committees together, and this is what we talk about, bipartisan action on the floor of the House.

Ladies, thank you so much for coming to visit with me. I will take this pink sweater and this red ribbon and I will look gorgeous.

But I am glad to join my colleagues here on the floor of the House as we talk about the economic stimulus, because the people of Ohio need a stimulus. They need jobs, they need health care, and they need jobs that make real money. They need to be saved from these mortgage brokers who have hurt them deeply.

I recognize my ''sons,'' of whom I am so very proud.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Thank you so very much, Mrs. JONES. Being a member of the Ways and Means Committee, we talk about the economy. I know that we will have a lot to do and say about that, and we talked about a bipartisan spirit. But we have, I think, like 2 more minutes left. But if you want to share anything as it relates to the economy that you would like to share with us, you can.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. I will recognize each of you. Thank you very much.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Thank you, Mrs. JONES.

We want to encourage the Members and also anyone who is watching us here on the floor, the 30-Something Democrats at 30somethingdems@mail.house.gov and www.speaker.gov/30something. You said something that I think is very, very important in this debate.

We are not here drinking the tea. I mean, we are not here saying, Oh, let's just all link up together and flowers falling from the ceiling and all and that we are working in a bipartisan way. What we are doing is saying that we are working like the American people would like for us to work on this very important issue. We are hoping that the President continues to do what he is doing as it relates to talking to Democratic leaders and real-time, Democratic leaders speaking with the President, Republican and Democratic leaders in the Congress continuing to work together in real-time, meeting day after day, morning and evening, so that we can put together a work product so that we can all work for it and get it out to the American people.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I think you have done a great job today, Mr. MEEK, and I just want to say how proud I am to come down here with you and make these points and listen to you break down the issues of the day where you are putting the cookie on the bottom shelf.

□ 1630

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. RYAN, days like this you just have to plow through it.

With that, Madam Speaker, it has been an honor to address the House.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. SHEA-PORTER). All Members are reminded that it is not order to refer to persons on the floor of the House as guests of the House.

VACATING 5-MINUTE SPECIAL ORDER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the ordering of a 5-minute Special Order in favor of the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is vacated.

There was no objection.

BORDER WARS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. POE. Madam Speaker, I come to you today to discuss what is going on internationally with our country. You know, this country is at war in Iraq. We have been for a number of years. This country is at war in Afghanistan, and we have been for a number of years.

While the news from the front is encouraging, both of those wars are not over with yet. And it is interesting to me that even though we are sending our troops, our young men and women, the finest America has to offer, halfway around the globe to protect the dignity of other countries, it concerns me that we fail to protect the security of our own Nation on the southern border of the United States.

Because, Madam Speaker, there is a border war going on in the United States on our southern border. Unfortunately, too many people, especially here in Washington, DC are blissfully ignorant of what is taking place on the southern border. You see we have two international borders. We have one with Mexico and we have one with Canada. The number one duty of government is to protect the people, to protect America from all incursions, all invasions.

So we send our troops halfway around the world to protect the interest of the United States in Iraq, protect the interest of the United States in Afghanistan, and I agree with what we are doing in Afghanistan and Iraq. But we also need to be concerned about what is taking place closer to our homeland, and that is the border wars that are taking place.

Why I say that is I have been down, while I have been in Congress these 3½ years, I have been down to the Texas-Mexico border now 13 times. I have also been to the border between California and Mexico.

Madam Speaker, each time I go to the border I see more evidence that we are not winning the border war, that it is more difficult, it is harder on our troops down there, the sheriffs, the border agents. It is harder on the people who live on the border between the United States and Mexico. Many ranchers and people who live along the Rio Grande River on the American side have bars on their windows because they are afraid of people who come across from the southern part of the United States committing crimes.

Madam Speaker, I want to make it clear I am not talking about everyone that comes to the United States is here to commit a crime. I am not saying that. I am saying when we fail to enforce the rule of law, that being you don't come to America without permission, that we get everybody. We get the good, we get the bad, and we get the ugly. Right now, Madam Speaker, we are getting a lot of bad and we are getting a lot of ugly.

Let me give one example of those people who come in and flaunt the law of the United States that you don't come here without permission. I have here a night shot taken, and I am not sure that it can be seen, but I will hold it up anyway. This top photograph is a night scene of the bottom photograph. This is a photograph on the bottom of the Rio Grande River near Laredo, Texas. Across the river is Mexico. This is the nighttime version of that.

What we see here is a raft with several individuals coming to America without permission. They are all dressed in black uniforms. You notice the guy in the front has an AK–47. That is an automatic weapon made in China. You also see, Madam Speaker, that behind each of these individuals coming in the raft are duffle bags. In those duffle bags are presumably drugs, narcotics, cocaine or heroin or both.

These individuals are foreign nationals. What happened was these individuals were Guatemalan soldiers trained in the United States. Once they went back home, they started working for the drug cartels that paid them a whole lot more money than being Guatemalan soldiers. They switched sides, and now they smuggle drugs into the United States on behalf of the drug cartels. The individuals, you know, are the bad, and they are the ugly. The reason is the border is not secure. If the border was secure, these outlaws wouldn't be coming over here without permission.

That is just one example of what is taking place on the southern border of the United States.

Madam Speaker, there are three, some argue four major drug cartels in Mexico that bring that cancer into the United States and sell it. Right now those drug cartels work with the coyotes. We call those people ''coyotes'' because they, for money, smuggle people into the United States. And the drug cartels and the coyotes now work together smuggling drugs and people sometimes in the same load.

