

new Congress and a new administration if all we see is the same old destruction in the Middle East with U.S. weapons being illegally used to kill children.

I oppose Hamas' rocket attacks on Israel. The rocket attacks, even to try to end the blockade, have no moral justification, are illegal, and must stop. But how can Israel claim self-defense when it bombs Gaza, which has no army, no air force, no navy, and has been under a constant blockade? How can Israel claim self-defense when its bombs destroy U.N. schools, killing children?

The children of Palestinians and the children of Israel both deserve life. But the lives of the children of Gaza are cynically discounted as human shields. Massacres are being rationalized. Israel's "moral high ground" in Gaza, a growing pile of small bones in a graveyard.

The administration knows Israel is using U.S. weapons, paid for by U.S. taxpayers, with disproportionate force, creating a collective punishment of Gazans, assuring an escalation of conflict, clear violations of the Arms Export Control Act.

Israel was given U.S. weapons on condition they would not be used for aggression or escalation. This outgoing administration must finally stand for the rule of law, not the rule of force.

IN MEMORY OF SERGEANT JOHN PENICH, U.S. ARMY

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

Mr. BOOZMAN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor a brave American soldier who sacrificed his life for freedom, Sergeant John Penich.

Sergeant Penich, by all accounts, was an extraordinary soldier whose hard work and determination earned him the title of Soldier of the Year in 2007 for his brigade. His bravery was evident in combat on several occasions. Brigadier General Perry Wiggins has said he knows of three separate instances when Sergeant Penich saved the lives of his comrades.

According to newspaper reports, one of his final acts of bravery came on September 6, 2008, when his patrol was attacked by rocket-propelled grenades and small-arms fire. He showed his courage under fire, taking charge and reestablishing security and saving the lives of his platoon members. His heroics on that day earned him a Silver Star, the third highest honor given to members of the armed services for valor.

Five and a half weeks after he earned the Silver Star, he gave the ultimate sacrifice. Sergeant Penich put himself in harm's way to make the world a better place.

His commitment to this country is second to none. He wanted to be an officer, and there's no doubt we would have benefited from this young man's tremendous leadership abilities.

Sergeant John Penich is a true American hero. I ask that my colleagues keep his family and friends in their thoughts and prayers during this very difficult time.

CONGRESS MUST WORK TO SAVE AND CREATE JOBS DURING THESE UNCERTAIN TIMES

(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. Madam Speaker, last year, nearly 2 million Americans lost their jobs. Almost half of those job losses came in October and November, after the financial collapse of Wall Street.

The December jobs numbers will be out in a couple of days, but it is not likely to be good news. All month long retailers were saying that they had to lay off seasonal help because Americans simply were not spending their money. And that's not surprising, considering that many of our constituents are justifiably concerned about their job security. Even those that are confident that they will hold on to their jobs are feeling financially squeezed because they are being paid less than they were 10 years ago.

As the 111th Congress begins this week, we are committed to getting Americans back to work and preventing further job cuts from happening later this year. We also want to provide middle class Americans with tax relief so they can better afford their monthly bills.

Madam Speaker, as change comes to Washington, we should work in a bipartisan manner to pass an economic recovery package quickly. We cannot afford to wait.

A NEW YEAR

(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. Madam Speaker, this year we should work immediately to address the challenges facing our Nation. Recent job losses and a decline in the housing market have led many Americans to lose confidence in our economy. I am optimistic, however, that sound bipartisan solutions that support small businesses and provide tax relief to American families will mean a quicker recovery and less of a burden on future generations of taxpayers.

As we expand opportunities for job creation, Congress should promote an all-of-the-above energy strategy. We cannot sustain our expensive and strategically dangerous dependence on foreign oil.

While there remain enemies who threaten our freedoms, I am grateful that our fighting men and women remain committed to their duty. We must defeat terrorists overseas to pro-

tect American families at home. We must always honor our military and veterans.

I am confident that we will lead our Nation toward greater prosperity and security if we trust and invest in the ingenuity and spirit of the American people with limited government.

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

ECONOMIC RECOVERY PLAN INVESTS IN AMERICA'S FUTURE

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

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Speaker, at a time of great economic anxiety, this new Congress faces enormous challenges. In the next 6 weeks we're going to craft and hopefully pass an economic recovery package that will create and save millions of jobs and will help jump start our economy with investments in some of our Nation's top priorities.

At a time when millions of Americans are losing their health insurance, Washington needs to provide critical assistance to States so that they can continue to provide health care services through Medicaid. If Congress does not act, States will have no other choice than to begin dropping coverage. That is an immediate health care concern that we should deal with as part of any economic stimulus package.

But we also have an opportunity to modernize our health care system with new computer technology that will greatly reduce health care costs and will improve care for every American.

Madam Speaker, I look forward to working with all of my colleagues in crafting a bipartisan plan that will help rebuild our economy so that we can get people back to work.

SELF DEFENSE AGAINST RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Madam Speaker, the radical hate group Hamas in Gaza has refused to renew a truce with Israel. It has begun once more firing thousands of Iranian-made rockets into Israel. Numerous Israelis have died in the last 11 days.

Hamas wants to annihilate Israel because, well, they're Jews. Hamas kills people that aren't radical Muslims like themselves. That's why they're called terrorists.

Hamas cowardly hides among civilians for cover, fires rockets, then is indignant if Israel defends itself. But Israel has moved into Gaza to find these bad guys.

Some world leaders, rather than mounting pressure on Hamas to stop the rocket attacks, are calling for a ceasefire, even a unilateral withdrawal

of Israeli forces from Gaza. In other words, peace at any price.

