

bill. The President has agreed to sign this bill. Instead, the Democratic leadership has decided to use funding for our veterans as a smokescreen in an effort to pass billions in unrelated domestic spending.

Our veterans are not pawns in a political game. They are heroes. These funding issues should have been considered separately and on their own merits. Please join me in calling upon the Democratic leadership to put our veterans first and send a clean Veterans appropriation bill to the President now.

IN SUPPORT OF EQUITY FOR FILIPINO VETERANS OF WORLD WAR II

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

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. Speaker, Filipino veterans are those who answered the call of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and served alongside our Armed Forces during World War II. They fought shoulder-to-shoulder with American servicemen, and we promised to provide full veterans benefits to them. While we have made some progress toward that goal, we have not yet achieved the full equity that the Filipino veterans deserve.

I am proud to be an original cosponsor of H.R. 760, the Filipino Veterans Equity Act, which, in essence, makes good on the promise that our government made to these brave men over 60 years ago.

Our Filipino veterans are in the twilight of their lives. Of the 250,000 soldiers that fought with us, only 18,000 survive today. Of that number, 2,000 reside in my State of Hawaii.

As we honor our veterans all across the country this Veterans Day, let us include those Filipino veterans who still await a promise unfulfilled.

BIBLES PROHIBITED IN CHINA

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

Mr. MCCOTTER. Mr. Speaker, as the world stumbles toward the Communist propaganda extravaganza labeled the Beijing Olympics, somewhere Chairman Mao is looking up at us and laughing.

According to the Catholic News Agency, Bibles and all other religious symbols are among Communist China's list of athletes' "prohibited objects" due to "security concerns."

Since the leader of the Free World, President Bush, has articulated his eagerness to attend Communist China's Olympics, I am compelled to ask three questions:

Mr. President, how many Bibles will you be taking to Beijing? Will you visit the five bishops and 15 priests in prison for opposing the Communist regime's official church? And will you tell Chi-

na's Communist tyrants this fundamental truth: No good government denies God's presence.

HONORING OUR VETERANS

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

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank our Nation's veterans and their families for their dedication, their service and their sacrifice.

As we approach Veterans Day, I commend the Democratic leadership for working with our Senate colleagues to pass a Veterans appropriations bill last night. This bill is the largest increase in veterans funding ever, \$3.7 billion over what the President asked.

This bill will provide our veterans with desperately needed health care services, including funds specifically allocated to treat the rising number of veterans with traumatic brain injury and PTSD.

To date, we have lost more than 4,000 troops and 30,000 troops have been wounded in Afghanistan and Iraq. We must do everything we can to take care of our servicemembers when they come home to their families and their communities, and we will bring them home. But until that day, this Congress will do everything we can to take care of our veterans and their families.

BIPARTISANSHIP

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

Mr. WALBERG. Bipartisanship. You hear this expression tossed around quite frequently in political circles, so much so that perhaps it has almost become a cliché.

Sadly, we don't see genuine examples of bipartisan cooperation in this Chamber enough, and this no doubt disappoints the American people. Over 140 days ago, Democrats and Republicans worked together to pass one of the largest necessary spending increases in the 77-year history of the Department of Veterans Affairs. To ensure the health and well-being of our veterans, this bill is a needed investment veterans care about and the care they need to receive.

Eight weeks ago, a similar version passed the Senate on a bipartisan basis. Instead of allowing the House and Senate to iron out minor differences yesterday, the House leadership insisted that veterans funding be held hostage for a wasteful, pork-barrel spending bill that would increase the deficit by \$10 billion.

No doubt this shameful game further disappointed the already jaded public perception of Congress.

Let's get back to bipartisanship and swiftly pass this important legislation in its original form. Then together, on behalf of our veterans, we can all celebrate when it becomes law.

VETERANS FUNDING BILL

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

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, as a veteran of the United States, I rise in support of the House bill on veterans funding.

Over the last 5 years, hundreds of thousands of Americans, military personnel, have bravely served this country in Iraq and Afghanistan.

I am proud that North Carolina is home to many of these soldiers and also has one of the highest veteran populations in the country. Unfortunately, VA health care is still not adequately prepared to care for those who are returning from combat. Today, nearly 400,000 veterans are faced with unreasonable delays for their claims to be processed.

Yesterday, this Democratic House once again fulfilled its commitment to our veterans by passing a conference report that is \$3.7 billion over President Bush's request for veterans medical care, claims processing personnel and for facility improvements. The conference report includes the largest increase in funding in the 77-year history of the VA to fund these health care needs, as well as funds for 1,800 new processors to alleviate the claims backlog.

Despite a veto threat from this President, who is spending millions of dollars on roads, schools and health care in Iraq and Afghanistan, this House passed the VA funding bill on a vote of 269-142. The Senate should follow our lead, and the President should reverse his course and sign this vital bill into law.

MASTER GUNNERY SERGEANT JAMES PETERSON

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

Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, a man that is faithful to his family, church and community, MGySgt James Peterson is distinguished and honored as a true American veteran.

His unit invaded Iwo Jima on February 19, 1945, and he fought bravely to see the American flag flown over Mount Suribachi. He then served 30 months in the South Pacific, after which he was assigned to be a drill instructor at the recruit depot in San Diego.

In honor of our veterans who have served and are serving this country now, MGySgt James Peterson of Aiken, South Carolina, is truly an American soldier through and through. Americans are in debt for his service in the Marine Corps, and Mr. Peterson will always be honored as an American soldier who fought to defend American freedom.