In other words, when our Border Patrol stops a vehicle sneaking into the United States, they will find not only

illegals, but they will find drugs as well because it is a highly lucrative business to do both of those things, smuggle in the name of that filthy lucre; we call it money.

I would like to talk this evening about some basic things that are taking place on the border, that silent forgotten border war that is taking place in America.

There are several places in the United States that border Mexico and border Canada that we call legal ports of entry. Those legal ports of entry are where people come to the United States the right way, the legal way, the way they are supposed to come into the United States.

Now if you are from Mexico or Canada or the Caribbean islands, you get a break in coming to the United States that other foreign nationals don't have. If you are from Brazil or Chile or Guatemala or Germany, the only way you come to the United States legally is with a passport. We have all seen passports. That is the universal, worldwide document of legal entry into another country.

But if you are from Mexico, Canada or the Caribbean island, you can come in using almost any type of document. There are now about 8,000 different documents that those people from those countries can use to get into the United States, including everything from a baptismal certificate to some type of other document like a passport.

So when these people come to the border, let's say Laredo, and they are lined up to come into the United States, the border agent that is standing on the international border letting people in sometimes doesn't even check the documents. How do you know that? Because I saw it when I was down there. They look into the car, they make sure that the people or they ask a few questions, and they let those people come into the United States. Sometimes they look at paperwork. Sometimes they don't. But they come into the United States presumably lawfully.

But the problem is, Madam Speaker, we do not record who comes into America. Assume everybody in this vehicle is coming into the United States the right way. They have legal documents. They have a visa to come in. The United States Government doesn't record who those people are. We just let them pass on through. We have been doing that for years. So the port of entry is an area where we first need to beef up security because if the person in that vehicle or a pedestrian walking across the border can convince a border agent that they can lawfully come into the country, they are waved on by in many cases; not in every case, but in many cases.

When I was in Laredo, Texas, at the lawful port of entry, the border agents there, the agents at the border, were very concerned about talking to me in private because, you see, their supervisor followed me around while I was there and they didn't want to talk to me with that person observing.

But one of those persons at the legal port of entry told me something very interesting. He told me that we have been told that we are a port of entry, not a port of denial; and when in doubt, we let them in because that is the policy we have been given. It looked to me like that was the policy.

So, Madam Speaker, the first thing we do is the basics: We secure the legal ports of entry, and not by allowing one of 8,000 documents to come into the United States, but we need to follow the 9/11 Commission that recommended that anybody entering America should have a passport. But yet here we are in 2008, almost 6½ years since 9/11, and yet we still don't use that universal document of a passport to require entry into this country.

My question is: Why not? And the reason is because of political pressure, political agendas by people here in the United States and abroad to prevent that from happening.

So let's assume that people have to use a passport and that passport that we have now has all types of electronic coding barcodes in it. And when those people come across in that vehicle, rather than just look in the car or examine a few documents that may or may not be forgeries, everybody's passport could be taken, you scan it across the scanner, the border agent at the border automatically sees on the screen whether anybody has a criminal record, gets their real name, we record who comes into the United States, and therefore we have a permanent record of those individuals. And he then returns the passport. That is the simplest, the most secure way to ensure that people are not fraudulently walking through the ports of entry and trying to get into the United States.

Madam Speaker, if I send a package somewhere in the world, let's say I send it to Russia and I send it by Federal Express, like in the movie with Tom Hanks, and it goes to Russia, well, you can actually use on the Internet, I can since I am sending the package, whether it's UPS or Federal Express, I can track where my package is going. I can see where it is going because every time it makes a stop, it is recorded. It is tracked all the way to Russia, and I can find out when it gets there.

Now if we are smart enough to devise a system like that to track packages, why don't we track people who come into the United States when they have permission to come here? I don't know. We just don't do it.

So, Madam Speaker, I recommend that we follow the 9/11 Commission and require every person who enters the United States, or leaves the United States, to have a passport. When I say leave it, when those individuals come here lawfully, we now know that 50 percent, almost 60 percent of people legally coming to the United States, they never go home. They just stay. The reason they stay is because who would want to leave America? More importantly, they know that the odds of them being tracked down, so to speak, and told to go home are almost none. I will get to that in a minute.

So you have a passport. Let's say this person is a guest worker. We hear we need more guest workers and we don't have guest workers. Madam Speaker, we bring in 1.2 million guest workers a year to work in this country. So we have guest workers. Whether we need more or not is another issue, but we do have guest workers. But when a guest worker comes in, make them have the passport and then make them have a bona fide visa that we can also stand. Right now when an individual shows up for a job the way the employer checks the legality of an individual is calling on the telephone a 1–800 number to the Social Security Administration to make sure that this guy has a Social Security number. That is ridiculous.

Social Security numbers were never meant to be an identification system. Social Security was set up so some of us, hopefully some of us, will be able some day to get some type of retirement. It has nothing to do with security and identification of people coming into the country. So we shouldn't use that system.

The employer should have the bona fide visa hard copy and able to keep it until that 6 or 8 months is over for that guest worker, and then that person needs to go back home. They have it recorded who the legal immigrant is working for. That is the fairest way, the simplest way, but we don't do that.

Now the Federal Government is talking about using another type of identification for people coming into the United States from Canada and Mexico.

□ 1645

Why do we do that? Why don't we just require everybody to have a passport? It makes no sense to me.

