can reach us, e-mail us, at 30somethingdems@mail.house.gov, and you can also reach our Web site by signing on to www.speaker.gov and look for the 30-something link, and you can find all the things that we are working on in the 30-something Working Group.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Thank you very much. I want to thank you and Mr. RYAN.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you for your time here on floor. It's always an honor for us to address the House of Representatives.

COMMUNICATION FROM CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut) laid before the House the following communication from the chairman of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure; which was read and, without objection, referred to the Committee on Appropriations:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE,
Washington, DC, May 18, 2007.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
Cannon House Office Building,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER PELOSI: I am writing to inform you that the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure approved thirteen survey resolutions for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at a Full Committee Markup on May 2, 2007.

Pursuant to the provisions of 33 US.C. §542, I have enclosed the resolutions for your review.

With all best wishes.

Sincerely,

JAMES L. OBERSTAR,
Chairman.

RESOLUTION—DOCKET 2768—MOSS LANDING HARBOR-ELKHORN SLOUGH, MONTEREY COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

Resolved by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the United States House of Representatives, That the Secretary of the Army review the report of the Chief of Engineers on Moss Landing Harbor, California, published as Senate Document 50, 79th Congress, 1st Session, and other pertinent reports, to determine whether modifications to the recommendations contained therein are advisable at the present time in the interest of navigation and environmental restoration, with emphasis on the health of Elkhorn Slough, and other related purposes.

RESOLUTION—DOCKET 2769—NEW HAVEN HARBOR, CONNECTICUT

Resolved by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the United States House of Representatives, That the Secretary of the Army review the report of the Chief of Engineers on the New Haven Harbor, Connecticut, published as House Document 517, 79th Congress, 2nd Session, and other pertinent reports, to determine whether modifications of the recommendations contained therein are advisable at the present time in the interest of navigation, sediment control, environmental preservation and restoration, and other related purposes at New Haven Harbor, Connecticut.

RESOLUTION—DOCKET 2770—MERAMEC RIVER, BRUSH CREEK, PACIFIC, MISSOURI

Resolved by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the United

States House of Representatives, That the Secretary of the Army review the report of the Chief of Engineers on the Mississippi River between Coon Rapids Dam, Minnesota, and the mouth of the Ohio River published in House Document 669, 76th Congress, 3rd Session, and other pertinent reports, to determine whether modifications to the recommendations contained therein are advisable at the present time, in the interest of flood control, environmental restoration, and related purposes along the Mississippi River and its Tributaries with particular reference to the Meramec River in the vicinity of Pacific, Missouri, including the counties of Franklin, Jefferson, and St. Louis.

RESOLUTION—DOCKET 2771—ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

Resolved by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the United States House of Representatives, That the Secretary of the Army review the report of the Chief of Engineers on the Mississippi River between Coon Rapids Dam, Minnesota, and the mouth of the Ohio River published in House Document 669, 76th Congress, 3rd Session, and other pertinent reports, to determine whether modifications to the recommendations contained therein are advisable at the present time, for the purpose of reconstructing the facilities of the St. Louis Flood Protection System, Missouri along the Mississippi River in the city of St. Louis and St. Louis County, Missouri to return the pump stations, gravity drains, pressure sewer emergency closure gatewells and other pertinent features to their original degree of protection.

RESOLUTION—DOCKET 2772—ESOPUS AND PLATTEKILL WATERSHEDS, GREENE AND ULSTER COUNTIES, NEW YORK

Resolved by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the United States House of Representatives, That the Secretary of the Army review the report of the Chief of Engineers on the New York and New Jersey Channels, published as House Document 133, 74th Congress, 1st Session; the New York and New Jersey Harbor Entrance Channels and Anchorage Areas, published as Senate Document 45, 84th Congress, 1st Session; and the New York Harbor, NY Anchorage Channel, published as House Document 18, 71st Congress, 2nd Session, and other pertinent reports, to determine whether modifications to the recommendations contained therein are advisable in the interest of navigation, streambank stabilization, flood damage reduction, floodplain management, water quality, sediment control, environmental preservation and restoration, and other related purposes in Esopus and Plattekill Watersheds, New York.

RESOLUTION—DOCKET 2773—HASHAMOMUCK COVE, SOUTHOLD, NEW YORK

Resolved by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the United States House of Representatives, That the Secretary of the Army review the report of the Chief of Engineers on the North Shore of Long Island, Suffolk County, New York, published as House Document 198, 92nd Congress, 2nd Session, and other pertinent reports, to determine whether modifications to the recommendations contained therein are advisable in the interest of navigation, streambank stabilization, flood damage reduction, floodplain management, water quality, sediment control, environmental preservation and restoration, and other related purposes in Hashamomuck Cove and Tributaries, New York.

RESOLUTION—DOCKET 2774—MANHATTAN BEACH AND SHEEPSHEAD BAY, CONEY ISLAND, NEW YORK

Resolved by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the United States House of Representatives, That the Secretary of the Army review the report of the Chief of Engineers on the Atlantic Coast of New York City from Rockaway Inlet to Norton Point, published in House Document 96–23 and other pertinent reports, to determine whether modifications to the recommendations contained therein are advisable at the present time, in the interest of storm damage reduction, floodplain management environmental preservation and restoration, and other allied purposes at Manhattan Beach and Sheepshead Bay, New York.

RESOLUTION—DOCKET 2775—PECONIC BAY WATERSHED, SUFFOLK COUNTY, NEW YORK

Resolved by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the United States House of Representatives, That the Secretary of the Army review the report of the Chief of Engineers on the Long Island Intracoastal Waterway from East Rockaway Inlet to Great Peconic Bay, published as House Document 181, 75th Congress, 1st Session, and other pertinent reports, to determine whether modifications to the recommendations contained therein are advisable in the interest of environmental restoration and preservation, streambank stabilization, flood damage reduction, floodplain management, water quality, and other related purposes in the Peconic Bay Watershed, New York.

RESOLUTION—DOCKET 2776—RONDOUT WATERSHED, SULLIVAN AND ULSTER COUNTIES, NEW YORK,

Resolved by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the United States House of Representatives, That the Secretary of the Army review the report of the Chief of Engineers on the New York and New Jersey Channels, published as House Document 133, 74th Congress, 1st Session; the New York and New Jersey Harbor Entrance Channels and Anchorage Areas, published as Senate Document 45, 84th Congress, 1st Session; and the New York Harbor, NY Anchorage Channel, published as House Document 18, 71st Congress, 2nd Session, and other pertinent reports, to determine whether modifications to the recommendations contained therein are advisable in the interest of navigation, streambank stabilization, flood damage reduction, floodplain managment, water quality, sediment control, environmental preservation and restoration, and other related purposes in Rondout Watershed, New York.

RESOLUTION—DOCKET 2777—KEY WEST HARBOR, FLORIDA

Resolved by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the United States House of Representatives, That the Secretary of the Army review the report of the Chief of Engineers on Key West Harbor, Florida, published in Senate Document 106, 87th Congress, 2nd Session, and other pertinent reports, to determine whether modifications to the recommendations contained therein are advisable with particular reference to widening the navigation project at the present time at Key West Harbor.

RESOLUTION—DOCKET 2778—CHOWAN RIVER BASIN, VIRGINIA AND NORTH CAROLINA

Resolved by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the United States House of Representatives, That the Secretary of the Army review the report of the Chief of Engineers on Chowan River, North Carolina, and Blackwater River, Virginia, published as House Document 101, 76th Congress, 1st Session, and other pertinent reports, to determine whether modifications to the recommendations contained therein are advisable at the present time with particular references toward flood damage reduction, environmental restoration, navigation, erosion control, and associated water resources issues in the Chowan River basin, Virginia and North Carolina.

RESOLUTION—DOCKET 2779—WESTCHESTER COUNTY STREAMS, WESTCHESTER COUNTY, NEW YORK

Resolved by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the United States House of Representatives, That the Secretary of the Army review the report of the Chief of Engineers on the Streams in Westchester County, New York, and the Mamaroneck and Sheldrake Rivers Basin and Byram River Basin, New York and Connecticut published as House Document 98–112, and other pertinent reports on the Hutchinson, Mamaroneck and Sheldrake Rivers to determine whether modifications to the recommendations contained therein are advisable at the present time in the interest of water resources development, including flood damage reduction, storm damage reduction, environmental restoration, navigation, watershed management, water supply, and other allied purposes.

RESOLUTION—DOCKET 2780—ROARING FORK RIVER, BASALT, COLORADO

Resolved by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the United States House of Representatives, in accordance with the Flood Control Act of 1938, That the Secretary of the Army study the feasibility of and alternatives for Roaring Fork River, in the vicinity of the Town of Basalt, Eagle and Pitkin Counties, Colorado, to determine whether modifications to the recommendations contained therein are advisable at the present time in the interest of flood damage reduction, environmental restoration, recreational, and other related purposes along the Roaring Fork River, Colorado.

There was no objection.

REPUBLICAN STUDY COMMITTEE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. NEUGEBAUER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Mr. Speaker, I was listening with interest this evening about all of the things that are going, supposedly, not well in Iraq. So I hope to spend the next hour with some of my colleagues talking about the things that are going well. I thought it was interesting as the other side was talking about how they support our troops, and are thankful for the wonderful job they are doing, yet they have made them wait 107 days for much-needed resources to do the job that we have asked them to do.

We are going to talk about that later on this evening, of all of the things that our young men and women have

had to wait for as we have been playing a political game, or the other side, I would say, has been playing the political game, and our young men and women have been doing and continue to do the professional job that they have been doing for so many times.

I have been to Iraq three times myself, and tonight I am joined by some of my colleagues that have also been over there. We are going to talk about this war, because it's a real war. I think some people try to minimize what is going on in this global war on terrorism, but, in fact, it is a real war. We will talk about where this war is being fought. It's not just being fought in Iraq and Afghanistan. We are also going to talk about the fact that Iraq is a central front for the war on terrorism.

Finally, we are also going to talk a lot about the progress that's being made over there. General Pace was in Congress today briefing Members on what's going on in Iraq and brought forth a very positive report in many ways.

I look forward to this time. I am certainly glad that some of my friends on the other side weren't around when we fought the Revolutionary War, because it might have been too expensive, or we might have lost too many lives. What we do know is freedom and democracy has never come cheap. It comes with a price.

We enjoy the freedoms. In fact, we enjoy the freedom to be on the floor tonight with our colleagues because of price that many have paid that have gone before us. I am very proud of them. Every time that I have had the opportunity to travel and be with our soldiers, it makes me proud to be an American.

I would like to recognize my good friend from New Mexico, my neighbor Mr. PEARCE. Mr. PEARCE has also been to Iraq on three different occasions. He has seen many of the things that I have been alluding to. I would ask him to talk about his perspective of what is going on in the global war on terrorism.

Mr. PEARCE. I would just remind the Members of the Chamber that we are a part of the Republican Study Committee, that's the RSC here. We have the Web site, www.house.gov/hensarling/rsc. So take a look at the things that we are talking about, the things that we all believe in. It's the conservative arm of the Republican Party.

I think the first thing that we would want to talk about is basically what is happening in Iraq. If the gentleman doesn't mind, I would like to use one of the charts here. If we take a look at the charts, these are reconstruction projects, but also they mirror very closely the conflict, the different fights that are going on.

If you look at this whole part of the country, this entire section is actually pretty secure. This al-Anbar province out in the west has been the subject of a lot of discussion. Baghdad, of course, is very near the center part. You can see where we are spending more money on reconstruction there and up north. We can see, also, that if we have the reports of firefights, the reports of IEDs, we would see the same sort of clustering there.

People ask, well, why did the British leave? The British were serving in the southern section here. The British actually had secured their area that had been turned over to the Iraqis.

I think all of our troop commanders are telling us that when we have Iraq secure, that when the Iraqi forces are in charge of their own security, both police and then the army, then we are going to see troops start coming home. That's exactly what happened.

Now, the risk that we run, I would cover that just briefly, Iran touches on the eastern side of the country. If we pull out, Iran will take over these massive oil fields in the southern part of Iraq. That's going to destabilize even more the price of gasoline. Our colleagues were just talking about it. Really, the price of gasoline is quite simple. I majored in economics in college, and I did so because economics is very easy. It's just got two moving parts: supply and demand.

□ 2115

If you will consider the demand for our product, the demand for gasoline, we have 300 million people today. That is significantly more than what we had in the 1950s when the price of gas was low. So our demand is increasingly higher, but also our supply is becoming more restricted.

Then we look at the worldwide picture, and you understand that the Chinese, if you overlay the price of oil, the price of natural gas, the price of gasoline with the demand in China for the last 20 years, you would see that the demand of the Chinese is almost exactly mirroring, is exactly causing our high price of gasoline right now.

There is a compelling fact today; we heard the same statistics that just a couple years ago the price of gasoline was actually $2.47, today it is about $3.29. And, again, the law of supply and demand, the Middle East, that OPEC group is actually cutting their exports. They are trimming back their exports. They are cutting the supply. It is driving the price up. It is actually quite simple. Our friends on the other side of the aisle in charge of governing the Nation really should stop and consider these two moving parts, supply and demand. They have got two hands, maybe they could write one on one hand and write one on the other hand and try to keep them organized, because they make this far more complex than what it actually is.

So what we are doing in Iraq is trying to stabilize the Middle East, because I would guarantee everyone in the Chamber that if Iraq fails, if we leave Iraq, Iraq falls. We were just in Israel about 2 months ago, and the Israelis said that you are going to lose Saudi Arabia. That is, the terrorists are going to go in and topple that regime, they are going to go in and take over that government. Now, Saudi Arabia has about 60 percent of the world's known reserves; that is the reserves of normal petroleum. So that would destabilize between losing the production in Iraq, losing the production in Saudi Arabia. And, don't forget Kuwait, because the general assumption is that Kuwait and Jordan would fall. Then you see a picture where the worldwide oil market would destabilize.

At that point I think that we would really have to worry about the security of the entire world economy. And if you worry about the security of the world economy, you also have to worry about social stability, because the terrorists know they are not going to beat us militarily. That has never been their attempt. Their attempt is to destabilize us economically. That was the reason they hit the World Trade Center in 1993. They came back and hit it in 2001. And they knew that if they could strike at that vibrant nerve center of the U.S. economy, they would destabilize us economically. If they destabilize us economically, they destabilize us politically.

So right now we are finding that actually our surge of troops, those troops are mostly in the Baghdad area, because how goes Baghdad, that is how goes Iraq. The governing structure is in Baghdad. If we secure Baghdad, then we secure Iraq. If we do not secure Baghdad, we do not secure Iraq.