UNITED STATES-PERU TRADE
PROMOTION AGREEMENT

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. The dollar is dropping like a rock. We're borrowing \$2 billion a day from overseas to buy things we don't make anymore. We've lost 4 million manufacturing jobs. Millions of middle-class Americans are seeing their pay stagnant or declining.

Our current trade policy is a dismal failure. It's a failed engine for our economy. Now comes the Peru Free Trade Agreement. The advocates tell you the burgeoning middle class of Peru, all three of them, are going to go out and be a huge market for the goods we don't make in America anymore.

They tout the breakthroughs on modest labor and environmental provisions. Well, the destructive multinational-written chapter 11 provisions remain at the center of this trade agreement. If trade is the engine that drives our economy, it needs an overhaul. Instead, with this bill, we are getting a new hood ornament, some side-view mirrors and a misbegotten cousin of NAFTA as a trade policy.

WELCOME TO FRENCH PRESIDENT
NICOLAS SARKOZY

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to welcome French President Nicolas Sarkozy and thank him for addressing the joint session of Congress this morning.

As a person of French heritage, I know we are all grateful for his tribute to American veterans. France was our first ally in the American Revolution, as symbolized by the portrait of Marquis de Lafayette here in the Chamber. France remains an important partner in international affairs and a major investor in the American economy.

I am grateful that the midlands of South Carolina is home to three Michelin tire manufacturing plants. The Associated Press has recognized President Sarkozy as a blunt and uncompromising pro-American conservative.

With his leadership, I am confident our historic alliance will be strengthened as we pursue common goals of global economic development and face down a common enemy in the global war on terrorism.

I look forward to working with my colleagues and our friends of France in promoting our vibrant partnership.

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

“PRESIDENT NO” ATTEMPTS TO
USE VETO PEN AS DISTRACTION
FROM HIS FISCAL MANAGEMENT

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

Mr. HODES. Mr. Speaker, over the last couple of weeks, President Bush has turned into President Veto, saying “no” to a bill that would provide 10 million children access to health care and then saying “no” last week to a bill that would protect the lives and livelihoods of millions of Americans from the devastating impact of flooding.

After 6 years of signing any bill that came to his desk and disregarding the impact legislation would have on our Nation's fiscal well-being, President Bush is now trying to claim the mantle of fiscal responsibility.

Who, exactly, is the President trying to fool? He turned a \$5.6 trillion surplus that he inherited from President Clinton into a \$3 trillion deficit. That's a reversal of fortune of \$8 trillion.

When Democrats took control of Congress, we vowed to restore fiscal sanity, and we began by restoring sensible pay-as-you-go rules. Every bill that we have brought to this floor has complied with these rules, but the President continues to imply that he is more fiscally responsible than this new Congress.

The American people should not and will not be fooled by this change in rhetoric.

THE FRENCH PRESIDENT AND THE
AMERICAN SOLDIER

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

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, the French president addressed a joint session of Congress today, and he, like General Lafayette before him, talked about the American soldier, the warrior's courage, determination, resilience and love of freedom more than life itself.

As we approach Veterans Day, French President Nicolas Sarkozy's words are appropriate to show how the world, that has benefited from the American GI, view our military.

He said this morning:

“The men and women of my generation heard their grandparents talk about how in 1917 America saved France at a time when it had reached the final limits of its strength.

“The men and women of my generation heard their parents talk about how in 1944 America returned to free Europe from the horrifying tyranny that threatened to enslave it.

“Fathers took their sons to see the vast cemeteries where, under thousands of white crosses so far from home, thousands of young American soldiers lay who had fallen not to defend their own freedom but the freedom of all others, not to defend their own families, their own homeland, but to defend humanity as a whole.”

Mr. Speaker, the world's freedom fighter has always been the American soldier.

And that's just the way it is.

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CONGRESSIONAL REPUBLICAN
LEADERS ARE NOT COMMITTED
TO A STRONGER CHIP BILL

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

Mr. WU. Mr. Speaker, last night big, rich tobacco companies killed health care in Oregon for little poor kids. Now we in Congress must and can do better for our entire Nation.

But Republican leaders refuse to allow bipartisan negotiators to reach a compromise that would give 10 million American children the health care they need and deserve. The Republican leaders' refusal to negotiate only highlights their continued opposition to health care for the children of low-income working families.

Unfortunately, President Bush also remains unmoved by the health care needs of our children. The President has routinely refused to meet with congressional leaders, even to discuss the children's health care insurance program.

While President Bush works against children's health care, Republicans and Democrats will continue to work together to identify a compromise that will afford health care to 10 million American children. A bipartisan majority of us realize just how important it is to ensure that children have access. The health care of the 10 million American children and over 100,000 children in Oregon is simply too important to ignore.

FREE TRADE AGREEMENTS

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

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, every time the United States signs a free trade agreement with a developing country, this time the Bush Peru agreement, we end up outsourcing more wealth and more middle-class jobs. We're already in deficit with Peru under existing conditions. And just like Mexico, when we signed that agreement, we went from a surplus to a gigantic deficit.

If labor provisions in the agreement are so good, why are no trade unions in our country or Peru supporting the agreement? Could it be because the agreement does not require the Peruvians to comply with core labor “rights”, but rather, with vague and unenforceable labor “principles” which are then cleverly placed in the preamble or the declaration of the agreement and not in the enforceable and binding core standards, as do the International Labor Organization conventions?

You know, this week the Peruvian miners are talking to us. They are on