Madam Speaker, the second problem we have is that the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Administration, good folks, but there's not enough of them. They're understaffed and they're underfunded. They enforce the law once the immigrant, legal immigrant has come into the United States past the 25-mile rule. What I'm saying is this: On the border of Canada and the United States, Mexico and the United States, Border Patrol patrols the first 25 miles trying to capture people who are coming here illegally. After that 25 miles, ICE, as it's called, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, patrols the rest of America trying to capture people that came through the net, broke through the net. And they are enforcing the immigration laws. And there's not enough of them because there's way too many immigrants that have been here for years and have never been confronted about being in the United States illegally, or legally, for that matter, if they're an overstay. So the interior enforcement needs to be restructured. We need to have more enforcement officers enforcing the rule of

law, because that is important for this country.

Madam Speaker, of course the people on the other side of the border that make money off of importation of drugs and people, they know all the rules and they know what's going on over here. So what happens is when, let's say, a person contracts with a coyote to come into the United States, they pay several hundred, several thousand dollars to this coyote and the coyote brings them in 30 miles to the United States. The contract is to get them past the Border Patrol. Once you're by the Border Patrol, we'll let you out of the vehicle, you pay us money and you're home free; nobody'll ever catch you. So the other side understands the rules and understands what's happening. So ICE, good folks, I know a lot of them, they just need more help in interior enforcement of the United States.

Madam Speaker, I want to mention a little heresy now, because, you see, the reason people come to the United States, many of them, is to work. Some of them come legally, but a lot of them come illegally to work. And it is the law, and has been for years, that if a business knowingly hires a person illegally in the country, then that business can be prosecuted. Now, we don't read about, in the papers, too much about businesses being prosecuted for hiring illegals. Of the thousands and thousands and thousands of businesses in the United States, you know there are several that are hiring illegals, and they know it. But not very often does one of them make the newspaper. We read about everything else, but we don't hear about that. Why not? Because maybe they aren't being prosecuted. So, if the business owner knowingly hires an illegal, then that business owner needs to be prosecuted. And when illegals that are working here don't have the opportunity to work, they'll go back where they came from. They will, because many of them are working here on the cash economy, which means that they are being paid plantation wages, in some cases, not all cases. They're being paid in cash. The employer's dealing in cash because, you see, then nobody pays taxes. Nobody pays the Social Security. Nobody pays to health care, including the business owner. And they're able, that way, to drive the economy down.

You know, we hear this about, Oh, they help the economy. That is a farce, and I'll talk about that in a minute.

I'll give you an example of how that works, Madam Speaker. I represent southeast Texas. I border Louisiana and northern Houston, and I have a business owner in one of my towns that legally hires legal immigrants to work in his carpet business. And he verifies, he goes through all the procedure to make sure that the dozen or so folks working in his carpet business are legally in the country as guest workers. Good for him.

But there's a guy down the street that's also in the carpet business, carpet laying business, tough work, and that person hires illegals. And he pays his illegals less money. And because he pays them less money, he can do the same job cheaper. And so what he's doing is forcing the business owner who does the right thing, hiring foreigners on a legal basis who come to the United States, he's forced him out of business. And the same is true of businesses that hire Americans, because the cheap plantation labor that is being furnished by people who are unscrupulous businessmen is driving the economy down. But they're making money out of it, and so they need to be prosecuted. I know that's heresy, but we need to go after them and prosecute them because it's been the law for a long time.

Madam Speaker, we hear about, well, we need illegals in the country to help the economy. If our economy is based upon illegal workers, then there's something wrong with our economy. But be that as it may, we hear that, well, illegals help the economy. And then we hear on the other extreme, no, they don't. They're a tremendous drain on our economy.

What is the truth? Well, a study was done by the Heritage Foundation, and they discovered that a head of household that's illegally in the country and has a household contributes in taxes approximately, or to the system, about $10,000 a year. But they also found that that head of household with illegals takes from the system, the government, the Federal Government, State government, local government, about $30,000 a year in benefits, whether it's health care, education, welfare, it takes about 30,000. So yes, they do contribute some to the tax base, but they take far more than they contribute to our economy. And so we need to understand that truism.

Madam Speaker, we also have the problem of cities in the United States that flaunt the fact that they are sanctuary cities. What a sanctuary city is is a city, whether negligently or on purpose, allows illegals to live in the city and makes sure that they're never prosecuted. Cities that are sanctuary cities, that harbor illegals, regardless of who those illegals are, whether they're overstays or anybody else, are in violation of Federal law. Those sanctuary cities, in my opinion, should lose Federal aid because the Federal Government, the taxpayers of the United States should not be funding and sending money to cities that allow illegals to stay there without the fear of being prosecuted or deported or sent back home. And it's important that the rule of law be enforced. But we won't go after sanctuary cities as a body. We haven't done that yet. We need to have the will to be able to do that. If cities want to have those sanctuary policies in their homes or in their States, then they shouldn't receive taxpayer money.

Also, we should be able to use local law enforcement agents, not to do the job of ICE, but to help ICE. And there's a program Congress established. It's called the 287(g) program. What that means is this: that there is money available for training and for funding of local law enforcement agents, that when they encounter an illegal that has committed maybe a crime and that person is arrested for drunk driving, let's say, that they can do an immigration background check and see whether that person's legally in the United States or not and then hold them for ICE to be deported later. They can work in cooperation with ICE, not go out and arrest folks at work sites, but people that come into their possession because they've committed some other crime. Because, you see, sanctuary cities in many cases won't allow the police officers to even ask the person they arrested, Where are you from? Can't even get that basic identification.