We put about 110,000, 120,000 troops into Baghdad. We are also joining those up with about 100,000 Iraqi troops that are there already. Both of those numbers are increasing, and I will tell you that we are hearing already that the violence in Baghdad itself is beginning to diminish significantly. Again, we can take some of the instability that is moving out to the outlying provinces if we first secure the capital, if we can have those essential government functions that cause the people to believe that their society is intact, and that even though there are difficulties that they can get their garbage service, they can get their water service or whatever. Those are the underlying factors that we are seeing playing right now in the troop surge.

I think that everyone believes by September or October, we are going to know the outcome of the surge. It doesn't mean we will know the outcome of the battle, it doesn't mean we will know the outcome of the war. But I think that it is essential that we fund our troops, that we quit playing games.

We have consistently asked our leaders, the majority leaders, if you do not like the war, that is a credible position. Just come to the floor, have the vote about withdrawing the troops. Do not play games with the funding. Do not play games with our troops in harm's way.

But they refuse to have that vote. Instead, what they do is they put the money here and they put conditions.

Now, I know that college football coaches and pro football coaches get fired every day. It is because they become too predictable. Their offense is too well known. When an offense is well known, the defense knows exactly where to play. Now, our friends on the other side of the aisle want us to give our playbook; they want us to put into legislation the benchmarks that will determine if we go or leave, if we come home from Iraq or if we stay in Iraq. And we will tell you, that simply tells our opponents where to go to defeat us. If the benchmarks are in writing, then that is going to give our playbook to the opposition.

We as the American Congress, we as the United States Congress, owe it to the men and women in uniform, who are in harm's way, to support our troops or to please bring them home.

I was in Vietnam at a period of time when the Nation began to turn its back on its troops. I was in Vietnam at a time when they began to play games with the funding. I was in Vietnam during the time that Jane Fonda went to the North and gave aid and comfort to the enemy. I will tell you that I have personal experience that this is not the way that we want to treat our young men and women who are in harm's way.

So we owe it to our troops to have the vote on the supplemental budget that we are discussing tonight, because the future of our country depends on it. But more than that, the lives of our young men and women rest today, today, on what we do.

So I yield back to the gentleman from Texas. I have other comments, but I see we have a lot of people here tonight. I thank him for the opportunity to speak and thank him for taking his leadership and giving leadership to this great subject, because it is the right thing for us to do. It is the right thing for America to do. It is the right and honorable thing for this Congress to do, to give the funding to our troops or bring them home. Those are the two choices we have in Congress. And I thank the gentleman.

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. I thank the gentleman from New Mexico. He brought a lot of insight to this discussion tonight. There is nothing better than, if you want to see what's going on, to go to the battlefield yourself.

What I was wondering with some of my colleagues this evening is the Democrats have made our troops sit and wait for 107 days to see if, in fact, they are going to fund the very resources that they need. And I have got to wonder how demoralizing that has to be when you get up every morning and you are putting yourself in harm's way for this great Nation of America, keeping America safe, and also helping liberate and begin to bring peace and democracy to another country, and how that must feel to know that your own home country is sitting over here and playing political games while you are doing the heavy lifting.

So I have to say to the young men and women that are in harm's way tonight that I am hopeful that this Democratic leadership will finally step up and do what they should do.

Before I yield to the next gentleman, I wanted to let the American people know what our young men and women have been waiting on. In this bill that we hopefully can pass this week is $8 billion for body armor, armored vehicles, and base security surveillance. In other words, these are the things that would help to keep them safe. Yet we have to wait 108 days for the Democrats to decide that they want to keep our troops safe. That just isn't right; $2.4 billion to help use some new technology and some things that we are learning about IEDs, which is one of the things over there that has caused so much damage and death and destruction in that country and harmed and injured, severely, many of our young men and women. And yet they have had to wait 108 days for these resources, for this Democratic Congress, this Democratic leadership, to give them the resources that they need.

Another important piece of this supplemental is the fact that $2.7 billion is allocated for updating our security and our surveillance and our intelligence. Let me tell you, today in Iraq and Afghanistan and all around the world, knowing where the bad guys are is a very important piece of how we defend this country and we prosecute the war on terrorism. Yet we have had to wait 108 days and counting for this leadership to do the right thing by our young men and women.

It is my honor and privilege now to recognize a fellow Texan, a former judge, a good friend, Congressman CARTER from Texas, who has also been to Iraq. I believe the gentleman has been three times, if I am correct.

Mr. CARTER. That is correct. And I thank the gentleman for yielding. As it turns out, we have got a whole room full of folks here that want to address this issue. But we talked earlier between you and our neighbor from New Mexico, and we have each been three times.

But let me point out that as Congressman PEARCE pointed out, the men and women that are in Iraq today, most of them are on their fourth rotation over there. Many of those people have been there four times, four times for a year, sometimes, or better, each time they've been. When we go, we are very blessed to be able to go over there, but generally time is very short and if we spend 3 or 4 days in country, we have been there a long time. These soldiers have gone over there voluntarily.

You know, one of the things that I think is a misconception that seems to be played out both in our coverage in the media and in the comments that we hear from our colleagues across the aisle is that they think that we are dealing with people who are being forced to go over there. These people volunteered. These men and women are true American heroes, and they know what their mission is, and they will tell you they know they are accomplishing that mission. They wonder why what they are accomplishing is not what they are viewing on American television. They wonder that a lot, and they say that to you a lot when you go over there to visit them.

And so it has been said here tonight already, but I think it is very important that the American people think about this. The Democratic Party in this House and in the Senate is in the majority. They have a responsibility now to govern this Nation. They ran on a campaign that promised what they were going to do when they got here to govern this Nation. And as we heard in the early hour, we do have three distinctive parts of the government. The President is one, but this is a coequal branch of government with the authority to take charge and be responsible for what you promise. And if it means to the American people what they think it means to the American people, that we have to get out immediately of Iraq, they have the authority and the ability to vote to bring our troops home.

But you see, it is easy to talk about wanting the responsibility, but taking the responsibility becomes very difficult. In fact, the real story of this debate that we are having on what should happen is they don't want to take the responsibility because they really, I would hope, in their heart of hearts, realize that the consequences are dramatic.

My friend Congressman PEARCE mentioned to you, and I think it is everybody's opinion that looks at that map of Iraq, that should the American troops strike their colors and march home tomorrow, that the southern part of Iraq falls almost immediately into the hands of the Iranians, because they fought a whole war over that issue; and only because the Iraqis stood up their Armed Forces and fought to a standstill that the Iranians didn't take those southern oil fields. But the Iraqi Army, which we are in the process of building up, would not be able to do that in today's life. They are too busy straightening out their own country.

We hear so much about the American soldier. And God bless the American soldier. The American troops are doing an outstanding job, but so are the Iraqi troops. And that is the news item that is not out there these days. The Iraqi troops are dying actually at much greater numbers than the American troops, side by side with the American soldier, learning as they go how to fight the kind of war that professional soldiers fight. And they are doing a good job. And we have to give them the opportunity to finish the job and stand up their military and stand up their police force.

And that is what our soldiers tell us when they go over there, and they tell

us that from the corporal or the private all the way up to the four-star general.

And the surge has a purpose. It is more than just feeding in troops. It is clearing a neighborhood, and then having the Iraqi troops, along with Americans, to hold those neighborhoods until we are able to get this thing done.

□ 2130

And you know, al-Anbar Province, when I was over there the second time, that was the Wild West. That was the worst province in Iraq, al-Anbar Province. Now the Marines report to us on a daily basis that because the sheiks who are the tribal leaders of that area, and particularly one sheik who's got the vast majority of the tribes in that area, have joined the fight, told their people, when you shoot at an American, you shoot at one of us; join us in getting rid of this al-Qaeda that's trying to come in here and turn all sides against each other to create turmoil in our country. And we are having outstanding success in that area, because the indigenous population is joining in the fight.

When an Iraqi hears a pounding on his door and calls the local policeman, this war is won. But they have lived for a long time under a dictatorship where the local policeman was the bad guy. We have changed that.

Ask a soldier, what was your mission, and he will tell you, sir, we've accomplished a whole lot of our mission. Our first mission was to go in and take out Saddam Hussein, and, sir, we did that. And I'm proud to say that the 4th Infantry Division from Fort Hood, Texas, which is in my district, pulled that tyrant out of that hole and started him in a lawful judicial process established by a government that the 1st Cavalry Division, which is also from my district, helped to defend as they voted, and in a properly impaneled judicial process we took care of Saddam Hussein. That's part of our mission. Mission accomplished.

The second mission was to help rebuild the Iraqi people. And if you look at that map at the number of projects that we're working on currently, and then you have a young soldier say, you know, sir, they reported last week that they killed an American soldier, what they didn't report is that we got water for the first time almost in the history of this country to a village of 400 people that never had water, because that's not a big fancy news item for The New York Times and the Washington Post. But that is a very, very important news item for the 300 people who had to pack their water in small jugs to have drinking water, that we got water, drinkable water, usable water to those people in the desert community. This is the kind of thing that changes the future of Iraq. If we pull out of Iraq, we create disaster.

Now, as I pointed out, the Democrats have an opportunity to do what they promised everybody to do and stop this war, but they don't have the will, and they don't have the courage to be responsible for their actions. So instead, they have prevented necessary supplies to keep our men and women in combat safe now, for 100 and what days?

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Soon to be 108 days.

Mr. CARTER. For 108 days.

I got a phone call last night from Fort Hood, actually from a newspaper in Fort Hood, asking about the fact they a bad rain out on Nolan Creek, and some people got stranded out there. And, of course, when you are next to the largest military facility on Earth, the helicopters went out and started pulling people off of the roofs.

And this reporter called and was worried that she had heard that maybe the resources were not as available as they had been before or wouldn't be as available because there were cuts going on on the post. We had already checked that out with Fort Hood, and that actually was not true of this event.

But I told her, you know, you are from a military community, so we who have a military community know what happens when the Congress doesn't do its duty to the military when they have troops in harm's way, like in Iraq and in Afghanistan.

The Army doesn't leave, or the military doesn't leave their soldiers without the gear. What they do is tighten their belt back home. And that's happening now, and it's going to get worse and worse as this delay continues over and over.

It means training missions could be in jeopardy. It clearly means that operations on these large military posts around our country have to be reduced. Expenses have to be cut so that we keep the people in harm's way supplied, because we don't leave our dead or wounded on the battlefield, and we certainly don't leave our fighting soldiers on the battlefield without the equipment it takes to do the fight.

And so the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, the Marines and the Coast Guard will all be contributing from home to the war zone until this Congress does its duty. And I think it brings shame to know that those folks back home just came back from their fourth rotation, and their resources they are counting on for their year back home are being cut back. They're doing it willingly, but they are being cut back so they can supply their fellow men and women in arms over in Iraq, in Afghanistan.

This is a crisis that people don't realize the strain we're putting on our soldiers. And then to constantly tell them, like the leader, the Democrat leader in the Senate, this war is lost; and those soldiers are looking around and saying, what war is he talking about? Where's he see the loss? We haven't lost. We're winning this war. That's what the people who are there are saying. Give those folks a chance.

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Well, I thank the gentleman. And you alluded to something that I want to point out, and several of our previous speakers have talked about this chart. And basically, people say, well, what's going on in Iraq? And I think what we hear is the news media portrays, well, there's a lot of fighting going on. But really what's been going on in Iraq at the same time is some nation building. And what you see on this chart is over 14,000 projects that have either been completed or are underway, and as the gentleman referred to, as some of these provinces for the first time have water. Some of them, for the first time in a long time, have electricity.

But let's get down to really talking about what's making a difference in the lives of the Iraqi people. And for the first time, young men and women are back in school again, and commerce is going on in these communities, and people are being able to live a life that's less fearful of this tyranny that Saddam Hussein would reign over his people. And so 14,000 projects, either completed or underway. And all of those green dots, and I know that it doesn't show up on the C–SPAN that well, but this map is dotted with projects.

The other thing that the gentleman brought up, and I think you're going to hear from some of the other speakers tonight, is that most of the time when we go to Iraq, we spend some time with the troops. I have meals, almost with every chance we always say to the military, we want to eat with the troops. We want to hear from the young men and women that are out there with boots on the ground what's going on.

And my most recent trip to Iraq, I was sitting with a young man, and it was one of the last, I think we were in Baghdad, and he looked over at me, and he looked me right in the eye and he said, Congressman, this is my third trip to Iraq. He said, nobody has more invested in this effort than me. Would I like to be home with my family? Absolutely. But, Congressman, go back and tell your colleagues, please let us finish this job. We are winning. We are making a difference. And it would be a true shame for us to leave this job undone and to let the Iraqi people down.

The other thing, and the gentleman alluded to, was the fact that now we've been hearing that tens of thousands of calls are coming in now to the security forces of people in the neighborhoods saying, there's some bad folks roaming in our neighborhood. They're trying to do bad things; they're trying to harm us. And so they're turning in the bad people. So the Iraqi people are buying into the fact that this is their country. They have a responsibility. They're standing up the troops.

One of the interesting things the gentleman talked about the fact that we're standing up an Iraqi Army. Every once in a while, and we know it's unfortunately, but our suicide bombers will bomb a recruitment area. And the next day, what shows up at that same

site but more recruits because they went their country back.

They've had a number of elections, and so the fact that now that the sheiks, and not just the sheiks but the people in the communities are getting engaged in this process, and what we're hearing is that now these leads are turning into being able to not only get the bad guys, but get their weapons. And hundreds of thousands of pounds of ammunition has been seized because of these tips that we're not getting from our soldiers, but from the people in Iraq.

I believe the gentleman from New Mexico wanted to make a comment about that.

Mr. PEARCE. I would. And I thank the gentleman. As he's talking about this new willingness of Iraqis to report suspicious behavior, I would remind my colleagues that it was our bill, my bill that was introduced, that simply said that you cannot be sued in American courts for reporting suspicious behavior, that you cannot be terrorized in our own courts of law for reporting the same sort of behavior that you're talking about being reported in Iraq creating stable responses, stability in the country.

And yet, we had 121 of our Democrat colleagues vote against that legislation. They voted with the terrorists to say, you can sue Americans in court for reporting suspicious behavior. I think that shows the difference between the Republicans in this Congress. All Republicans voted with the American citizens to limit those capabilities. But the difference between the Republicans and Democrats is that the Democrats are still soft on security. They're soft on terrorism, and they're soft on funding the troops who are fighting the battle.

And I just wanted to, your comments about the Iraqis now turning in evidence, bringing those actions to our attention, caused me to remember that bill on the floor of the House where we actually had a vote here, and the Democrats voted, 121 of them, to let terrorists sue us in our own courts.

I'd yield back to the gentleman.

Mr. CARTER. If the gentleman would yield just a moment.

