

“The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution nor prohibited by it to the states are reserved to the states respectfully or to the people.”

And, I submit, “the people” in that phrase are parents that have the power, under our Constitution, to decide how to educate their children. It is their responsibility, their right, and their authority. After all, our children do not belong to the government and are not government possessions to be molded as the government or government judges deem fit.

The U.S. Constitution gives liberty to Americans, not enslavement to government. It is a parent's responsibility and right, not the government's, to raise our children. That includes how best to educate our children.

Living in a Nation that was founded on the inalienable right of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, means that parents have the right to raise and teach their children in a manner that is consistent with their beliefs and their principles, whether the California appellate judges like it or not.

And that's just the way it is.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 4847, UNITED STATES FIRE ADMINISTRATION REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2008

Ms. SUTTON, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 110-563) on the resolution (H. Res. 1071) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 4847) to reauthorize the United States Fire Administration, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

HONORING FORMER REPRESENTATIVE BILL DICKINSON OF ALABAMA

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

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to rise and talk a little bit about a great former member who just passed away, Bill Dickinson of Alabama.

Mr. Speaker, and my colleagues, when I came in in 1981 and campaigned with Ronald Reagan in that great year in which we brought back a policy of peace through strength to the United States Government with respect to foreign policy, I was lucky enough to be placed on the Armed Services Committee and Bill Dickinson was the new ranking Republican member.

In those days, we had 1,000 petty officers a month leaving the U.S. Navy because they couldn't afford to take care of their families on the pay they were making; we had 50 percent of our aircraft or more which were not combat mission capable; we had what was called a hollow Army, that is, an Army

within which skilled people were leaving at an enormous rate. And, under Ronald Reagan's leadership and Bill Dickinson's hard work as the ranking member of the Armed Services Committee, along with lots of right-thinking Republicans and Democrats, we reversed that trend. We rebuilt national security.

I will always remember Bill working the budgets that Ronald Reagan brought in his early years, that 12.6 percent pay raise that we brought in early to start moving military families up to scale, the new equipment budgets that we brought in. The decision that we were going to stand up to the Soviet Union, and those decisions that the President made like the one that he made to move ground launch cruise missiles and Pershing 2s into Europe as the Russians were then ringing our allies with SS-20 missiles, and the fact that that helped to bring them to the table, helped to bring them to the point where they picked up the phone and said, “We want to talk.”

I can remember Bill Dickinson standing tall and supporting the President very strongly when, in Central America, we saw the FMLN in El Salvador, the Communist group that was taking arms and materiel from the Soviet Union and trying to establish a Communist beachhead in El Salvador.

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I remember the United States moving in to provide a shield around that fragile new government that was standing up, a democratically elected government. I remember Bill Dickinson, as a ranking member of the Armed Services Committee, spearheading support in Congress for that very important initiative.

Time after time, Bill Dickinson moved to the fore to make sure that we rebuilt America's forces, that we operated under a policy of peace through strength. And he was, indeed, Ronald Reagan's strongest ally with respect to national security in the House of Representatives.

Bill was a wonderful guy, a great guy with a sense of humor, a guy who was elected in a district in Alabama that until 1964 had not been Republican for 100 years. But he kept that district with a good sense of humor, a good sense of touch with the people, being approachable, and having a very strong, conservative peace-through-strength philosophy that resonated not only with his constituents but with the American people.

To Barbara and the children, we express our greatest condolences. We have lost a great former representative, and I have lost a great friend.

ENACT U.S.-COLOMBIA TRADE PROMOTION AGREEMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, as Members of Congress, we are entrusted with the responsibility of keeping this Nation's economy strong by enacting policies which keep U.S. companies competitive in the global marketplace, to also support job growth at home, and ensure that the Federal Government operates effectively and efficiently.

Today, Mr. Speaker, the 9,000 U.S. companies who export industrial and consumer goods to our fourth largest trading partner in Latin America face tariffs of up to 35 percent in their exports while most Colombian products imported to the U.S. enter tariff free, tax free.

On February 27, just 5 weeks ago, the House agreed unanimously to extend existing unilateral trade preferences to Colombia and other Andean countries. In May 2007, House leadership publicly committed to passing a full bilateral trade agreement with Colombia, thereby allowing equal access to U.S. businesses in Colombia.

The Colombian government supports lowering these tariffs on U.S. goods, and many Members of Congress have shown time and time again that they support lowering barriers to trade with free nations. Yet the answer so far has been total inaction by the leadership. Inaction on the part of this Congress has levied an unnecessary burden and an uncalled for tax upon American companies, including 8,000 small- and medium-sized businesses, many of which operate in southern Florida.

Furthermore, it has been reported in the press that files recovered from a computer belonging to Raul Reyes, a leader within the terrorist rebel Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces, FARC, link the terrorist organization to the Venezuelan leadership in Caracas. In light of this news, Mr. Speaker, recent threats also made by the reckless and irresponsible leader, Hugo Chavez, and the ongoing attacks by the FARC, the United States needs to be supportive of the Colombian government, which stands up to anti-democratic and anti-American forces in the region.

It is time for the House leadership to follow through on their promises. Enactment of the U.S.-Colombia trade promotion agreement would show our strong support for this democracy while strengthening our own economy by creating greatest access for U.S. companies and creating more jobs in our communities here in the United States.

It would be negligent, irresponsible and unthinkable for this House to not immediately pass a free trade agreement with our closest ally in an otherwise volatile region.

Passage of this agreement will benefit businesses in our communities, create jobs for our constituents, and help strengthen our alliance with that democratically elected government and the people of Colombia. I call upon the House leadership to bring this agreement to the floor for a vote so we can