So the 287(g) program is a good program. It would allow local law enforcement agencies to help in the cause of protecting the dignity of the United States, when necessary, after they're trained and trained by ICE to, when they arrest someone, if that person's illegally in the country, they can pass that information on to ICE as well.

Madam Speaker, I've talked a lot about those people who come here legally. I mentioned a little bit about people who've come here illegally, and I think we need to separate the two and make sure that we understand that there is a difference between those who come the right way and those who come the wrong way.

I've been to those immigration ceremonies where people wanted to not just come here to work but wanted to come here to be Americans, stood there, Federal judge, gave them the oath to be a citizen of the United States, how their families were there, how they're teary eyed and proud of the fact that they are now Americans. Wonderful, wonderful events for those people who come here the right way, especially those who want to be citizens.

And we've got troops in Iraq and Afghanistan who legally came to the United States but they're not American citizens. And they've gone to Iraq and Afghanistan and are fighting those wars over there in the hope that that will help them become citizens later, and it will help them become citizens if they fight for the United States, and they're not even citizens. Wonderful, wonderful people, those citizens who have become naturalized.

But we have a problem with those folks who are not coming here the right way. And everyone that comes here illegally has always got a reason why they won't do it the right way.

But I'd like to move on, Madam Speaker, and mention a problem that we have currently with the Border Patrol. The Border Patrol, Madam Speaker, are those wonderful men and women that patrol the border, northern border, the southern border, great people. And I have met so many of them, and

they do the best that we will let them do in enforcing the border. But because Homeland Security, in my opinion, has drawn up the rules of engagement, they tie the hands of the Border Patrol on what they can do to enforce the rule of law.

Now, we've got to remember, that the bad guys that are coming into the United States, especially drug dealers, coyotes, they know what the Border Patrol policies are and they flaunt them to their benefit. And so what happens is, in many cases, our Federal Government, when the Border Patrol is down there fighting for the dignity of the United States trying to prevent, let's say, drug dealers from coming into the country, they get in a confrontation with a drug dealer, our government doesn't back them.

The best example, of course, is Ramos and Compean, two border agents who now have spent a year in Federal custody. They got 11- and 12-year sentences because they had a confrontation with a drug dealer down on the Texas-Mexico border at the town of Fabens, Texas, and had a confrontation with him. They shot him. They didn't know they'd shot him. He disappears into Mexico. They believe that he had a weapon. The United States Federal Government finds the drug dealer bringing in $750,000 worth of drugs into our country, finds him, says to him, Oh, we're going to give you immunity. We're not going to prosecute you for being a drug smuggler into the United States. All you've got to do is come back to America and testify against the two border agents on a civil rights violation because, you see, they shot at you. They actually hit you, and so we want to prosecute them, says our Federal Government. And our Federal Government spent thousands and thousands of dollars prosecuting those two border agents, and they were convicted. They were sent off to prison.

But what the jury in that trial didn't know was when this star witness, the backroom deal witness that the Federal Government made a deal with, you know, made a deal with the devil, to testify against these two border agents, while he's waiting to testify, he slips back into Mexico and brings another load of drugs into the United States, and the jury never heard about that second encounter.

Now, Madam Speaker, if you're a juror in a case, and I used to be a judge, and, you know, I never thought using these kind of witnesses helped to find the truth in a case. And this is a perfect example. If you were a juror in the case and the whole Federal Government's case is based upon the testimony of a drug dealer saying that he didn't have a weapon and that these two border agents shot at him anyway, wouldn't you want to know that while he's waiting around to testify he's bringing more drugs into the United States, flaunting the immunity agreement that our government gave him? Sure, you'd want to know and then judge his credibility.

Well, it turns out that was kept from the jury by the prosecutors. That case is on appeal. The fifth circuit heard it last year, and hopefully they'll reverse the case and order a new trial and let the next jury hear the whole truth. But you see, it's incidents like that which tells the Border Patrol agents don't get in a confrontation down there on the Texas-Mexico border, because if you do, our government won't back you; they're going to back the bad guy, the drug dealer.

Another example, David Sipe, another Border Patrol agent. Several years ago, I think it was the year 2000, almost the same situation. He gets in a fight with a coyote, human smuggler, bringing people into the United States in the Rio Grande riverbed. And he has a fight with this coyote and he wins the fight. You know, we'd think we'd want our border agents to win the fight, but yet he's prosecuted for violating the civil rights of the human smuggler, and he's tried and he's convicted. And what we learn in that case was the prosecution hid evidence in this case as well. The U.S. Attorney's Office hid evidence in that case as well about the fact of all the advantages and deals they gave to the coyote if he testified. See, the jury didn't know about all the things that he was given, about the $80,000 he was given.

Now, he bought a ranch down in Mexico with that $80,000 of U.S. money. About the cell phones, about the green cards coming back and forth. And so the Federal judge found out that the U.S. Attorney's Office hid that information from the jury, ordered a new trial. The second trial the jury heard all the truth. The jury found David Sipe not guilty. He's the second one.

□ 1700

More recently, Gilmer Hernandez, now get this one. It's almost as bizarre as the other two. Gilmer Hernandez is a deputy sheriff down in Rock Springs, Texas, not a very big place, and a vehicle is coming through at night, lights off, runs the stop sign. Gilmer Hernandez is on patrol by himself. You see, we don't have the money to have two deputies in a car.