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. I would yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. CARTER. Hearing my colleague from New Mexico reminds me of another vote that was taken on the floor of this House that had to do with our intelligence for our United States military. And in the bill, the Democrat Party had diverted millions of dollars to take our Intelligence Community and have them study global warming. I have this vision of one of our spy satellites being relocated over the North Pole to check on the polar bears that was sitting over Baghdad checking on the terrorists.

I think the American people want our American soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines and coastguardsmen to have on the ground intelligence, which they cut, and in-the-air intelligence, which they want to move to study global warming, so that we can make sure that our soldiers, our American citizens in harm's way, have the security of good intelligence. But there's a vote that we took. We tried to fix that, and that fix was voted down. And so now we have an intelligence bill that has a big chunk of it set aside for global warming.

Meanwhile, it was discovered when we had the debate that there are 13 agencies in this government studying global warming right now. And why does our Intelligence Community have to study global warming at this point in time when American soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines and coastguardsmen are at war? That's a question that the American people ought to ask themselves.

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. And the gentleman's correct. In fact, the money that was taken out to fund the studying of global warming and intelligence was taken out of some of our more crucial intelligence areas, the intelligence that's used to help our young men and women in the battlefield know where the bad guys are before the bad guys know where they are. So that just doesn't make sense.

We're joined by some additional colleagues this evening, and certainly my good friend from Georgia, Congressman GINGREY, he's another Member that's been to Iraq three times. That seems to be the theme tonight. And I'm pleased to yield to the gentleman from Georgia.

Mr. GINGREY. I thank my friend and classmate from Texas, Representative NEUGEBAUER, and, of course, Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to be here on the floor this evening with our colleagues and my classmate, Representative PEARCE of New Mexico and Judge JOHN CARTER from Texas. And you'll hear soon from another classmate of ours from Iowa, Representative STEVE KING, and, of course, a new Member, but a very experienced one, TIM WALBERG from Michigan.

It's an honor to be with them, Mr. Speaker, tonight, because this is a time really of victory for our men and women who are the patriots fighting this war in the Middle East. It's not a time for bragging, and we're not here to stick our finger in the eye of the Democrats and say, you know, you were wrong, you were wrong all along, and finally, after 107 days, you have admitted you were wrong, and we have won this argument.

Actually, Mr. Speaker, it's been a tremendous loss for the country to go 107 days, or whatever it is, from the time the President asked for the money that the Department of Defense has requested to continue to conduct this war for the rest of this fiscal year, 2007, the $100 billion with no strings attached, Mr. Speaker.

The Commander in Chief and the combatant commanders in the field and General Petraeus brought us a new way forward. It's what the American people wanted. It's what the Congress wanted. And our combatant commanders responded to that. And we put in place the highest-ranking four-star general on the ground in Iraq, General David Petraeus, who wrote the manual 6 months before on counterterrorism and knew and knows.

□ 2145

And it wasn't just his plan, but it was a plan that was worked out in combination with the Iraqi Government, with Prime Minister Maliki, and it called for essentially all of the things that the Iraq Study Group asked for. That report, Mr. Speaker, was a bipartisan report chaired by two very distinguished political public servants, the Honorable Jim Baker, Republican, the Honorable Lee Hamilton, a long-term member from Indiana, a Democrat, and this is exactly what the President tried to do. And yet the Democratic new majority wanted to insist on these benchmarks that weren't really performance benchmarks but they included a timetable, a timeline, for giving up no matter what the circumstances on the ground were. And the worst and most egregious of those, my colleagues, was to say that in August of 2008, just a little more than a year from now, that no matter what was happening in Iraq, even if it got like when Andrew Jackson had the British running down the Mississippi to the Gulf of Mexico, as the song goes, even if we were in that situation, winning this battle, in August of 2008, this Democratic majority wanted to blow the whistle and bring the troops home.

And I am telling you at this particular time, as we approach the Memorial Day weekend, what kind of message does that send to those who have given the last full measure of devotion in this war, and in any war, while the Democratic majority tries to get the last full ounce of political blood on the floor of this House? It is shameful, Mr. Speaker and my colleagues.

Every one of us have gone to some funerals in our districts. And I stand here tonight and I think about the Saylor family, Paul, their son, 22 years old from Breman, Georgia. I think about young Justine Johnson, another 22-year-old from Armuchee, Georgia, up in Floyd County. I think about the former president of my student body at my alma mater, the Georgia Institute of Technology, who 2 years after serving as student body president at that great institution, that first lieutenant gave his life in Iraq, shot down by a sniper while leading his troops. I think about Command Master Sergeant Eric Cooke, who served 30 years in the military, multiple deployments at the tip of the spear, and on Christmas Eve, 2003, my first trip to Iraq, one day after I met him and gave him some books and school supplies for the Iraqi children; he promised to deliver them, but, unfortunately, he took that right seat in a Humvee so that one of his troops

could stay home and call his wife and his family and talk to his loved ones on Christmas Eve. And Command Master Sergeant Eric Cooke gave his life one evening when that Humvee went over an improvised explosive device.

In the history of this country, we are about to honor those who have given their lives on Memorial Day, the last Monday in May. And at that time I think about and I want my colleagues to think back to World War I when Dr. McCrae wrote that poem ''In Flanders Fields.'' I am not going to try to quote the poem, although it is a very short poem, but the last stanza basically says don't forget it us. Just don't forget us. We fought the battle. Whatever the cause, you may not agree with it, but don't forget us.

And I think that is why we felt so strong. I commend this President for vetoing bad bills that would forget the troops and would let them die in vain.

So it is an honor to be here tonight to say thank you maybe to the Democratic majority for finally coming to your senses and letting the combatant commanders and the Commander in Chief fight the war. Certainly we could talk about policy and we can talk about funding but not with strings attached. Let's give victory a chance. And I think we have an absolute chance, as my colleagues pointed out, and some of the progress is being made. The news media, of course, doesn't report good news. Good news is an oxymoron, isn't it? So they don't talk about that. But thank you, colleagues, for letting me come tonight and talk about this.

I know if the troops are watching over in Iraq and Afghanistan, I think they are very proud that the Congress is supporting them and we are not going to pull the rug out from under them.

With that, I want to yield back to my colleague from Texas, Mr. NEUGEBAUER. I know there are a couple of other speakers and I thank the gentleman for giving me the time.

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman.

And he brings a point that many of us have had to experience, and that is to make that call of condolence to a mom or a dad or to a wife.

And I thought it was interesting, one of the previous speakers talked about being in the majority means you lead. And, in fact, we have gone 107 days without the much-needed resources for our young men and women, and it took the Republicans having to write to the Speaker of the House and saying it is going to be hard for us to go back home and talk about memorializing the sacrifice our young men and women have made in the past when we aren't even funding the troops of today. So we said we are not willing to go back on a recess for Memorial Day without taking care of the business of supporting our troops.

And I am hopeful that tomorrow, and certainly before we adjourn, that the Democrats do begin to deliver to our young men and women the resources they need so that when we do go home for this Memorial Day, we can celebrate the sacrifices of the many that have gone before, that we can do it with our heads held high that we have taken care of our part of the business.

I am pleased to be joined by a new Member of Congress from Michigan, someone who has a number of military bases in his district, who also has taken a keen interest in the Walter Reed issue and making sure that when our young men and women get injured that they get 21st century care. So I am pleased to yield to the gentleman from Michigan, Congressman WALBERG.

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to stand with men here who have served with distinction and consistency on this issue and the most important issue, as I understand it, as a new Member of Congress, taking that oath of office for the first time on January 4 to uphold the Constitution of the United States, which gives us the primary responsibility, number one responsibility, for security and defense of this great Nation not only for its people but for the impact that this Nation has given and continues to give worldwide.

We are the greatest bastion of hope for liberty, for individualism, for opportunity. And for us to be now in an arena that, frankly, with my colleagues I can't say that I have been there yet. I look forward to being over in the arena of this war and having the opportunity to sit with our heroes, our warriors over there who understand the process. I look forward to that experience to be able to hear directly from them in the field. But until that time, I have to resort to memories, including a memory my wife and I will never forget in sitting on the parade grounds in Fort Knox, Kentucky, watching my son graduate with the rest of the young recruits, troops that volunteered, all volunteers to serve their country, all of whom understood that in signing up for this austere and wonderful choice of patriotism, yet also put their lives on the line potentially.

And I will never forget watching my son, who had changed before my eyes during the course of the past number of weeks at Fort Knox, and had become a man with an understanding, as he was preparing to be a combat medic. That was unique. And meeting with his fellow soldiers and understanding that they had a purpose in mind, what an encouraging thing that was.

And now to look back on that and realize that not only have numerous of his fellow comrades gone to the arena, some who have come home with the impact of that time on their life never to leave them. Others have not come home alive and have given the supreme sacrifice. We would do well to honor them not only by our words but by our actions.

I have stood at Walter Reed Hospital on numerous occasions now, with my wife alongside several times, and I have met these troops, these fallen warrior heroes. I have prayed at their bedside. I have thanked them. I have had the opportunity to hear from them: Mr. Congressman, don't thank us. It was a privilege to serve. Don't thank me, though I appreciate your being here, but I want you to go back and tell your colleagues that we would appreciate their unquestioning support, that they would stand with us, that they would encourage us, that they would support us with the necessary resources, both armaments and financial resources, to complete this passion that we have, to stand for the defense not only of Iraq and its citizens who long to be free, but stand for our fellow citizens at home so we don't have to fight this war on our home turf as well. They understand this.

I don't understand why many of my colleagues, whom I respect highly, yet don't seem to understand, on the other side of the aisle, that we are fighting so it doesn't come home here as well.

I have also had, and I call it a distinct honor, though difficult as well, to speak to families who are now dealing with the impact of the war. I think of Travis Webb from Adrian, Michigan, who is still at Walter Reed, who came home missing two legs but not missing his heart, and still with a passion for his comrades back in the field and expressing the desire that we stand firm with them, thanking him and hearing him say ''I wish I could go back.''

Just a week ago, I called the mother of Daniel Courneya of Vermontville, Michigan, and expressed my sincere sympathy to her. Her son has not come home alive. He along with three other of his fellow troops were killed with an IED explosion, and three of his troops are still missing. We have read about them in the media. And we pray for their safe return. We know also that they have given their service for a cause. And I will be at the funeral of Daniel Courneya this coming Friday, in fact 2 days from now, and will stand proudly and yet humbly, recognizing the sacrifice that they have given for a cause greater than all of us even on this floor tonight.

Mr. Speaker, 108 days ago, on February 5, President Bush requested from Congress funding for our troops in Iraq. And even though current funding for our troops is set to expire at the end of May, and I say this as a new Member and I guess I say it as a Member that doubts until I actually see the bill in front of me to vote on, this funding is set to expire at the end of May. The new leadership in the House of Representatives has yet to put in front of me a bill that even comes close to properly financing the troops. And I say that saying until proven otherwise, it hasn't been in front of me to vote yet, and that is a shame.

Our American commanders need an opportunity to implement the new strategy. We are handcuffing our generals on the front line. That is not the

way it ought to be. New House leadership first introduced a bill in March that not only micromanaged the troops but also contained millions of dollars of unrelated pork-barrel projects to buy a few votes for bad legislation. That is not what I understood that I signed up for in supporting our troops and protecting and defending this great country.

□ 2200

The bill was a salad bar of egregious earmarks: $25 million for payments to spinach producers; $120 million to shrimp industries, $74 million for peanut storage; $5 million for shellfish, oyster and clam producers are just a few examples. And again, as a new Member of Congress, I couldn't believe that, that we were dealing with that type of funding with a war going on.

This bill was rightfully vetoed. In response, House leadership scrambled, and now we see supposedly that there is a bill before us.

I heard my colleague, the gentleman from Georgia, express appreciation that we have a bill now that we can vote on that will fund our troops. But again, I haven't voted on it yet. And so I say, let it come before us. No wonder this body, this Congress, this great symbol of American freedom has a 29 percent approval rating, when we mess around with the lives of our troops and the freedom of our citizens.

House leadership seems to have finally relented, and hopefully has decided to provide the necessary funding for our brave men and women. I am glad to hear that we will put aside any plans to go on break until a clean funding bill will pass, and I trust that that will take place tomorrow, to support our men and women in combat. Our troops deserve this respect.

Recently, the Iraqi Government, after complaints from myself and other Members of Congress, decided to forego its plans for a 2-month summer recess so important decisions such as the development and distribution of Iraq's oil and how to deal properly with sectarian violence can be made and laws can be passed.

This Congress similarly has decided not to go home for more than a week and leave our troops in limbo until we finish this job. We have to stay here and finish our job so our brave troops, our men and women in uniform, can finish theirs.

House leadership needs to allow Members to vote as early as possible tomorrow on a clean bill, devoid of wasteful, nonmilitary spending. We need a bill that doesn't handcuff our generals, but instead gives our troops the resources they need. Setting timelines on American involvement in Iraq is good policy, but not publicly in front of our enemies. Our military commanders need to have control of the situation, and not the terrorists.

The Congress needs to give General David Petraeus, the new Commander in Iraq, who was confirmed unanimously by the Senate, a chance to fully implement the new strategy instead of telegraphing surrender to terrorists.

In the Anbar Province, one of the most dangerous areas in Iraq, violent crime is dropping, and 20 of 22 tribal leaders of that area now support the U.S. and Iraqi forces against al Qaeda. Granted, the level of violence remains high, and the hot spots are numerous, and many challenges persist. But the wounded soldiers I've met at Walter Reed and Bethesda deserve our support. They have indicated that our Armed Forces can secure Iraq enough so that an Iraqi Government and a security force there can take over.

Time is running out. Congress needs to move past political posturing and partisanship and allow the men and women serving in Iraq the opportunity to crush the terrorists in the Middle East so our families will have a more secure future here at home.

I want us to win this war. There are only two options, as we mentioned tonight already, only two options: One, victory; and the other, defeat. I do not believe that Americans countenance, by and large, the option of defeat.

I am asking my fellow Members of Congress, those that I am proud to stand with here on the floor tonight, as well as those who have wavered and waffled at times, to buck up. FDR called our America to a strength of sacrifice together, to win a war as brave people that sustain this great world as well. We, as well, have the privilege tonight, as Members of Congress, to call our Nation by first standing together, calling them to sacrifice in support of our troops, calling them to bravery and courage in standing for this country, calling them to one decision, and that being the decision for victory.

Memorial Day is upon us. I will experience this Memorial Day like I have experienced no other Memorial Day, because I have stood next to these wounded heroes. I have defended these brave troops. I have spoken with them. I have had family members, including my son, sign up to do that brave duty. And I will say to the troops who may hear us tonight, God bless you. We stand with you, and we will support you.