Peace ought to be a goal, but not at all costs. Actually, some things are worth fighting for. Now is not the time for unrealistic, hopeful idealism. Lives are on the line.

Men may cry peace, peace, but there can be no peace as long as Hamas kills in the name of religion.

And that's just the way it is.

RULE CHANGES BY THE MAJORITY

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

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. We had two Members, Madam Speaker, speak this morning on the issue in the Gaza Strip. I tend to agree with my colleague on this side of the aisle, Mr. POE, and tend to disagree with my colleague on the other side of the aisle, the Democratic Member, Mr. KUCINICH.

But I did want to point out something, the analogy between what he said and what happened on the floor of this House yesterday in regard to changing the rules package. Mr. KUCINICH said, in regard to the proportionality and Israel's response to Hamas and the Gaza Strip, we ought to abide by the rule of law, rather than the rule of force.

Well, I would say the same thing to the Democratic majority in regards to the rules change yesterday. You have a 40-vote margin, and you come in and you change the rules, and all of a sudden you weaken your PAYGO initiative so that you can declare spending an emergency to avoid PAYGO.

You said when you took control in the 110th that this business of holding a vote open for 3½ hours, breaking arms to change a vote, should never occur. You wanted to eliminate that, and now you say that's okay; we can do that.

I would say to my Democratic majority, despite those rules changes, for the sake of the American people, I hope my colleagues on the other side of the aisle come to recognize the need to include all voices in the legislative process.

PAYCHECK FAIRNESS ACT AND THE LILLY LEDBETTER FAIR PAY ACT

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

Mrs. MALONEY. Madam Speaker, this week, this Congress will take up two tremendously important bills that will work towards ending discrimination against women who still earn 78 cents to the dollar. We hope to get it to the Senate, pass it in the Senate and have it on President Obama's desk as one of the first bills for him to sign.

The Paycheck Fairness Act could be called the Free Speech Restoration Act because one of its features simply ensures that employees have the right to

give out personal information on how much they make without being fired. Some of our corporations say, if you tell anyone how much you make, you will be fired.

The second, the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, says that you can no longer cap damages. You cannot cap the amount of time that a person can be discriminated against. The Supreme Court held that if you did not bring a case within 180 days about pay discrimination, you could never bring it. So for 18 years, Lilly Ledbetter was discriminated against, and this Supreme Court said she could not bring suit. This Congress is changing that with this bill.

I urge a "yes" vote on these important bills.

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MAINTAINING AMERICA'S PROSPERITY AND DEMOCRACY

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

Mr. MCCOTTER. When the House last met in December, in the dying days of the 110th Congress, thanks to the leadership of the Speaker and of the chairman of Financial Services and of the people of this body, we sent a rescue package for the auto industry over to the Senate. Unfortunately, the Senate did not allow it to come up for a vote. Fortunately, President Bush and the administration offered and extended a bridge loan to the auto industry to keep the hardworking men and women employed and to keep America's manufacturing sector vital. We did not rejoice.

We understand that restructuring is necessary and that it will be painful. It will intensify and it will continue, but we also vow to do what we need to do to ensure that America keeps its engine of prosperity and its arsenal of democracy. We will prove the doubters wrong.

DEMOCRATS LOOK TO PROVIDE TAX RELIEF TO 95 PERCENT OF AMERICANS

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

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Our Nation is facing some of the worst economic conditions in decades. By the end of next year, our economy could fall \$1 trillion short of its full capacity. That is a loss of \$12,000 of income for every family in America. We cannot continue on this same economic course. Congress must take bipartisan action in the coming weeks to improve our economy both in the near term and down the line.

Economists tell us that we must act in bold terms—that we must invest in new technologies and, most importantly, that we must invest in the American people.

Congress should work with President-elect Obama to craft a targeted and fiscally responsible economic recovery package that invests in the middle class families by providing them with tax relief during these uncertain times.

Madam Speaker, it's going to take time to turn this economy around, but we should start the process immediately so that all Americans can once again live the American dream.

THE COOPER-WOLF SAFE COMMISSION: A BIPARTISAN SOLUTION

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

Mr. WOLF. Madam Speaker, I have never been more concerned about the short-term and the long-term budget shortfalls we face as a Nation.

Yesterday, President-elect Obama said we have trillion-dollar deficits for years to come even with the economic recovery we're working on. Whatever stimulus package, rumored to top \$700 billion, is brought to the House floor for a vote, Congress has an historic opportunity to work in a bipartisan way.

There is a plan already on the table that has garnered the support of over 100 Members of the House. It is the bipartisan plan that Congressman COOPER and I have that puts every spending program on the table and that sets up a bipartisan commission of eight Republicans and eight Democrats.

If this Congress does not pass this, then no Member ought to be able to go home and give the traditional Rotary speeches about how concerned they are for your children and for your grandchildren of the country. The real issue is, with trillion-dollar deficits, if we don't deal with the entitlement issues, we will fail.

DEMOCRATS LOOK TO PROVIDE TAX RELIEF TO 95 PERCENT OF AMERICANS

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

Ms. WATSON. Madam Speaker, the current economic recession is putting a lot of pressure on American families. Today, millions of our constituents are fearful that they could lose their jobs any day now.

Last night, my sister told me that she lost hers in New York. They've seen family members or work colleagues already let go, and they are uncertain about their futures. They are also working for less money than they did 10 years ago. Yet they face skyrocketing bills for their children's education, for health care and for their own groceries. They hear the bleak economic forecast on the news every night, and they're looking for help. We all know that the U.S. economy is in trouble, but now the question is: What are we going to do about it?