He stops the vehicle. As he's approaching the vehicle, the driver turns the vehicle around, tries to run over Deputy Hernandez. Deputy Hernandez pulls out his pistol, perfect great shot. He starts shooting at the vehicle, the tires, just like in the movies. He's shooting at the tires, and he knocks out two of the tires as the vehicle goes by.

But what happened was, one of those bullets ricocheted on one of the people in the vehicle. There were nine illegals, plus the driver which I assume was the coyote, and they take off running. Deputy Hernandez was prosecuted for a civil rights violation because the U.S. Attorney's office said he shouldn't have fired his gun at the vehicle as it went by. He protected himself in self-defense, in my opinion. Deputy Hernandez just now got out of Federal penitentiary, and he's back home in Rock Springs, Texas.

It's cases like that which tell the border agents, be careful, don't get in a confrontation because if you do your government's not going to back you.

Now, I give you those three examples, Madam Speaker, because of the most recent example, the tragic example of Luis Aguilar. Luis Aguilar was a border patrol agent from El Paso, Texas, on duty in Tucson, Arizona, last week. Two vehicles speed across the United States border with Mexico, presumably drug dealers, come into the United States, border patrol sees them, tries to apprehend them by blocking their path, they turn around, they start heading back to Mexico.

Luis Aguilar, after getting permission with his supervisors, throws out what are called spikes, tire spikes, in front of one of the vehicles. The vehicle runs over this, tires blow out, and you're able to capture the bad guys. So he throws the spikes out in front of a Humvee, apparently stolen in the United States. You see, drug dealers are using real fancy vehicles stolen in the United States in many cases, and so he throws the spikes out but the Humvee doesn't stop. He heads for Border Patrol Agent Aguilar and, at a speed of 55 miles an hour, hits Border Agent Aguilar and killed him and then disappeared back into Mexico, that being the Humvee. He was 32, married, had two kids.

But you see if he would have done what Deputy Hernandez did and pulled out his gun and tried to shoot out the tires, you know, where would our Federal Government be? We don't know, but we do know that Border Agent Aguilar was killed in the line of duty protecting the dignity of the border, and I say that to say this, Madam Speaker.

Here's a chart. It's pretty simple. Assaults on border agents in 2005, there were 384. That's about one a day. 2006, doubled, 750, two a day. And last year in 2007, 987 assaults on border agents, three a day. That's what's happening to our border agents.

And have you read about any of this in our American press, about the assaults that are taking place against our border agents who are protecting the war zone down there on the Texas-Mexico border? You don't hear much about it, but you sure hear about it when some drug dealer gets shot by a border patrol agent. That ought not to be.

So, Madam Speaker, that's part of the problem is that we don't give the border patrol the right rules of engagement. We need to support them. We need to make the rules of engaging, especially drug dealers and coyotes different, so that they know our government supports them and act within the law to make sure they're able to stop those people who illegally come into the United States.

Madam Speaker, one of the many places I've been is Hudspeth County.

I'm sure most Americans never heard of that except folks down there in Hudspeth County. This is a drawing of it. El Paso County is to the West, and then there's Hudspeth County right here. It's a county about the size of Delaware. It has 12 deputy sheriffs patrolling this whole county the size of Delaware, and it's a great place for drug dealers to sneak into the United States and human coyotes because they're only 20 miles from Interstate 10.

There have been reports that the Mexican military has actually helped drug dealers smuggle drugs into the United States. You don't hear much about that in the national media.

But I want to tell you specifically about one incident I saw when the sheriff of Hudspeth County took me down to the Rio Grande River. We're driving down to the Rio Grande River on a dirt road. The river's to our south, and we come upon this. This is a bridge. It's a foot bridge. You don't drive back and forth across it, and it's out in the middle of no place, and there are three of these that connect Mexico to Hudspeth County, Texas, and of course, that bridge serves one purpose. It allows people to come into America without permission.

And I was just stunned to see this and the other bridges, and they've apparently been there for a long time. I don't know why we just don't tear it down, you know. Are we going to offend somebody if we tear this bridge down? At least go halfway. Half of it's ours, but it's things like this that make the work of our border patrol so difficult when we have these absurd bridges down in at least parts of Texas that border the United States and Mexico and allow people to come across.

Let me mention some other problems that we have. When Vicente Fox, and I call him Generalissimo Fox, was President of Mexico, he instigated a plan that would help illegals, not legals, come to the United States. What happened is the Mexican government produced comic book-types of pamphlets that were given to the migrants that were coming into the United States. Here are a few pages from the Guide for the Mexican Migrant. That's what it says on the outside of this pamphlet.

And here you see what to do, shows you where to cross, what to do when you're confronted by a border patrol, what to say and not to say. But anyway, it's all helping migrants come into the United States illegally, including giving them maps on where they can go and the best places to cross. So I doubt, in my opinion, if we're getting the right kind of cooperation from the Mexican government.

The Mexican economic policy seems to be go to America and send your money back to Mexico because that's what's happening. You know, people that are working in the United States from Mexico, send about $20 billion a year, that's billion with a B, back to Mexico. Other countries in Central America and South America, it's about $10 billion. It is about $30 billion a year of American economic stimulus is going to Mexico and to other countries in the Americas. So that is the apparently economic plan of Mexico.

I don't understand why Mexico, with all of its natural resources, doesn't develop those rather than expecting individuals to come to the United States and send their money back home.