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. I thank the gentleman. And as the gentleman has said, he has been to Walter Reed with his wife; I have, also. And I think about one time I went and I was there with a soldier that had gotten a new prosthesis. He had lost part of his leg. And he said he was so proud of it. He said, Congressman, this is state-of-the-art, and I'm going to be able to walk again, and do you know what I want to do? I said, what do you want to do? He said, I want to go back and be with my buddies and finish the job that I went to do.

Those are the kind of men and women that I'm going to be celebrating during this Memorial Day weekend.

I am proud to see that a great Member of Congress from Iowa, the gentleman from Iowa Mr. KING, who I know has been to Iraq on a number of occasions, and I am pleased that he has joined us this evening and would yield to the gentleman.

Mr. KING of Iowa. I thank the gentleman from Texas for organizing this Special Order and each of the Members of Congress who came down here to the floor to stand up for our he brave men and women who defend our freedom. And I know you will be there when they need you.

I just would add a few pieces to this, as I have listened to the dialogue that has gone on here tonight, and one of them is that we all have constitutional responsibilities. And 435 of us come down here to this floor, and we take an oath together to uphold this Constitution of the United States. Now, you would think that would mean something to everyone, ''So help us God.''

And by the way, I bring my Bible here to make sure that I am swearing on a Bible at the time. But I also carry with me this Constitution. And you don't have to be a constitutional scholar to read this, you can read it pretty well with a sixth- or eighth-grade education. But what it says in here is Congress has three responsibilities when it comes to war. One of them is to declare war, which we haven't done since World War II. The second one is to raise an Army and a Navy and, by implication, an Air Force. And the third one is to fund it.

And, yes, there are conditions in there that allow us to regulate some things that go on within the military, like how they're going to run their military courts and how we are going to do promotions and things of that nature, but there is no provision in this Constitution for micromanaging a war or for being a general if you're in the United States Congress. In fact, the experience that our Founding Fathers had with the Continental Congress and the Continental Army brought them to draft into this Constitution the office of Commander in Chief because they wanted to avoid the very circumstances that we are fighting off here in this Congress.

So if anyone thinks they ought to be a general, they ought to be in the military to do so. You can't be a general here from Congress. Your job is to be a generalist, someone who stands up for this Constitution, and someone who adheres to your oath to uphold this Constitution. That means maybe on a very sad day we may someday be obligated to declare a war.

Let's keep raising the Army and the Navy and the Air Force, and let's keep funding our military men and women that are out there in harm's way with their lives on the line for our freedom. That is the constitutional responsibility.

As I look back through the history of this country, I find no place where we have come to a constitutional challenge where the President had to make a decision to veto a funding bill and

have to face a veto override, which everyone knew was not going to pass, and now held the line. And I am really glad that it isn't coming down to the line where we are mothballing some of the development of our military equipment just so we can play this political game out here. That's not our job.

Even if you go back to the Vietnam War, the President signed the appropriation bills that took the military out of North and South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, out of the skies over them and out of the seas around them and said not 1 dollar will be spent in support of the military effort of the South Vietnamese and defending them themselves. And there are 3 million lives that paid in the aftermath of our lack of keeping our promise with the South Vietnamese.

That is on the conscience of the people of this Congress that didn't adhere to this Constitution. We don't need that on our conscience, and we don't need the enemy of Iran with a nuclear weapon in their hands on the control of the valve at the Straits of Hormuz, where they control the economy of the world as well as the development of the military within themselves. They can buy as many nuclear scientists as they want if they can just put their hands on the valve of the oil that goes to the world.

So that is where the problem is. We must succeed. There is far more at stake than the people on the other side of the aisle understand or will admit.

I will yield back to the gentleman who organized this Special Order, Mr. NEUGEBAUER of Texas, and thank him for organizing this meeting.

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. I am also pleased that another colleague and a fellow Texan has joined us this evening, Congressman BURGESS.

PRICE OF GASOLINE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COURTNEY). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. KLEIN) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure and an honor to be here tonight with the Members of the freshman class. All of us were elected this past November with great ideas brought to us by the people that we represent; lots of good suggestions on how to solve some of the problems that our country, of course some of them are overseas and some of them are home, but the great news is all of them are solvable. Every problem that we have in this country is something that there is a solution to. And it typically requires good faith, working together, Democrats and Republicans, Independents, people of good minds and good faith, to solve the problems.

Tonight we are going to start out our conversation as the freshman class with something that all of us came to this Congress to talk about and to work on and to solve. And it has unfortunately risen up as another significant problem that I think that we are very unhappy about right now, and that, of course, as everyone who has filled up their tank lately knows, is gas prices.

I am from Florida, the 22nd District, which is parts of Broward and Palm Beach Counties in southeast Florida. It is fascinating to me because I have watched gas go up and down and up and down over the years, and Congress has never seemed to have the backbone, if you will, the President and this administration hasn't shown much interest in dealing with gas prices. Maybe it's because of the backbone of some of the people of the administration, or maybe not; but the bottom line is that we have a situation now where gas prices in my area are at about an average of $3.25 a gallon, and as much as $3.59 a gallon.

We understand what this means. This is a real problem for consumers, it is a real problem for our businesses. Whether you have transportation, whether your personal transportation to and from work or the shipping of goods to and from a location, this is something that is beginning to affect our economy.

And I think I am going to throw it over to my colleagues here, but I just want to throw out a few rhetorical questions, because every time we go through this and the price spikes, we hear excuses. You know, last time the excuse was we had a hurricane called Katrina, and it shut down refineries. No hurricane this time. Last time we heard there is a disruption in the oil deliveries out of the Middle East. No disruption. Last time we heard, well, there is a summer spike because of demand during the summertime. It's May, no summertime. What is the excuse? What is the bottom line?

What I am so pleased about is the fact that our freshman class, along with a more senior Member, Mr. STUPAK, took on this issue this year and passed today, out of this Congress, in a bipartisan way, I am very proud to say that all the Democrats and I think 70 or 80 Republicans, I think, joined us and passed something called the Federal Price Gouging Prevention Act. The purpose of this act is to allow the FTC, the Federal Trade Commission, to go in with some teeth and enforcement authority, to go in and investigate what's wrong. If the price of oil per barrel is the same or even less than it was last year at this time, how could gas prices be so much higher? And all the commonsense things that we know.

What I am going to do is I am going to introduce each one of you, and I am going to ask you all, I know you all have your own perspectives and some thoughts on this. I am going to start out with Congressman PERLMUTTER from Colorado. Please give us your thoughts.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Thank you, Mr. KLEIN.

Every other Saturday I have a ''government at the grocery.'' I visit different grocery stores throughout my district. This past week I was at a grocery store in Edgewater, Colorado, and the number one topic was the price of gas. Usually it has been Iraq, and we certainly are going to talk about Iraq tonight, but the number one conversation was about the price of gas. And people were saying, look, we understand that on a per-barrel basis, it's down, the cost is down, the price is down. Why is the cost at the pump up?

And, you know, we have excuses. The excuses this time, Mr. KLEIN, have been, well, we just needed to clean the refineries. They clean the refineries right at the beginning of the summer travel season because by restricting the supply, you drive up the price, and we can't have that anymore. We can't have our people being gouged in this country by manipulation of the market in that fashion.

□ 2215

What we are seeing is too few companies controlling too critical an item, a commodity, like gasoline, and that is what that price gouging bill was all about today. So I can assure you in Colorado, it is a major topic of conversation, and people want to see a change, and we are bringing that change to them by the bill we passed today and the direction we are taking this Congress.

With that, Mr. KLINE, I would like to turn it over to my friend from Vermont, who always has something to say on any topic, but particularly I know he has something to say today on this gasoline price gouging.

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Thank you, Mr. PERLMUTTER. The gas issue, obviously the price going way up is hitting people pretty hard. But it is a real metaphor in my view for the two economies we are seeing emerge in this country. We are at a time now where the stock market has never been higher. People who have significant assets have never been doing better. Large corporations are making record profits. Executives, CEOs at large corporations, have never gotten better and sweeter pay packages.

But the vast majority of Americans are finding that their wages are stagnant, and the prices of things that they need, daycare, gasoline to get to and from work, to and from daycare, groceries, those things are going up and concealing this so-called ''tame'' inflation.

So what we are having in this country is the emergence of two economies, and our goal here in Congress is to start having a Congress that stands up and represents the needs and aspirations of average folks. We give them a leg up.

Every time the price of gasoline goes up about 10 cents, that is like a $16 billion hit on the consumer in this country. So you think about it. We have got a chart over here that shows gas prices going up, really doubling during the presidency of George Bush. But just

take a $1 increase in the price of gasoline, that is like $160 billion tax increase that all comes out of the pockets of working Americans, the people who can afford it the least.

You look back at the last couple of years, what has happened when we have been talking about the oil industry are a couple of things. Number one, there has been very favorable legislation that has benefited the oil companies. At a time when the oil companies had record profits, $125 billion over 3 years, $125 billion over 3 years, at that time not our Congress, but the Congress that preceded us, the Republican Congress, gave tax breaks to the oil companies. The mature and very profitable industry got $13 billion out of taxpayer funds on top of the record profits they had received.

What we have done here is try to change the rules of the game and say that there has got to be a cop on the beat. It doesn't make sense for the prices to be going up on gasoline when we have seen the price of a barrel of oil go down and we haven't seen an increase in the demand, so that the laws of supply and demand are really being thwarted by the oligopolistic power of the very few oil companies that are able to manage the price and inflate their profits.

What we are doing is first taking back those tax breaks that went to big oil. We did that earlier on this year, hoping our friends on the Senate side join us. But, secondly, we are saying that the Federal Trade Commission should be active and aggressive in answering these questions on behalf of the American consumer.

Every 10 cents, $16 billion, that is a tax increase right out of the pockets of working Americans. Our responsibility to the American people is to make sure that consumers are protected so they are not getting ripped off. It is that simple. They need to keep that money in their pocket and not just be subject to the abuse of the monopoly power really of big oil.

So, that is a little perspective from Vermont. I will turn it over to my colleague from Connecticut, Representative MURPHY.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Thank you very much, Mr. WELCH. I just want to point out to the Speaker and the Chamber that Mr. WELCH just used a word with six syllables in it, oligopolistic. We have freshmen that are courageous, we have freshmen to take on big industry, but we also have some pretty smart freshmen too in this case. So I don't want that to go unnoticed.

Mr. WELCH, let's call it for what it was. For a long time this Congress was run by the oil industry. Whatever they asked for, they got here. It was sort of a sense that if you did really, really well in this economy and you came and asked for something from this Congress, then they were going to give it to you. You were going to be rewarded, in essence, for coming out on top of the heap. The same could be said for the pharmaceutical industry, the same could be said for multimillionaires, as was the case for the oil companies.

If you probably turned on the television and you watched people get up here on the other side of the aisle for the last several years, you probably heard them say a lot things like we are saying. You probably heard them complain about gas prices. You probably heard them say that they were going to do something about it.

Well, they didn't. They didn't do a single thing about it, and we see the evidence of it today. Gas prices spiraling higher and higher. Mr. PERLMUTTER is going to show a chart here which shows the average price of a gallon today pretty soon. You are going to see the average price for today is on an 8½ by 11 piece of paper sort of precariously stuck on to the poster board. Why? Because, guess what? It moves every single day. We have to change that piece of paper on that chart every day as the price goes higher and higher and higher.

So what happened when a bunch of us went out there and decided that we were going to come to Washington to try to change the priorities here, do what Mr. WELCH said, which is finally put regular middle-class folks, working-class folks in charge of government again, was that we started matching action with words.

We are going to get up here and talk about how gas prices are hurting regular Americans, how they have less and less ability to spend money on other family needs, but then we are going to go and do something about it. We started with the price gouging legislation. We are going to take on some pretty important legislation to end the antitrust exemptions for OPEC and international oil cartels.

Then we are going to take on the big enchilada. We are going to start making this country energy independent. We know that is a triple whammy. That is about gas prices and energy prices, it is about making energy more affordable for people, that is about cleaning up our environment, and it is also about national security.

That is what happened here for a long time, was that the inaction wasn't just about trying to stem the bleeding in one particular summer, it was about avoiding a problem that could have been solved 5, 10 years ago, if they had started doing the things that we are about to do to invest in alternative and renewable energy.

So I am so proud to stand here with members of the freshman class, because we can stand here and talk about what we want to do to start transforming this society back so that the priorities of regular middle-class Americans matter again. But we also need to do something about it.

We also get to stand here and cast some votes that have not been cast in this Congress for a very long time, and that is what makes me especially proud to be a member of this freshman class, certainly proud to be a member alongside my friend from Iowa, Mr. BRUCE BRALEY, who I will turn the microphone over to at this point.

Mr. BRALEY of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from Connecticut. I am just a simple country lawyer from Iowa, which is the center of the renewable fuels explosion. I don't think I have ever used a six syllable word, so I feel a little inadequate.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. I think you get locked up in Iowa if you do that.

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. I think people are making fun of me.

Mr. BRALEY of Iowa. Here is a three syllable world I will throw out right now: Paradox. Right now it is planting season in Iowa, and farmers are going out and growing renewable energy, so that we can become energy independent, we can reduce our dependence on Mideast oil, we can promote national security, we can promote economic security, we can provide jobs, good paying jobs, to the people of this country.

Yet, at the same time, while those Iowa farmers are out there driving around in their pickup trucks, getting deliveries from their co-ops for their crop inputs, the cost of producing renewable fuels is directly impacted by what you see on that chart. Whether it is gasoline in the pickup truck, whether it is diesel fuel that is affected by periodic price influxes, one thing we know is that the cost of getting energy independence goes up. And is it any wonder when we look at who we are shifting our dependence from, people who create energy from fossil fuels, and look at who is going to benefit from these record oil company profits, that many of us campaigned on and made the case to the American people, give us a chance to have an impact.

That is why I was very proud to be a cosponsor of Representative STUPAK's bill. This whole Congress has been about increased accountability, increased oversight, because that is what the American people demanded when they sent us to Congress.

Yet every day in these oversight hearings we are talking about important problems that the people demand solutions to. We take important votes on progressive bills that are going to change the direction of this country. And every day we get the same message from the White House: If you pass this bill that is good for the American people, I won't sign it.

A good example of that. The first bill I had to be voted on on the floor of the House of Representatives, the Small Business Fairness in Contracting Act. It sounds pretty good. It sounds consistent with the President's statement on the importance of creating fair contracting opportunities for small businesses in 2002. Overwhelming bipartisan support in committee. Everybody voted for it. Overwhelming bipartisan support here on the floor. 409 people voted for it. Yet the President said it was a bad bill.

That is a symptom of the greater problem we are talking about. It is an interrelated problem, whether you are talking about energy, whether you are talking about ethics. That is why we are here tonight, to start shedding some light on the important point of where the buck stops on the problems we are talking about.

I yield back on that to my distinguished friend from the great State of Florida, which, unfortunately, entered the Union right before the State of Iowa, Mr. KLINE.

Mr. KLINE of Florida. But who's keeping track?

I think everyone in the room here sees that there is some good logic, some common sense, that is being applied in the development of this legislation. I just want to touch on a couple points ever the legislation itself, this law that we passed today so overwhelmingly, because Americans really are hurting.

We talked about teeth, the Federal Trade Commission, which is an existing Federal agency that is responsible for fair trade. It is self explanatory, fair trade. What can we do to make sure that organizations, businesses, big oil in this case, that in fact if there is market manipulation, if it is going on, what can we do to get to the bottom of it?

Well, the questions will be asked. What does it cost to drill? What does it cost to refine? Why is there a difference between the cost of crude and the cost of a gallon of gas? Why does gas cost more in Fort Lauderdale, right near a port where the gas comes in, than it does 500 miles inland? These are common sense questions. When there is transparency in pricing, there is no price gouging.

So what we are asking for is something very simple. We want competition. We all believe in the capitalistic system. We want to see thriving competition. Competition is good for quality, pricing and everything else. But when there is something so out of whack here, when you see there is no common sense, a barrel costs less, price is up. No disruption in the oil, no disruption in the refining. Nothing that really should cause this kind of surge.

In fact, we see by this chart on the day that President Bush was sworn into office, back January of 2001, gas was at $1.47. Today, it is $3.22 on average in the United States of America. What is wrong with this picture?

Now, this is a matter, as it was said by one of our colleagues, a matter of national security. It is a matter of our economy. Certainly it is a matter of our environment over time.

So one of the other things that we are also committed to, I know every one of us in the whole freshman class, and I would say many of the Republicans came with the same view, but we are going to take some action this time in a bipartisan way, we have to move this country toward energy independence.

Mr. BRALEY of Iowa. If the gentleman will yield for a question, the argument we hear over and over in this body is just let the market play out. Let it take its course. What is wrong with that argument?

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. Well, I think it is fairly clear. Unfortunately, what has happened in this industry is there is a consolidation. Do you remember there was a term a number of years ago called the seven sisters? That was a term many years ago talking about large oil companies. Well, there has been big consolidation with multinational oil companies that obviously have lots of different people that are tending to their interests. And at this point in time, if you look in any community, I can look at my own community in Palm Beach and Broward Counties, there are fewer competitive stations, company stations versus independents, fewer independents, you don't see a lot of independents at all, which really drives the market a little bit. Then, at the end of the day, there really is very little activity that would show there is true competition.

But I think the real question, of course, and what this law is going to get to, is there is market manipulation, are there antitrust violations. We are going to define it, we are going to strengthen it, and there are consequences.

By the way, don't let anybody tell you, some of the Republican debate on the floor, some of the Republicans that opposed it said, oh, we are going to knock down the independent service stations, the little mom and pop groceries that have a pump in front of them.

We are not talking about them. The minimum size of activity that can become subject to this is a company that sells $500 million of fuel.

□ 2230

So we are not talking about the mom and pops. We are the one who are protective and interested in our communities in the mom and pops.

I think there are lots of questions out there that need to be answered. Again, I think the consequences of violating our Federal law is what is going to change this.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. If the gentleman would yield, I think we have to get back to basics here. We have to have a diversified energy portfolio.

One of the things that you were talking about and Mr. BRALEY was talking about was renewable energy. The American people are way ahead of Congress, and it is our job to change the direction of the Federal Government on this subject because it is good for national security, and it is good for the climate, and it is good for jobs.

Quite frankly, if we have a diversified portfolio where we have biofuels, and where we use solar and wind where appropriate, and have hybrid types of cars, we will not be so beholden to a particular company or companies in the gasoline business.

Also we are going to stop funding both sides of the war on terror.

We need to talk about the war in Iraq. We will be voting tomorrow on supplemental funding to the President that will keep him on a short leash through September to see exactly where we are going with this war.

We have asked for a timeline. The President has rejected. He vetoed it. We have set benchmarks. He doesn't like those; but apparently, based on conversations we have seen in the paper, he may accept benchmarks. We need to see what is happening.

We had a briefing today from General Pace and from Secretary Gates and Ambassador Negroponte. The best they could say about what was going on in Iraq, mixed results. With the surge in one part of Baghdad, there was some reduction in casualties in Baghdad, but an explosion of casualties in the suburbs. You push in one place, and it pops out another place. They call it the balloon effect or toothpaste effect, the squeeze effect.

We have to make some changes here, and that is what this Congress is about. We will be keeping this President on a short leash. We will be imposing some benchmarks to see if there really is any progress in Iraq.

I know we all want to see progress and stability, but that is not what we are seeing on the television or reading in the newspaper. And the American public knows that. They are not being fooled any longer. We are going to change the direction of this war. We cannot continue by paying this kind of money at the gas pump funding both sides of the war on terror.

One of the things I am going to talk about tomorrow is the fact that by being in Iraq, we have stretched our military forces to the breaking point, both Active military and our National Guard. The National Guard, 88 percent of the equipment of the National Guard has been deployed to Iraq and hasn't come back. We are coming into a hurricane season. We have forest fires that are plaguing the West and Florida. Is our National Guard prepared to deal with that?

Their mission, they have three missions. The first mission is homeland defense, protecting our country against attacks that might happen here, whether it is a 9/11 or some other type of attack. The second is civilian support, helping in the event of another Hurricane Katrina. The third is to be deployed overseas.

Now, we know that our National Guard, I don't know if, in fact, in either of your States, but the Colorado Air National Guard is going to be deployed for the third time within the last 3 or 4 years to Iraq, which is stretching their ability to deal with things in Colorado or to assist other State National Guards in the event of a natural or man-made disaster.

We as a Congress have an obligation to look after this country and not to continue to pursue things where we are

refereeing a sectarian civil war. Things have to change.

I heard our friends on the other side of the aisle in the hour that proceeded us saying we have an obligation to protect and defend the Constitution, and they are absolutely right. And we have an obligation to protect and defend this country. We cannot continue the way we are going in Iraq. So the President wants to stay in Iraq. He vetoed a timeline that establishes a thoughtful redeployment of our troops. But at this point we will let him have, I believe tomorrow's vote will allow him, mostly with Republican votes, to have funding through the end of September. At that point we will see where this surge is going, whether it is better than mixed results. If that is the best you can say about the surge, it is mixed results, that is not very good, and it is time for a change, and we intend to bring a change to this country.

We all know that one of the issues in Iraq is oil. We can't forget about that. We need to decrease our dependence on foreign oil so that we don't have to be in a place like Iraq unless it is there for real humanitarian reasons and not there for oil or other purposes.

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. When we went into Iraq in the first place, they were supposed to be able to pay for their entire rebuilding through their own oil revenues. Unfortunately, that has not happened.

I know Mr. PERLMUTTER has been one of our leaders on renewable energy, as has Mr. WELCH.

Mr. WELCH, you have brought many ideas forward on renewable energy and alternative energy and energy independence. Why don't you bring us up to date on some of your thoughts.

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. First of all, Mr. PERLMUTTER is right, oil has made us vulnerable in foreign policy. A big reason we are in Iraq clearly is related to oil. I think we have to be much straighter with the American people than Congress has been.

We are doing two things here. One, with this legislation, the price gouging legislation, we are providing basic protection against rip-offs, and that is just the fundamental responsibility that people's government has is to make sure that the people with a lot of money, corporate power, don't use that power to rip them off. That is one.

Second, we have to develop an energy policy. An energy policy, as has been said, is going to give us a lot more freedom in foreign policy, not create these enormous pressures to get involved in wars that we shouldn't be involved in.

Secondly, it is obviously good for the environment.

Third, as the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. BRALEY) has been saying, it is good for the economy. The legislation we have to pass is not just on protecting the consumer, it is about creating a projobs, pro-high-tech, progrowth approach to addressing in a straightforward, confident way the energy challenge that we face.

One of the small bills that I have sponsored and you are a cosponsor of, Mr. PERLMUTTER, and I am soliciting more, is to make our offices carbon neutral here in Washington. When I got here, I was concerned about global warming. I checked into how much carbon pollution did I create just by turning my lights on here in Washington and Vermont, flying back and forth to my district, and then driving around. It is quite staggering: 754 tons. That is a lot just to show up for work.

I tried to find out how to offset that. Change the light bulbs, turn the thermometer so you don't use as much air conditioning or heat, and then invest in renewable energy that would allow a farm in southern Vermont to do a digester, a methane digester, which adds to the bottom line of farms, and all of our farms are struggling to make ends meet. We have to keep our farms in production and have local production of agriculture for the ag economy, but also for a way of life that a lot of folks in Vermont and Iowa want to maintain.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. If the gentleman would yield, following your lead on this carbon-neutral office, we actually next week are going to have a press conference on a carbon-neutral office. We are buying power from a wind energy farm in Lamar, Colorado. We have talked our landlord into putting solar on top of the office building. We use the stairs and not the elevators, and we are working with the National Renewable Energy Lab, which is the lab Mr. KLEIN was referring to, to assist us in coming up with a carbon-neutral, energy-efficient, sustainable type of office.

In Colorado, we don't have the moisture or quite the fertile ground as it is in Iowa, so there is a lot of dry-land farming. One of the other ways for farmers to derive an income is going to be through wind energy. We have a number of wind energy types of plants developing in Colorado as well as solar farms.

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Right. What you are describing is the fact that you are going to produce your energy locally, so you are not going to have to go to the Middle East and ship it all of the way back here. The money you spend on energy are going to be dollars that stay in Colorado or Iowa. Every dollar you keep in your local economy gets circulated and multiplied. That is what creates jobs. We have to break the stranglehold of our addiction to oil. It is all about building a local economy.

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. We all are very committed, and we are seeing some great ideas. This is about business and consumer behavior changing.

You also mentioned something about National Guard. In Florida, we are coming up on our hurricane season June 1. The National Guard has played a big role in emergency services.

Mr. BRALEY, I know you have a lot of specific information about your National Guard.

Mr. BRALEY of Iowa. All of us have our own natural disasters we deal with on an annual basis. This point was driven home with me in February when a huge ice storm hit my State. We had 350,000 people without power. The 133rd of the Iowa National Guard has been stationed in Iraq for over a year and had their deployment extended by another 120 days. They were struggling with people available to respond to this very significant demand for assistance. So that is when you understand in a very real way how foreign policy affects domestic policy in your district.

But as my friend from Vermont knows, when he was talking about the need to preserve the heritage of agriculture in this country and its importance to our economy, my great-great-grandfather, George Washington Braley, walked from Vermont in Mr. WELCH's district to Iowa in 1855 looking for better farmland, Mr. PERLMUTTER, better rain.

My parents both grew up on farms in Iowa during the Depression, and the whole sense of stewardship and preserving the land for the next generation is something that is almost a spiritual quality about farming. I know there are very many people looking for ways to diversify their agricultural economy.

Mr. KLEIN, you raised a very good point about the multiplier effect of renewable energy. Right now Iowa ranks third in the production of wind power, which surprises people. They go to Palm Springs and see those huge wind farms, and they know there is also a lot generated in Texas, but Iowa ranks third. Part of the reason for that is windmills have been a way of life in my State for over 150 years.

But there is a very acute shortage of wind turbines in this country. People who want to convert to wind energy and want to have the ability to produce electricity from wind are facing significant shortages of turbines, specifically those manufactured in the United States. A lot of people, municipalities that are looking to convert to wind have to go to the European market because they are on long waiting lists from U.S. wind turbine manufacturers.

Recently there has been an incentive to factories that are creating new wind turbines. There is a new factory in Iowa that opened up recently. So when we are talking about how this has a ripple effect throughout our economy, it creates jobs and incentive for people to try new and innovative energy technologies, and we all benefit from that. That needs to be part of the overall discussion we are having about how we create incentives to move people to clean energy sources.

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. Another big issue that many of us ran on was ethics reform and lobbying reform and the whole notion of this connection between lobbyists and legislators and Members of Congress.

I know in Florida before I left Florida, and I was in the Florida Legislature for a number of years, we passed a law that said you can't take a cup of

coffee. It used to be fancy meals, fancy trips and wine. You know something? The average person and most of us who ran said that was not necessary. It creates an impression that there is this unholy connection between a lobbyist and a Member of Congress.

□ 2245

Of course, we also know that many people who give us information are lobbyists, too, but they come in the unpaid variety. One of my teachers talked to me about No Child Left Behind. That's a lobbyist as well. We're talking about the paid ones.

I'm very proud that this Congress, this House, in the earliest going, one of the first packages we passed out of this chamber was to change the rules that this House governs itself by, and the freshmen of this class, of course, once again took the lead because we felt we were the closest ones, having heard the most from the public that we said no more cups of coffee, no more fancy meals, none of that.

You know something? It works just fine. I think all of us can buy our own cup of coffee. We had a little cup of coffee before. Mr. WELCH and I, we had our dinner together and were glad to pay for it ourselves.

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. A good chicken sandwich, $7.16.

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. But it goes beyond that. I think there are other ways that we can break this link, and I think some of the discussions going on right now of continuing to do things and disclosure and all those kinds of things are very important in making sure that the history of this Congress, particularly over the last few years, whether it was the Cunningham and the Tom DeLay and the Bob Ney.

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. That was illegal. That was beyond us. That was pure criminal conduct.

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. That's right, and there's still unfortunately a few that are still being investigated, and that's going on and that's wrong. It's wrong at home, in any business. It's wrong in any community whether it's done person-to-person, and certainly when you run for higher office in Congress, you have a higher responsibility to make sure that you do the people's business and you're an independent thinker.

So I think I'm very proud and I know these discussions are going on right now.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Very first thing as you said that we did was an ethics reform to the rules. So we took a huge step the first day we were in this Congress. Tomorrow, we are going to add to that from a bill that came over from the Senate as to certain other parts of lobbying reform. So we are continuing to make strides so that this place is open and transparent and people really know that we're working for the betterment of the entire country, you know, not a select few, and that's really the change that's going on here.

That's why people wanted to see a new direction in this Congress. They wanted to see a new direction in Iraq. They wanted to see a new direction in how we did business within this chamber, and they're getting those very things.

I'm proud to be part of the impetus, the catalyst to make those kinds of changes, to make the big change when it comes to energy. We can't wait any longer to change the way we deal with energy in this country, whether it's because we're just continuing to put more and more exhaust into our climate or we want to wean ourselves from foreign oil or we want jobs.

I mean as Mr. BRALEY was saying, we need turbines, we need solar panels. There's construction jobs by the thousands and thousands as we move to a new type of energy for this country, and we're making that change.

This Democratic Congress is making the change that was so desired by the people of this country. They wanted a new direction, and that's what we're giving to them.