You know, also speaking about Mexico, Mexico every once in a while kind of takes the position that we're being too hard on protecting our borders, but yet that's the same government that protects its southern border from other Central American countries where those illegals who want to come into Mexico, either to stay and work or come into the United States. Somewhat hypocritical to me, in my opinion.

We have gone so far that in this country if you are illegally in the country you can get what is called a Mexican matricula card. What is that? That is a document that is produced by Mexico as identification for Mexican nationals that are illegally in the United States. Now, somebody sent me one of these. Here is one. It's obviously not authentic even though it looks like it was from the consulate's office in Indianapolis. That's my photograph. Somebody took it off the Internet and just put my photograph on it and just made a Mexican matricula card.

Now that's what Mexican nationals, especially illegals, use to do banking, credit cards, to set up any type of financial transaction. They use these matricula cards. So we give illegals in this country identification cards from their home country. Doesn't make a whole lot of sense to me.

The next thing I'd like to mention is that in many cases when people are actually captured by the border patrol they're not immediately sent back where they came from, whether it's from Mexico or from China or wherever. Because of the overwhelming numbers, we don't have the facilities to detain individuals. So, if you are a Mexican national, you're usually sent back home. That doesn't prevent you from coming right back across the river the same way you got here. But they're sent back, and I'm talking about Mexican nationals that are illegally in the country. They have to come back and forth and be caught numerous times before our government finally says now we're going to prosecute you for criminally entering the United States. Most of the time they're just sent back home.

If you are not a Mexican national, what happens is because we don't have places to detain people that are captured by border patrol, sheriff's department, whoever, and then they are released on their word to come back to court for their deportation hearing. I probably need to repeat that again because I want to make sure that it is clear. So if you're not from Mexico but you're from some other place and you illegally come into the United States and you are captured, you're taken before an immigration judge, and on your oath and word you promise to appear in 6 months for your deportation hearing, and you are given a piece of paper, a get-out-of-jail-free card, which allows you to roam around for 6 months before you have to show back up because the courts are overwhelmed.

Did you know something, Madam Speaker? Most of those people never show back up for their deportation hearing. They just stay in the United States, and we hear from Homeland Security that that policy has ended. I'm not so sure that it is, because when I go down to the border, and I talk to the people, the boots on the ground, they say, no, we are still doing that in many places. We let them go because we don't have places to detain them.

When I was down on the Texas-Mexico border in one episode, we were driving down, middle of the night, 2 o'clock in the morning. Those Texas sheriffs are hard to keep up with. They stay up all the time, but anyway, we're driving down a road near the border and we see two people waiving at us. The sheriff stopped, found out these two people were from, I believe it was Costa Rica, and they wanted to be arrested so they could get their get-out-of-jail-free card so they could go on about their way. Interesting. They know the rules and what we don't do in this country to enforce our law in other countries. So it makes it very difficult to do what is necessary to enforce the rule of law.

Madam Speaker, we have this problem. We have individuals, legal and illegal, from foreign countries come into the United States and they commit felonies. I'm talking about serious crimes, in violation of the Federal law. They are caught. They are captured, they are tried, they are convicted, and they're sent to prison.

While they're in prison, our system works very well. ICE files deportation proceedings. They take place. An immigration judge orders the person deported as soon as they get out of the penitentiary. But what happens is when they finish their sentence, their home country won't take them back. They don't want them. They're criminals, and so because of our law, we can't indefinitely keep the person in custody. They've already served out their sentence for violating American law for a felony like robbery. So they're released within 6 months, as it should be. The Supreme Court has said that. I agree with that rule. We can't detain them, but their country won't take them back.

Now, there are nine main countries that do that, and it may not surprise us that the number one culprit is that country that makes, you know, toys with lead in it and sends it to the United States, China. China doesn't take them back. They use all kinds of diplomatic excuses why they don't take them, but the bottom line is they

don't take them back. Vietnam is another one that doesn't take them back. India. There's a total of eight countries that won't take them back.

□ 1715

Now, it would seem to me if a country won't take back their lawfully deported felons, that country shouldn't get legal visas for other citizens to legally come here. It seems like that ought to be the law: You won't take back your deported ones, your citizens can't come here legally. That's what the law ought to be. Well, Madam Speaker, that is the law. However, the State Department chooses not to do that, especially with China, and I have the letter that they sent me. They choose not to do that with China because of the ongoing trade negotiations with the Chinese Government.

Madam Speaker, if a person commits a felony in this country and they're ordered deported to go back home, they ought to go back home. If that country doesn't take them, they ought to lose the right to have legal visas in this country, and they ought to lose foreign aid if we give foreign aid to those countries; otherwise, we will have a continuing number of these felons running loose in America. How many are we talking about? My understanding is that right now it's 165,000 people lawfully deported for committing felonies and haven't been taken back home by their home country. It's amazing what we don't do in this country.

We also have the problem, of course, in the area of how much it costs. And I'm going to try to go through these as fast as I can, Madam Speaker. Before I get to the costs, I want to talk about this issue of birthright citizenship. Most Americans, if you ask them the question, if you're born in the United States, are you a citizen, 100 percent of them are going to say, sure, you're a citizen if you're born here. But is that the law? And I'll read where this comes from. And when in doubt, we probably ought to just look at the Constitution. And I know most Members of the House on both sides carry a pocket Constitution like this, as I do, in their pockets. I want to read to you the 14th amendment, just portions of it.