And I do want to tell you that your great-grandfather was George Washington Braley. My grandfather was George Washington Bristow anyway, for just pure information.

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. It's very important the American people know that.

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. I thought it was George Washington Perlmutter.

Mr. BRALEY of Iowa. I have to say I'm really the rookie of this group because all of my colleagues who are still here tonight had the great privilege of serving in their State legislatures. They've had to struggle with these issues, especially these important issues on ethics.

One of the things that I talk to people a lot about coming from Iowa is how it just amazes me how other people really struggle with the sense of open and fair government because the State that I come from has probably the most fair reapportionment system of any State that I know of. In fact, there's been national news articles written about it.

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Remarkable.

Mr. BRALEY of Iowa. Because there's a bipartisan commission every 10 years that is balanced by geography and that's required to come up with a plan that is fair and equitable, and the State legislature can only vote the plan up or down on the first two tries, and not until the third try can they tinker with the boundaries. And in all the years that plan has been in place, not once has the legislature ever gotten to the point of redrawing districts, and people accept it because it's done in a way that creates a sense of fairness, a sense of openness and a sense of accountability.

And I think that really gets to the heart of what we're trying to talk about in the need to make sure that people have confidence that this body that we are proud and privileged to serve in is that same type of open, honest and accountable place to do business.

So I'm very, very excited to be with my freshmen colleagues talking about why we ran on a platform of restoring ethics and accountability in Congress, and I'm very pleased that we are bringing together collective experiences from all over the country, the experience that you bring from your backgrounds of working in your own State legislatures, and knowing that people have a right to expect this type of accountability when they walk into the voting booth and put your name on their ballot.

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. If you think about accountability and confidence, if you have confidence in the people that are representing you, you will certainly have a lot more confidence in the policies and the things that they do in Washington.

And what happens in Washington, whether it's dealing with Iraq or whether it's dealing with the cost of health care, which is another huge issue which hopefully we're going to start tackling soon, or whether it's dealing with any number of issues that we are talking about right now, I feel so much better now just watching the process than looking last year and seeing the Medicare bill that was drafted by pharmaceutical companies that had a big donut hole and really took advantage of people's good intentions of needing health care at an elderly age. And certainly in Florida, in all of our communities, we have a lot of senior citizens.

So the Medicare and the pharmaceutical issues unfortunately were not handled the right way, you know, the energy issues. These are solvable problems. We started talking about that in our opening tonight, solvable issues.

Little bit of backbone, little bit of roll up your sleeves, and turn off the air conditioning, and put a coffee down and nobody's getting up and out until you finish the job, that's the kind of can-do attitude that I think we have and we're going to continue to have over the next year.

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. I agree with you. It is very exciting and an incredible privilege for all of us to be here. And there aren't free meals and there aren't free trips and all of the things that have been abused in the past, and that cuts across Republicans and Democrats, and it's all so that we can try to do a good job and give confidence to the American people.

But the challenge we have is giving us confidence, giving this Nation confidence that the Congress actually has as its first priorities the needs of the American families, not the needs of the corporations that are doing really well, which is not to say get in their way because we've got to have jobs and corporations do good things and create wealth, but we have to have a commitment to building a middle class.

What's always been the great hallmark of American democracy has been we've had an economic agenda that has said to people, who are willing to work, that they could climb the ladder of opportunity, and we pursued policies that gave them the chance to do it. Affordable and accessible education, affordable and accessible health care, nondiscrimination, the big fight that this country had for years that ultimately we've made enormous progress on. So people, regardless of the color of their skin, their sexual orientation, their religion, they have something to offer and they want to work, they're going to have a chance to get ahead.

Much of what we're trying to do on ethics, I agree with you. We served in the State legislatures. We had sunshine laws. We didn't have lobbyists buying things. It's all an alien situation that has been described here in D.C., but we're trying to bring the Iowa values and Vermont values, Florida, Colorado, here to D.C., and we've got to hang on to that. But it's all in service of trying to get the job done so that we have an economic agenda that helps average people.

Mr. BRALEY of Iowa. I want to just follow up on your comment that I think is very prudent that we hear about that people don't talk about a lot, and that is the disappearing American middle class. And I'm here surrounded by distinguished colleagues, and I'm going to make you the economic physicians and make a diagnosis.

If you look at the symptoms of what we talked about, all of us, out on the campaign trail leading up to last November's election, you look at the fact that you've got 47 million Americans without health insurance, 37 million Americans living below the poverty line. That sets a floor of where your middle class starts, and when those numbers keep growing, we know, at least I think we should know, that we've got a problem, that we need to do more to drive those numbers into what we've traditionally associated with the middle class, which says that if you work hard, you play by the rules, and you get minimum opportunities to assist you to get up a rung on the economic ladder, you're going to do better, your family's going to do better, your children are going to do better and you're going to create a stable environment that contributes not just to this society but to the way that we think of ourselves as Americans.

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. I was just thinking as you're talking about the economic dream and the responsibility, and one of the things that I heard on the campaign trail over and over and over again, and I just felt that in my own heart as a small businessman, we had 75 employees in our business, was the fact that this government, for so many years, was just operating in this deficit higher and higher, spend and spend and spend.

And it's one thing we talk about lower taxes, which obviously we want lower taxes, but you have to have lower spending. It has to balance, and it still just goes beyond my imagination as to why Members of Congress over the last number of years could spend and spend and borrow 10s of billions of dollars.

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Hundreds.

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. From China, and seems like such an unfathomable, unsustainable kind of thing. Did you ever operate your small business that way or you personally? You balance your checkbook.

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Well, all of us come from States where you've got to pay your bills.

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. A balanced budget. Every one of our States at the end of the year, we all participated in a balanced budget, for 14 years.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. If I could jump in here, I mean what was happening under the prior Congress and under this President, President Bush, is a classic borrow and spend, borrow and spend. There was no limitation on what you would buy or what you'd spend, but you'd cut taxes and you'd prosecute a war that's cost us, by the end of 2008, $750 billion. The budget of Colorado is about $15 billion for a year. We'll have spent $750 billion in Iraq by the end of 2008. Right now we're at about $550 billion.

Mr. BRALEY of Iowa. My math is not good, but that sounded like about 30 years of a Colorado State budget to me.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. It's a long time, and it means that we've given young men and women to this fight in Iraq, we've given our treasure to Iraq, and we did it without the sacrifice that ordinarily comes when you fight a war and that is through taxes. So we ran this gigantic deficit.

Now, the Republican Congress last year didn't even pass a budget, and this year the Congress sent a budget to the President that balances the budget within 5 years, as opposed to continuing to run deficit and deficit and grow the debt and grow the debt. We will balance this budget within 5 years. Quite a feat. There's some places where we've got to tighten the belt, but as you said, we rolled up our sleeve, made some tough decisions and took on a budget that was absolutely out of control under the prior Congress, and we're doing something to benefit the American public and not saddle them with debt.

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. The discipline it takes to do this Federal budget, which we're doing right now and I'm really proud we're doing it, is the same discipline that you do with your own family budget. You don't keep borrowing and borrowing and borrowing if you can't afford to pay it back. And these are the kinds of things that are absolutely necessary. What is this principle that we passed I think unanimously in this House.

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Pay-as-you-go.

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. PAYGO, pay-as-you-go. You can't keep borrowing, you can't keep spending, adding new programs unless there's money in the budget. You can't pretend there's some trickle-down future great thing. If it happens, wonderful, but you know something, we all want lower taxes. We all want a reasonable amount of spending, but you've got to be fiscally responsible.

I'm just proud that we're getting things back on track. So maybe like in the 1990s, when we moved into a budget surplus, which we should have been proud of and sustained that over time, we want to go back to the old ways of the 1990s and certainly not the way of the last seven or eight years.

□ 2300

Mr. BRALEY of Iowa. I think one of the things that the American public doesn't really fully appreciate is how difficult it is to operate under pay-as-you-go budget rules, where you have to find someplace to cut in order to introduce a new program. Everybody has needs, everybody has wants, everybody comes here with their wish list.

But the harsh reality is we have to make difficult decisions every day about how we are going to allocate resources. That's one of the things that makes this job so important and so difficult.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. One of the things that I think is also important is we have taken steps to be fiscally responsible. We dealt with a budget early on in February. We are dealing with a budget right now. We are dealing with the supplemental emergency request.

We are able, in those budgets, to put our fingerprints and our values, our budgets reflect our values, and one of the things, that we had a number of bills that came through here today, some things that are going to happen tomorrow, is back in February, we increased benefits to veterans like hasn't been done in the 77 years of the Veterans Administration, because we recognized the service and the sacrifice that these men and women made for our country.

We have increased their benefits; instead of scrimping along and they get the last little bits, we are increasing those benefits. We are working on the military hospitals, the hospitals. We changed the fingerprint. That's a value that we hold. We added money for renewable energy research. That's another value that we hold. We are increasing money for children's health insurance, another value that we hold dear.

We have done this within these budgets where Republicans in the prior Congress couldn't even pass a budget. We are showing the values of improving the lives of the people in the middle, not the wealthiest 1 percent, but the hard-working people in the middle and the veterans who so valiantly served our country over the many years.

I am just proud to be part of a Congress, part of a class with all of you where we really are changing the direction of this Nation. This is a big ship

that we are steering here. It doesn't change very easily, but in the last 3 or 4 months, we made some major changes.

Mr. BRALEY of Iowa. I would just like to encourage all of my colleagues to watch a very special edition of ''60 Minutes'' this week. It's going to be focusing on the Ironman Battalion, the 133rd, based out of my hometown of Waterloo, Iowa. It is the whole 60 Minutes program. They are currently stationed in Iraq.

A member of the Iowa Legislature, Representative Ray Zirkelbach, has been serving and has missed two sessions of the Iowa Legislature because of the extension of their deployment.

I am very, very proud of the Ironman Battalion. I am in frequent contact with their commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Ben Correll, who is also from my district, Strawberry Point. I think it's significant that as we head into this Memorial Day weekend, people like me, my father served in the Marine Corps on Iwo Jima, that affected his entire life, my brother works at a VA hospital in Knoxville, Iowa; it's important that we pause and reflect on these sacrifices that we talk about every day in this Chamber, but also that we honor the brave men and women serving this country.

I think this program is going to do an excellent job of exposing everyday, middle-class Americans who picked up out of their very busy lives to serve this country in its time of need, and I think it will be a very informative and rewarding experience for everyone.

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. I thank you for that close, because as we do approach Memorial Day, we do want to extend our appreciation and our acknowledgment to our families all over the United States whose lives were affected by brave men and women who served our country and made the ultimate sacrifice.

We conclude this evening. I would like to thank my colleagues, Mr. PERLMUTTER, Mr. BRALEY of Iowa and Mr. WELCH, representing our freshmen class. We look forward to, every week, coming back here and giving a little update on what is going on.

We look forward to another busy week, and, of course, a working week at home catching up with our friends and family. Have a nice weekend, everyone, and we will see you soon.

ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from California (Mr. BILBRAY) is recognized for 55 minutes.

Mr. BILBRAY. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the chance to speak before the House today, and it's about an issue that many Americans all over this Nation are discussing, are listening about, and, frankly, are very concerned, if not outraged, and that is the proposal before the Senate this week that would actually not only allow, but demand amnesty for 12- to 20 million illegal immigrants in this country while millions wait patiently outside to immigrate into our country legally.

Tonight I am honored to be able to have colleagues here to be able to address the issues and actually talk about what's going on in their districts and address the issue that where does America go from here? How do we stop the Senate from making this terrible mistake? How do we turn the President and the Senate away from the path of amnesty that was followed in 1986, which caused the greatest influx of illegal immigration? How do we get the elite here in Washington to wake up to the fact that you do not stop illegal immigration by announcing to the world that you are now going to reward up to 20 million people who are illegally in the country?

I have the privilege to recognize the gentleman from Texas at this time.

Mr. CARTER. I thank my friend from California for recognizing me on this very important issue to the people of the United States of America, the opening of our borders and the pouring in of somewhere between 12- to 20 million people who have broken the laws of the United States of America.

I want to talk a little tonight about what's going on in my district and what's going on in Texas and what's going on in the country. But, first, I would like to respond to some talk that took place in the last hour, just for a second.

When we talk about gasoline prices, you know, all this talk about gasoline prices, I saw in this last hour, they kept trying to say all this was President Bush's fault. The Democrats are in charge of Congress. They have told us tomorrow that they are an equal branch of government, and that they are, in fact, in charge of this Nation at this time, and they are responsible for these gas prices. It's time to be responsible to go along with your rights. The Democrat majority has something they can do about gas prices, but, of course, let's look at what they have done.

The first thing they did in Six for '06 was take away the incentives to encourage domestic drilling and, in fact, place a tax on gas production, and, thus, decrease the availability of American petroleum to replace our burden on foreign petroleum. They proposed a cut-and-run theory on dealing with the issue in Iraq, which, if we cut and run, would turn over the second largest oil reserve in the world to Islamic terrorists.

They propose now, out of the Senate, to open our borders to the illegal aliens that are already here and to put together a policy which would encourage more illegal aliens to come across our borders and consume 20 million people's worth of oil and gas in this country. These are the things that they are criticizing the Republican minority for causing the gas prices to go up?

But that all just gives you a picture of where we are going right now. Now the Democrats have come out of the Senate, remember, they are the majority in the Senate, too, and they have come out with a proposal to, they say, solve our immigration crisis.

I want to say, and I have told this to the White House, and I have told it to my colleagues here in Congress, and I tell them again, the American people want a solution to the illegal immigrant problem. That's where they see and know the crisis is, and they are saying you have the tools and have had the tools to do something about this problem for a long time, over 20 years, and nothing has been done. The American people see this as a crisis, and they are right.

You know, for 20 years I sat on the bench as a district judge in Texas. When people broke the law, the people of our country, in Williamson County, Texas, they wanted the laws enforced. They called upon our sheriffs and our law enforcement officers to enforce the law, and they called upon our courts and our juries to enforce the law. I am proud to say we did.

This issue is a law enforcement issue as much as any other issue. There are between 12- and 20 million people in this country, we are told by some, came here to start a new life. You don't start a new life by breaking the law, and the American people know that. The American people want something done about it.

The American people want us to defend our sovereign borders of the United States and to tell these people, you cannot break the laws of the United States and then expect to come into this country and get the benefits and the privileges of being a United States citizen. They are unhappy.

When the Senate bill was announced, I believe it was last Friday, before the end of the day and into Monday, we had over 1,000 phone calls, an estimation. I know we had over 400, I think it was, right here in D.C. Then our other two offices were overwhelmed with phone calls, all from citizens who we, you know, who are people of our community, who live and work in our community, and every one of them said this is an outrage. Do not support this concept of amnesty for people who have broken our laws. They have to be responsible for their own behavior. We raise our children to be responsible for their behavior, and we expect them to be.

We tell the American citizens, we set up a series of laws, we call it the rule of law. It is a basic principle of the Republic of the United States that the people respect the rule of law. Without it, democracy and the Republic cannot function. Yet we have proposed a bill that will waive the rule of law for up to 20 million or possibly more than 20 million people that are in this country illegally.

That's just not right, that's just basically old country boy not right to the folks back in Texas and to the folks, I believe, across this Nation. They get up

every day, and they abide by the laws of the United States. They pay their taxes. They do the right thing for the right reasons because that's what Americans do. That's the kind of people we want in the country, people who abide by the law.

To just say that it's a good way to start a new part of our population by letting them break the law to become part of our Nation, it just flies in the face of everything America thinks is right. We hear the argument, we are sure they are good people. I am sure they are good people. They are hard-working people. I have lived in Texas all my life, and I have seen this phenomena all my life.

These are hard-working people. I have visited with many of them in my limited Spanish and find them to be people looking for a job and who are hard-working. But it doesn't change the fact that they are starting their life in the United States of America illegally. This is wrong, and the American people know it's wrong.

Mr. BILBRAY. One of the things, I think, people misunderstand when they talk about the amnesty, that people that are here illegally working in the United States are not just violating immigration law. A lot of people don't realize that about 73 to 75 percent of everyone who is here illegally is working illegally because they acquired false documents, stole somebody's ID or identification to work, which is a felony.

The Kennedy proposal in the Senate not only gives amnesty, an exemption from prosecution, for being illegally in the country, but exempts them and gives amnesty for the felony they committed when they used somebody else's identification or used false documentation to acquire a job.

So we have got to remember that we are not only giving amnesty for immigration, we are now proposing that we will pick a certain population to be exempt from a felony violation and not only forgiven for that violation, but to be given a special program, the Z visa, that only those who have broken the law qualify for. Those individuals who have been waiting patiently to immigrate into this country illegally are not allowed, under this proposal, to have the Z option, to go for the Z visa.

That is a concept of rewarding illegal behavior, a little felony illegal behavior, when you are telling those who have not broken our laws that you are not going to offer them the same thing.

□ 2315

Mr. CARTER. Absolutely. And you hit on a very good point, and I thank the gentleman for yielding. The point that you hit on is that there are people that are trying to do it the right way, that have been waiting patiently to do this the right way in countries around this world; not just from our neighbors to the south, but all over this world that have waited patiently to get the opportunity to come to the United States, following the rules in the effort to go to work, enjoying the freedom of the world we live in, and ultimately by doing the right thing, the right way, hopefully become American citizens.

Mr. BILBRAY. Reclaiming my time. I am chairman of the Immigration Caucus, and I am proud that my mother is an immigrant, a legal immigrant. She came here, played by the rules; and, as she reminds me again and again, it is an insult to her and everyone else who played by the rules to gain legal status in this country to watch anybody, let alone the Senate of the United States, announce to the world that they are going to give up to 20 million people the cherished ability to live permanently in the United States and to give them a vehicle towards citizenship.

At this time, I have the honor to yield to the gentlewoman from North Carolina.

Ms. FOXX. I thank the gentleman for taking on the task of serving as chairman of our Immigration Caucus. I appreciate the leadership that you have given to it and I appreciate the comments that you and Congressman CARTER have made tonight. I have several points I would like to make.

The members of our caucus know that I am very keen on the use of language, and that language makes a big difference. And we keep hearing over and over from the supporters of this Senate bill that this is not amnesty. But I think it is important that we define the word ''amnesty,'' so I looked it up under dictionary.com unabridged.

The first definition: a general pardon for offenses, especially political offenses against the government, often granted before any trial or conviction.

And then I like this one, another one from Online Etymology Dictionary: pardon of past offenses, intentional overlooking.

I think that is what we are talking about here. And, again, I think it is important that we define what we are talking about. That is exactly what the Senate is proposing.

Now, the other thing that I want to say is that I am really concerned with the way this bill has come out. It is being debated in pieces. It was written in secret, sprung on us late in the day, and it didn't go through a committee structure as most of our bills do. It was brought straight to the floor of the Senate. The leadership of the Senate, the Democratic leadership of the Senate wanted to cram it through before the Memorial Day holiday.

Those kinds of actions are not the actions of people who are proud of what they are doing. If they were proud of this bill, they would have brought that bill to a committee, they would have debated it, they would have heard the arguments pro and con, and then they would have come up with something that was discussed openly with lots and lots of people. That is the way, as Congressman CARTER says, our Republic operates. We don't operate in secret. We don't do things like that. We don't cram bills through in a hurry, especially when they are so controversial.

You know, you mentioned, we want to talk a little bit about our districts. I live in, I think, the most beautiful area of the world, the Fifth District of North Carolina. I am very blessed to live there. And I live among, I think, the brightest, hardest-working people in the world. And they are very intelligent, very conscientious, very patriotic people. They are upset about this proposal. They don't like it.

Since I came to Congress a little over 2 years ago, I have been telling everybody who would listen, this is the biggest issue in my district, it is the biggest issue in most districts. And why? Because the American people, and again particularly the people in my district, have played by the rules and they understand the importance of the rule of law.

I tell folks over and over what makes this country so special are three things: the rule of law, our moral underpinnings, and our capitalistic way of life. But you can't have moral underpinnings and you can't have the capitalistic system if you don't have the rule of law.

Now, we can do something about illegal aliens who are here in our country. People say, oh, we can't do anything about them. We surely can. What we can do is start enforcing our laws. We have not been doing that. Both Democratic and Republican administrations are guilty of it. I can't forgive our Republican administrations because they are guilty of it, too. But we can close down our borders and we can enforce the laws as they are now. And I think that what we have to do is we have to look at this issue of illegal immigration in a very careful, law-respecting way. The solution doesn't lie in wholesale amnesty.

And the President has said that this bill will treat people with respect. Well, I respect the President, but I have to strongly disagree with him. Because from what I have seen so far, this bill fails to respect the millions of people who have worked within the system and have immigrated to our country legally. And those people who want to come to this country legally, they are doing it the right way. These people have done it the wrong way. We are not going to reward, we cannot reward illegal behavior by uttering platitudes about respect and fairness. Our first principle on immigration reform has to be upholding American laws. If we do not do that, then our system will be fundamentally flawed.

The bill that the Senate is proposing is going to legalize these people immediately. They talk about triggers being in there, but the triggers don't really go into effect. And the triggers are nothing but laws that we have already had in place for a long, long time. And if this bill passes and is signed by the President, we will be, I think, doing severe damage to our country, not just in the short run, because I think that it

will be both in the short run and in the long run. There will be a huge battle ahead of us if we pass this bill, because we are going to be facing more and more illegal immigration.

In addition, as I said before, the people of the Fifth District are very bright people. They know amnesty when they see it, and they know that if this bill or something even vaguely like it passes, it is going to dilute the meaning of citizenship in this country, and that is the last thing we want to do. We are the last best hope for freedom in this world; and if we don't enforce our laws and help people come here legally who want to come here, and deal with things on a case-by-case basis, we are simply going to destroy what it is that is wonderful about our country.

Congressman BILBRAY mentioned that his mother was an immigrant but came here legally. My father's parents came from Italy in the early 1900s; my mother's ancestors came much earlier than that from Scotland. But the Ellis Island model was a very, very good model. People had to come here, prove that they were healthy, prove that they either had a job or had a sponsor for them to be here. That worked wonderfully well in this country for a long, long time. And think that we have to have something akin to the Ellis Island experience again in this country, where we know that the people who are coming here are coming here because we need them here or they provide a benefit and they can be independent. They will not have to have public assistance.

Mr. BILBRAY. If I may reclaim my time. I think the one thing we don't talk about enough in this country is that there is this perception that we don't allow very much legal immigration inside.

The United States today, Mr. Speaker, accepts more legal immigration than all the rest of the world combined. We are accepting more legal immigration today than at any other time in the history of our Republic. This country is one of the most gracious and welcoming countries, the most welcoming country in the history of the world. And so we have nothing to apologize for when it comes to accommodating, except for the fact that we made a terrible mistake in 1986.

When you were talking about the definition of amnesty, it actually comes from the Latin word for amnesia. And maybe what the Senate is forgetting in having this amnesia is what happened the last time they proposed this type of amnesty.

Einstein said that insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result. Let's just look at what happened when Mr. KENNEDY, who promised in 1986 this would be the last amnesty that America would ever have, clearly stated, ''It will never happen again.''

Twenty years ago, we tried this experiment of rewarding illegal immigration. We were promised that it was only going to be 1 million illegals that were given amnesty. It turned out it was 3 million. Now, 20 years later, rather than having 3 illegals in our country we have 12 to 20. Mr. KENNEDY, did your amnesty really eliminate illegal immigration?

I will tell you as somebody who was down at the border, I was actually the chairman of San Diego County on the border, a county of 3 million. The greatest influx of illegal immigration that we have seen in this country happened immediately after the last amnesty. And anyone who says that we are going to stop illegal immigration by announcing to the world that 20 million illegals got rewarded is either ignorant of the facts or willing to fabricate verifications that are absolutely outrageous. And you cannot stop illegal immigration when you announce that you are going to reward it, and the proof is in history. Last time, Mr. KENNEDY, you did this, we had the largest illegal immigration population.

And, frankly, I think there are people who are proposing this amnesty who know what it will do but will not come clean with the American people. And I think the one thing we saw this week, and I think all of us will agree, is that the elite in Washington think that the American people don't understand this issue. Well, the American people understood it. Within 45 minutes after Mr. KENNEDY and the Senators were doing their press conference, the American people started making phone calls, they started e-mailing, they started faxing. They sent a signal to the Senators and they sent a signal to us that, Washington, we are watching and we are not going to fall for it this time. We are going to stand up and defend our grandchildren's birthright, and we are going to start demanding that you start doing the right thing.

And I think the guilt goes both ways. The public is fed up with the Republicans and Democrats, because they have not seen an administration enforce the law. We have to gain credibility that we really can be trusted with the security of this country by being willing to do the right thing and enforce the immigration laws here. And not until we do that, no matter who is President, no matter what party is in power, will the American public trust us to move on with a lot of other agendas.

Ms. FOXX. I just want to ask one question. I think that you have touched on a very important point again, and that is that we here in the House of Representatives are the Representatives of the people. We are the people's House. And I think the Senate is completely out of touch with what the sentiment is in this country.

And I agree with you, the American people get it. The people of my district get it, and they are very, very bright. I think that we need to be listening to those people. And the House generally does listen to the people.

And I hope that they are going to send a very, very strong message to the Senators about how they feel about this, and turn this around in the Senate, because we need this bill to be killed in the Senate and not even come to the House of Representatives to be debated. But I know that we as Republicans are going to have some alternatives that we will be presenting in this House, and I hope that the majority party, which has made so many promises, none of which it has kept in this session of the Congress, will listen to the people and say, we are going to take up legislation that will do what needs to be done, which is protect our borders and provide for national security and give the people a true immigration reform.

□ 2330

Mr. BILBRAY. I appreciate that. And actually, I guess we've got to remember that 11 months ago, I was standing exactly where you are and gave my acceptance speech for being sworn into Congress. And there were 18 candidates for the 50th District in California. And the people of San Diego wanted to send a clear message to Washington that this illegal immigration issue is something that people need to address. And I think today you're hearing not just one district scream loud and clear that they want the illegal immigration issue addressed, but you're seeing people calling from all the districts, calling their Representatives and demanding that we finally do the right thing and not sell out on this issue.

I'd like yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. CARTER. And I thank the gentleman for yielding. And you mentioned that your wife came here as an immigrant, and my wife came here as an immigrant also. And I'd like to share just a little bit of our story because I think it gives us a good comparison to what's being proposed in the Senate today and what we used to operate under in this country when you do it right.

I am very blessed to the fact that my wife, Erica, fell in love with a law student from the University of Texas law school back in 1965. And I happen to humbly be that law student. And we married in 1968.

And to be very honest, I really never even thought about the fact that my wife might have to actually apply to come to the United States after she had married a red-blooded American. You know, I thought that was just the ticket, but quickly found out that wasn't the ticket.

We had to go down to the embassy, and we had to fill out all these papers. We had to have someone pledge $5,000 to ensure that she would have a sponsor who would take care of her when, if she was allowed to enter the United States and ultimately get a green card to be a resident alien of the United States.

She had to take a physical, and as she took a physical with several other women her age, one of whom looked very much like her, when they got the lung exams back, this is a personal

thing that happened to us, they came to us and said, I'm sorry, but our exam of your wife's X-Rays shows that she's got tuberculosis, and she may not enter the United States, which we were newly married. We hadn't even been married a month at that time, maybe a month and a half. We were crushed. And then the doctor came back and said, I'm sorry, we got the wrong X-Ray. This is something we will never forget. And unfortunately, that X-Ray was for another redheaded girl who was in the same physical group that had their physicals, and so I felt very sorry for her, who was also marrying an American, but she was not going to be allowed to come to the United States because she had tuberculosis. But, praise God, it wasn't my wife.

So we paid our fee. We took our physical examination, we had the background check which is required for all people coming into the United States, and then when we arrived in the United States, in those days every year you had to register with the Federal Government. Every person who was not a citizen but had a green card, between January 1 and January 31 you went down to the post office and you filled out a form every year and told the United States Government where you were if you were a green card holder in the United States. We don't have that provision anymore. It went away.

We did all those things. My wife learned American history. She learned the English language. In the meantime, she had three American children, but she still met all the qualifications that you had to have to get to be an American citizen. And in 1976, I was very proud to see my wife raise her right hand and take the oath of allegiance to the United States of America and become a United States citizen. And I am proud of her for many, many reasons, and that's one of them today.

That's how you do it to do it right, to do it legally, and to become part of what this mysterious wonder that is America. It's not to sneak across a border in the middle of the night and hide out as a lawbreaker to make money. That's not the way you're supposed to come into the United States of America.

And as you pointed out, we have a procedure where people legally come here by the millions, and we welcome them.

And let me point one more thing out, and then I'm going to yield back, and that is here about a month ago we had about, I don't know, looked like several hundred people walking around this building with T shirts on that said ''Legalize the Irish.'' And I stopped some of them in the elevator and said, what in the world does that mean? And they said, well, we're all here illegally, and we want to be made legal.

This is not an Hispanic issue. This is an issue for the people who came to Disneyland and never went home. This is the people from all over the world that have overstayed their visas and are staying in the United States, as well as those who come across our borders. They are just as big starting life as a lawbreaker as people who swam the Rio Grande or walked across the desert of Arizona or California or New Mexico in the middle of the night. This is something that is not the right way to become an American citizen, and we can do better than this, and we must. And I yield back.