Section 1, 14th amendment of the United States: ''All persons born or naturalized in the United States and subject to the jurisdiction thereof are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside.'' That phrase that we don't ever talk about is ''all persons that are subject to the jurisdiction thereof.'' In other words, you've got to be subject to the jurisdiction of the United States if you're born here. And people who sneak into the country with the whole premise of having a child are not subject to the jurisdiction of the United States. That would be my argument as a former prosecutor and as a judge, looking at it from a constitutional point of view.

Just because you're born here doesn't make you a citizen under the Constitution. But it's our policy in this country to allow you to be a citizen. We just accept that. But that's not what the Constitution says. So, maybe in the interest of America we ought to revisit that, especially those people and those cases that fraudulently enter the country on the premise to have a child born here. Once that child is born here, then the child, because we say that child is an American citizen, then we don't deport the child, but we let the mother stay and then we allow the whole extended family to come over here and stay into the country. And this is happening at an epidemic proportion in the United States. It seems to me that we need a case before the Supreme Court and let them decide down the street whether or not, just because you're born here, does that make you a citizen? I would argue it doesn't because they're not subject to the jurisdiction of the country when they fraudulently came in here. They're subject to the jurisdiction of the country that they came from.

Also, we have a tremendous cost in the area of education, Madam Speaker. Last year, Texas spent $4 billion educating people illegally in the United States. We talk about education costs. We've talked about it. We're going to talk about it some more. We don't hear too much talk about the people that are in the system that are here illegally in the country. Nationwide, it's about $30 billion a year. And it's unfortunate that we won't deal with the reality of it. We educate everybody in the country. All you've got to do is just show up and you're educated at somebody else's expense.

Now, I don't think other countries do that. Let's say, Madam Speaker, that I went to France, and I snuck into France and I take my four kids with me. And I get into France and I tell the Education Minister of France, Educate me. Educate my kids. Educate them in English because none of us speak French. What do you think would happen to me? Well, my kids and myself and my family, we would be sent back to Texas, and rightfully so. And most countries in the world do that, but not the United States.

Let's deal with the issue of the cost of people in the system that are illegally in the country and figure out the most humane, ethical and financially beneficial way to deal with it. But one way not to deal with it is what we're doing now is allowing people that are illegally in the country to go to our universities and pay in-state tuition. That makes no sense. And Texas, unfortunately, is one of these States. You see, if you are illegally in the country, you can go to the University of Texas and pay in-state tuition. But if you're from Oklahoma, God bless you, or you're from Germany and you want to go to the University of Texas, you pay out-of-state tuition because you ain't from around here. But if you're illegally in the country, we allow you to go to the University of Texas and pay in-state tuition.

So, we benefit people illegally in the country over American citizens and foreign nationals who are coming here the right way. It makes no sense to me. And with the high cost of education, and as a parent, and most parents who have to pay for this education, it doesn't seem fair to me that we penalize American citizens and legal foreign nationals who want to go to our universities. So, education is one of those.

Health care costs is another one. I've discussed that. I don't have time to talk about Parkland Hospital in Dallas where most of the babies that are born there every year are born to mothers that are illegally in the country. There is a whole network of individuals, pregnant mothers from south of the Texas border, and I don't just include Mexico, but there is a whole network, work your way up to Dallas, wait your turn, go to Parkland Hospital and have your baby, and your baby is now an American citizen. We have to deal with that. And of course the health care cost is being paid by somebody.

We've talked a lot about health care and expenses and how Americans can't afford it, and that's true. You know, middle-class America, people making up to $100,000, $80,000, they can't afford health care costs. They can't afford to pay for the insurance. But if you're illegally in the country, of course, all you've got to do is show up at the emergency room, the most expensive health care, and somebody else pays for it. And that's people that are paying taxes, legal immigrants and U.S. citizens. So, health care costs are being driven up by people who are here illegally.

The criminal justice system. I mentioned I was a judge down to Houston forever, 22 years. And on any given day they tell me over in the sheriff's department that about 20 percent of the people in jail waiting to be tried, waiting for their felony trials, that's what I tried was felonies, are people from other countries, most of them illegally in the United States.

The prison system, State, Federal, local, is all being driven up in cost by criminals that are over here. Not everybody is a criminal of course, but some of them do come over here and commit crime. And it's important that we have to deal with that issue and the cost as well.

Madam Speaker, the GAO did a study on our borders, and here is what they did. They got some of their people to drive back and forth across the American border with Canada and Mexico, and they wanted to see if they could get into the United States illegally. And they did. They used fake documents that they had manufactured, just like other people do. And what they were bringing in was radioactive material that went undetected when they kept crossing back and forth the border between the United States and Canada and the border with Mexico. And I give you that example because, in the big scheme of things, open borders is an invitation for terrorists who

want to do us harm. The next terrorist attack that happens in this country is not going to be because somebody lands over here at Reagan National Airport, gets off the plane and says, I wonder what damage I can do to America. It's not going to happen that way. They're going to probably just come across the border because it's easier to do that. And we should be very concerned about that issue because, you see, open borders, you get the good, you get the bad, and you get the ugly. And those terrorists are certainly bad and ugly.

So, Madam Speaker, we need the moral will, as a country, to enforce the rule of law. All those different groups that have a political agenda, or some other agenda rather than national security, have an influence over our national security issue. And maybe we need to deal with what is best for America. And we start with the basics. We secure the border and you make sure that people who come here come here the right way. We streamline the Immigration Service so people don't have to wait so long before they come here, whether they want to be a citizen or whether they want to work or whether they want to be a student. That's a whole other issue, the Immigration Service. But streamline that. Make it efficient. Make sure that we use documents, such as a passport, to come into the United States.

We protect the borders of other nations, Madam Speaker. We protect the border of Korea. We're over there protecting the border in Iraq. We protect the borders of other nations better than we protect our own border. Third World countries protect their borders greater than the greatest power that has ever existed protects its borders. Why? It's because we don't have the will to do it. We do a lot of talking about it, but we don't do much about it.

As I mentioned, I've been down to the Texas-Mexico border 13 times. Every time I go down there, it gets worse. A sheriff in one of the counties told me, I said, What's it like down here? He said, After dark it gets western. I said, What do you mean by that? He said, It gets western. It's violent. And while we were down there, we heard gunshots coming from the other side of the border. It's a serious situation, and Americans need to realize it. And I invite every Member of Congress to go down to the border and see what it's like. Because if we're going to make rules about immigration reform and border security and national security, we need to see what the war zone is like to make those decisions. And I invite them all to go down there. Go with me, because I'm going back.

So, we need to prosecute businesses that knowingly hire illegals. They shouldn't get a pass because they own the business. We go after the worker that's over here and try to deport them. That's the wrong method. The method ought to be, go after the business, because if the business owner doesn't hire illegals, that person doesn't have a place to work and they'll go home. Oklahoma has already proven that with their State law.

We need to put America first. And Madam Speaker, we cannot continue to be blissfully ignorant of the truth on the border. This is a great country, a country, as we hear, that is made up of mostly immigrants, people who came here the right way at some point in time. And we want to continue to be a Nation of immigrants. But the rule of law needs to be followed. It has to be followed. And we need to enforce the security of our Nation rather than continue to talk about it.

It reminds me of what my grandfather used to say. He said, ''When all is said and done, more is said than done.'' And that's true. We need to do whatever is necessary within the law. I, for one, believe that we ought to put the National Guard on the border; that would stop it. When the military is on the border, our military is on the Korean border, you don't cross that Korean border without the permission of the United States. Protecting somebody else's border, again.

Madam Speaker, it seems to me that open borders invites everyone to come in and invade the United States, and it's time that our country deal with this reality while we're dealing with the war in Iraq, while we're dealing with the war in Afghanistan, while we protect the borders of other nations. Let's deal with the issues of the border security of our own country, the border security on the southern border and the border security on our northern border. We will be a better country for it and a safer country for it.

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

PRESIDENT'S DEFENSE BILL VETO

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. BRALEY) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. BRALEY of Iowa. Madam Speaker, I was sitting at home over the holiday recess spending time with my family when I became aware of the fact that the President had vetoed the Defense Authorization bill that we passed in this body shortly before we adjourned. And like most of my colleagues, I was surprised by that veto and I wanted to learn more about the basis, the reasoning behind the decision of the President to withhold pay increases to our men and women in uniform who are serving us in very heavily conflicted areas around the world, and why the President would veto a bill that would increase funding for Veterans' Administration health care benefits to our Nation's aging veterans and our most recent veterans who are in serious need of those medical services. And so I got a copy of the President's veto statement and I read it, and, quite frankly, I was shocked. I was shocked, Madam Speaker, because, as I saw the President's basis for the veto, I was taken back to a time several years ago when I was watching a 60 Minutes story about tortured U.S. prisoners of war from our first Gulf War. And when I learned that the basis for the President's veto was to keep U.S. POWs who had been brutally beaten and tortured by Saddam Hussein's thugs in the first Gulf War from receiving compensation for those injuries, I was ashamed for my country.

To give you some idea of what we're talking about, these were the words that Mike Wallace uttered on 60 Minutes at the beginning of the program on November 20, 2003: During the first Gulf War against Iraq in 1991, a number of American soldiers who were captured and became prisoners of war were brutally, brutally tortured by the Iraqis. Eventually, though, the POWs came home, put the pieces of their lives back together, and largely remained out of the public eye. But today, a different battle is being fought by some of those American POWs all these years after they returned. It was back in 1991 that the POWs came home from Iraq to a hero's welcome and were greeted by the then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Collin Powell and then Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney.

□ 1730

''Your country is opening its arms to greet you,'' said CHENEY. Many of the POWs had suffered wounds both physical and psychological. Some of them suffer to this day more than a decade after they were captured and appeared on Iraqi TV.

And, Madam Speaker, to put a human face on these tortured American POWs, I am going to put up a photograph of Commander Jeffrey Zaun, who was a tortured Gulf War POW, who had a very visible presence on TV because of the attempt by Saddam Hussein's government to use him as an example and try to convince the American people to give up the cause that was the purpose for defending the invasion of Kuwait from the aggression of the Iraqi army. Commander Jeffrey Zaun was one of those POWs who was brutally tortured by the Iraqis and was part of a group of POWs who took action to try to hold the Iraqi Government accountable and to serve as a deterrent to other nations like Iraq who would dare to use American hostages and American POWs as a way of exacting their political agenda through torture and abuse in violation of international law, in violation of international treaties.

So how did we get to this point? During the Gulf War against Iraq, these captured POWs that we've been talking about were subsequently tortured, beaten, starved, hooked up to electric shock devices, and subjected to other horrendous acts by Saddam Hussein's regime. At the time these acts occurred, the United States Department