Mr. BILBRAY. Reclaiming my time. I mean, the American people are such a patient, humanitarian people that maybe sometimes we forget there's a fine line between being the nice guy and being a patsy. My mother immigrated from Australia. She got her citizenship, and she's very proud that she was one of the first Australian war brides to get her citizenship, April 1946. And when she sees that there are not only illegals in the country saying they want to be legalized, they want amnesty, what shocks her is that the United States allows people to be here illegally and demand, demand that America change its laws to accommodate them because they do not want to play by the rules.

What other Nation on Earth would allow people to be illegally in their country and then demand that their duly elected representative government modify its statutes to accommodate them because they do not want to be bothered by following the laws of their host country?

What kind of relationship do we expect to come from a situation to where we accommodate people who come to this country illegally, while we tell those patiently that want to come here legally, sorry, you get put on the back of the list?

And, you know, I'm very impressed. Learning a new language is always a big challenge, and your wife did that. My wife didn't immigrate from a foreign country. She came from New Orleans, and we're still trying to understand some of the things she says. My mother immigrated from Australia, and the Australians are going to have to learn English someday themselves.

But I think the real sad fact is that there are actually people that think that there's some good that can come out of this not only for America, but for the immigrants and immigrants around the world if we think breaking the law is now going to be a standard. If you want to live in a country where their law is bought and sold and shifted around by politicians just for political expediency, there's a lot of countries you can go to. Those countries tend to be poor, downtrodden, and poverty-stricken, and, by the way, happen to be the places that a lot of these illegal immigrants are coming from. But why transfer that corruption from those Third World countries into this country and destroy the mother's milk of freedom, the concept of the rule of law, while at the same time you're saying that the economic backbone of freedom, the middle class, is expendable at the same time?

In fact, there are people that try to accommodate illegal immigration to such a point that this bill that the Senate is proposing will say that an illegal alien qualifies for in-State tuition, even though a United States citizen doesn't qualify. And this really hits me personally, because in the State of California, where I have been a resident since the day I was born, I have paid taxes my entire adult life, I was told that my children, to get in-State tuition, I had to show a personal tax return. But somebody that they suspect is an illegal alien doesn't have to show their personal records; they just have to show utility bills. And when I said, I'll show you my utility bills, I'll show you all the way back to the '70s; oh, excuse me, sir, you don't qualify because we don't think you're illegal.

So if the American people think this is just about illegals and just about, you know, 12- to 20 million, they've got to remember that they are going to be put in a position of having to prove more than somebody who is illegally in this country; that American citizens will become second-class citizens to those who are not even citizens and not even legal. This is how absurd this line goes if you follow Mr. KENNEDY off the edge.

And remember, this is the same man, in 1986, that said no more amnesties anymore. I guarantee it. That is a sad state of affairs that the American people are facing, that same big lie, 20 years later. And it's time we say no.

And I'm so proud, I am so proud to be an American, knowing that the American people called those Senators, e-mailed them, faxed them and wrote them to where the Senate, rather than trying to cram this through this week, were forced to back off and give some time. And now this next week the American people will have more time to read the fine print, read about things like in-State tuition and loans to illegal aliens, and read about what is really in this bill and how bad it really is.

And I'd like to yield back to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. CARTER. And I thank the gentleman for yielding. There are a lot of interesting things in this bill that common sense tells you that nobody's thinking about this. I'll just give one example. They have told us that there are people that have been waiting legally, and they're going to make sure that these illegals will get behind those people, and it will take approximately 8 years to process these people.

Now, I just sat down and looked at it. If you take the people that are in the pipeline right now, and I don't remember the number, but it's a couple of million, I think, and we're going to process them over 8 years to get them processed in doing it the right way, these are people doing it the right way, and I can tell you this, I know this for a fact. The last time I checked, which was about 3 months ago, those people we were helping who were doing it

right processed their papers through the San Antonio office, which is where, our part of Texas, I live just north of Austin, San Antonio office, they were still working on 1999 and 2000. They may be up to halfway to 2001 right now. So they're 7 or 8 years behind. So they got the number right.

Now they're going to tell us that they're going to take 12 million and instantly process them for a Z visa. About 18 months they say it'll take. So that tells you right off that the standards have got to be different. They have to be different.

And I was asking questions of someone who seemed to have some knowledge of the bill, and he said, well, you take a full handprint, you run it through all the criminal records, and you find out whether they've got a criminal record. Well, if that's so easy, why is the number one answer that we get from the Immigration and Naturalization Service when we call them, why are we delayed, FBI's got to do background checks? These things are extensive. They take a long time. Wait a minute. Take a full handprint and run it through the records. That's what we're told we're going to for these Z visas. That's not enough for the legal people, but it seems to be enough for the illegal people.

How about the fact that we've got diseases south of our southern border which are incurable, like a strain of tuberculosis? Shouldn't everybody that's here have a medical check? Where is it? Is it going to be there? It doesn't sound like it is.

Mr. BILBRAY. Not even mentioned.

Mr. CARTER. Not even mentioned.

So, you know, I think there was some good-hearted people tried, but they tried miserably on this bill. The American people want to take our time and do this right. And right now their concern, if you ask them, you don't hear them say, I want new immigration policy. You hear them say, I want the illegal immigration problem stopped, which means pour the resources to the border, pour the resources to law enforcement, enforce the laws that are on the books. And then when the American people say, you know what, we can trust our government again to enforce the law, that's when they will be willing to say, now let's work with coming up with alternatives to make this whole thing work. And we can do it right the next time.

This is the wrong bill, the wrong time and, as Ms. FOXX pointed out, shoved down our throat by the Democrat majority.

□ 2345

Mr. BILBRAY. Congressman, you hit on the real point. In a Republic where the governed get to choose the government, trust is an essential component. And there isn't any trust in the American people when it comes to the Federal Government enforcing our immigration laws. There isn't any credibility in the Federal Government when it comes to stopping illegal immigration.

The American people believe, and rightfully so, that special interests manipulate the Federal Government to stop illegal immigration from being controlled in the past, and that unless they really scream loud and start holding elected officials accountable at the polling box, that they are going to continue to have that type of corruption delivered to them when it comes to the immigration issue.

I want to just say clearly, a lot of people say why am I feeling so strong on this concept of amnesty? Why can't we just do it one more time? Let me tell you something. I have talked to people south of the border and in Third World countries all over the world. And if people would take the time to listen.

To give an example, a congressman in Zacatecas, Mexico, a Mexican congressman, says to me, Look, BRIAN, you know you have got to educate these people because we all down here know you are going to give amnesty again. They are all going to be U.S. citizens. Why do you think they are coming up illegally? They know you are going to reward them.

You go down to places like Central America. They say, Look, we are told come on up now. America is going to give us amnesty. We are going to become citizens. The way to America is come illegal. That message is being heard around the world. We need to send a clear and defined message that says no more amnesty, no more rewards for illegal behavior. You want to be an American? You follow the law and play by the rules. If you are not willing to do it, we will never give amnesty again. And, believe me, if we send that clear message, if we stop this amnesty, people around world will finally understand, no, it is no longer the option to come here illegally. You have got to play by the rules.

And then and only then will we see the ability to control not just our border; but our neighborhoods, our jobs, our parks, our hospitals, our schools, are finally going to be ours, and those that we choose to be our neighbors, not somebody who snuck in and stole away in the middle of the night.

I am so honored to stand here today with you, sir. I appreciate the hard work that you have given the people of Texas and your district, and I look forward to working with you to make sure that we present a workable, enforceable immigration policy that will stop illegal immigration and not allow this proposal in the Senate to move in and allow another illegal immigration wave being caused by another ill-fated amnesty scheme. Thank you very much.

Mr. CARTER. If the gentleman would yield, I am very honored to appear here with you, Mr. Chairman, with all the great work you are doing on the Immigration Caucus trying to come up with a solution to this illegal immigration in this country. I salute you and all of our colleagues who join you in this effort to come up with reasonable solutions for a very difficult problem.

I want to join you in saying to the world, we are asking the rule of law to prevail. It's very simple. This Nation was built on the rule of law. Let the rule of law prevail. And the rule of law does show compassion on the poor and the downtrodden, but it has to exist or they have no protection. And if we start to tear down the rule of law, it is going to be as harmful to those who are downtrodden and poor as it is to the richest man in the world because the rule of law is the basis of our Republic.

So I reach out to the Hispanic community who feels like this is targeted to them and say, no, it is targeted to all who come into our country illegally. I reach out to those friends back home that say be compassionate, and say to them we can be compassionate. Let's get law and order back in our land and then let's show compassion. But law and order must come first. It is what this country was built on.

Mr. BILBRAY. I would like to close, Mr. Speaker, by announcing that the American people have really spoken this week, stopped the Senate from forcing something through the Senate. And not only that, they have sent the message to their Members of the House of Representatives. And I would like to announce today that this week, because of all the reaction and the backlash against the Senate amnesty scheme, five new Members have joined the Immigration Reform Caucus in the House of Representatives. And I am very happy to welcome new Members in that are committed and working hard to be able to finally do the right thing on illegal immigration and start enforcing our laws the way the American people want to do; securing our borders and securing our neighborhoods and securing our future for our grandchildren.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COURTNEY). Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 50 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

N O T I C E

Incomplete record of House proceedings. Except for concluding business which follows, today's House proceedings will be continued in the next issue of the Record.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 8 of rule XII, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

1940. A letter from the Chief Counsel, FEMA, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Final Flood Elevation Determinations — received April 1, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

1941. A letter from the Counsel for Legislation and Regulations, Department of Housing and Urban Development, transmitting the Department's final rule — Public Access to HUD Records Under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and Production of Material or Provision of Testimony by HUD Employees [Docket No. FR-5015-F-02] (RIN: 2501-AD18) received April 16, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

1942. A letter from the Assistant to the Board, Federal Reserve System (Board), transmitting the Board's final rule — Expanded Examination Cycle for Certain Small Insured Depository Institutions and U.S. Branches and Agencies of Foreign Banks [Docket No. R-1279] received April 10, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

1943. A letter from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans; Illinois [EPA-R05-OAR-2007-0138; FRL-8302-5] received April 26, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

1944. A letter from the General Counsel, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — Standards for Business Practices and Communication Protocols for Public Utilities (Docket No. RM05-5-003; Order No. 676-B) received May 18, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

1945. A letter from the Director, Office of Congressional Affairs, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — List of Approved Spent Fuel Storage Casks: HI-STORM 100 Revision 3 (RIN: 3150-AH98) received April 1, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

1946. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Export Administration, Department of Commerce, transmitting the Department's final rule — Chemical Weapons Convention Regulations: UDOC ''Change in Inspection Status Form;'' Amendments to Records Review and Recordkeeping Requirements; Additions to the List of States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) [Docket No. 060831231-7030-02] (RIN: 0694-AD53) received April 10, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

1947. A letter from the Assistant Secretary Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting the Department's final rule — Death and Estates. [Public Notice: 5582] (RIN: 1400-AC24) received April 1, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

1948. A letter from the Acting Assoc. Director, PP&I, Department of the Treasury, transmitting the Department's final rule — Sudanese Sanctions Regulations; Iranian Transactions Regulations — received April 10, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

1949. A letter from the Director, Office of Personnel Management, transmitting the Office's final rule — Allowances and Differentials (RIN: 3206-AL07) received April 26, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

1950. A letter from the Acting Director Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act Provisions; Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Northeast (NE) Multispecies Fishery; Modification of the Yellowtail Flounder Landing Limit for the U.S./Canada Management Area [Docket No. 04011-2010-4114-02; I.D. 041707E] received May 14, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

1951. A letter from the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Atlantic Highly Migratory Species (HMS); U.S. Atlantic Billfish Tournament Management Measures [Docket No. 070307055-7099-02; I.D. 022607F] (RIN: 0648-AV25) received May 18, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

1952. A letter from the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Northeast Multispecies Fishery; Total Allowable Catches for Georges Bank Cod, Haddock, and Yellowtail Flounder in the U.S./Canada Management Area for Fishing Year 2007 [Docket No. 070227048-7091-02; I.D. 020807C] (RIN: 0648-AU63) received May 18, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

1953. A letter from the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Magnuson-Stevens Act Provisions; Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Northeast Multispecies Fishery; 2007 Georges Bank Cod Hook Sector Operations Plan and Agreement and Allocation of Georges Bank Cod Total Allowable Catch [Docket No 070322064-02; I.D. 030607E] (RIN: 0648-AV20) received May 18, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

1954. A letter from the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act Provisions; Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Northeast Multispecies Fishery; 2007 Georges Bank Cod Fixed Gear Sector Operations Plan and Agreement and Allocation of Georges Bank Cod Total Allowable Catch [Docket No. 070321063-7098-02; I.D. 031607E] (RIN: 0648-AV22) received May 18, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

1955. A letter from the Federal Liaison Officer, Department of Commerce, transmitting the Department's final rule — Correspondence with the Madrid Processing Unit of the United States Patent and Trademark Office [Docket No.: PTO-T-2007-0005] (RIN: 0651-AC11) received April 17, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

1956. A letter from the Regulations Coordinator, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's final rule — Claims Collection (RIN: 0991-AB18) received March 8, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

1957. A letter from the Regulations Coordinator, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's final rule — Salary Offset (RIN: 0991-AB19) received March 8, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

1958. A letter from the Counsel for Legislation and Regulations, Department of Housing and Urban Development, transmitting the Department's final rule — Certification and Funding of State and Local Fair Housing Enforcement Agencies [Docket No. FR-4748-F-02] (RIN: 2529-AA90) received April 27, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

1959. A letter from the Administrator, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting notification that funding under Title V, subsection 503(b)(3) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, as amended, has exceeded $5 million for the cost of response and recovery efforts for FEMA-3274-EM in the State of Indiana, pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 5193; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1960. A letter from the Director of Reg Management, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department's final rule — Administration of VA Educational Benefits — Centralized Certification (RIN: 2900-AL43) received April 25, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

1961. A letter from the Director of Reg Management, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department's final rule — Medical: Informed Consent — Designate Health Care Professionals to Obtain Informed Consent. (RIN: 2900-AM21) received April 1, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

1962. A letter from the Regulations Coordi-

nator, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's final rule — Child Care and Development Fund State Match Provisions (RIN: 0970-AC18) received May 18, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

1963. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule — Section 1274.—-Determination of Issue Price in the Case of Certain Debt Instruments Issued for Property (Rev. Rul. 2007-36) received May 21, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

1964. A letter from the Acting Regulations Officer of Social Security, Social Security Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Privacy and Disclosure of Official Records and Information [Docket No. SSA 2006-0074] (RIN: 0960-AE88) received May 18, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.