delicate ecosystem, which has become engrained in the unique culture of the great State of Florida.

Athalie Range, Mr. Speaker, was another pioneer among the great women of Florida. Ms. Range was the former president of the Liberty City Elementary PTA in 1953. Ms. Range fought to eliminate the deplorable conditions of segregated public schools. She may not have been the only one to notice the disparity between white and black schools, but she was one of the first to do something positive about it. She stood before the all-white school board, which turned out to be no match for her fighting spirit. These segregationist policies, which seemed to be set in stone, were smashed beneath the weight of her mighty will.

In fact, South Florida is blessed with many remarkable women, and our chapter of RESULTS is cultivating distinguished, altruistic women like Betsy Skipp, Gale Neumann, and Kathleen Gordon. These women have devoted their precious time and their ample talents to this amazing organization that advocates solutions to raising the standards of living throughout the globe.

Their role within RESULTS has been to pioneer the use of microenterprise programs to empower even more women to pursue their dreams and achieve greatness of their own. These women are heroines. I admire them, and young girls in South Florida aspire to achieve even a fraction of what they have.

Every day I am thankful that my daughters will have the benefit of walking the road that these courageous women have paved for all of us.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MCHENRY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. MCHENRY addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

VOTE ''NO'' ON NO-BID CONTRACTS

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

Mr. FLAKE. Madam Speaker, later this week we'll vote on whether to instruct the Ethics Committee to investigate the relationship between earmarks and contributions from the PMA Group, an organization that is currently under investigation by the U.S. Department of Justice.

Last week, I offered a broader resolution. This one is specific. At its core is the notion that the House should have a higher standard of conduct than whether or not a Member can be indicted or convicted. The broader resolution gained the support of 182 Members—a substantial number, but still short of passage.

Let me make an appeal to the newer Members of this body, those who have been elected in the past few election cycles: Most of you campaigned on principles of good government, that Congress should take its article 1 powers seriously, that we should be careful and deliberative stewards of the public purse.

I have some sobering news. It's now up to you to uphold the dignity and decorum of this institution. It's now up to you to ensure that those who view our proceedings from afar will have enduring respect for what is done here.

This duty would normally fall to the more seasoned Members of this body, particularly those who have been entrusted with leadership positions. One would assume that they would feel it their obligation to be the guardians of the reputation and the dignity of the people's House. But this is not the case.

For whatever reason, those who have been chosen to lead have chosen not to lead on this issue. While the Department of Justice investigations swirl around us, while some of our former Members sit in prison, we have opted for business as usual, insisting that campaign contributions do not constitute ''financial interest,'' whistling past the Justice Department as we go.

Those who have been entrusted in leadership positions may tell you that securing no-bid contracts, even for those who give you campaign contributions, is simply an exercise of your article 1 authority under the Constitution. But you know better than that.

When the President stood in this body 1 week ago and called for an end to no-bid contracts, he received a standing ovation. We all stood and cheered. But the very next day we passed legislation that provided thousands of no-bid contracts, including several to clients of the PMA Group—a lobbying group currently under investigation by the Department of Justice.

So here we are. A privileged resolution has been offered that would ask the House Ethics Committee to investigate earmarks and campaign contributions related to the PMA Group. We will vote on that resolution on Thursday.

This resolution, or something similar to it, will eventually pass. We will eventually come to understand that it is beneath the dignity of this institution to continue to sweep this issue under the rug and pretend that no one will notice.

It simply isn't right to give no-bid contracts to those who give us campaign contributions. I believe that the overwhelming majority of this body understands that, regardless of what our leaders may tell us. I think an overwhelming majority of this body knows that we need a higher standard than we currently employ.

Madam Speaker, we owe this institution far more than we are giving it. Let us vote for this privileged resolution and give it the respect it deserves.

DEFENSE SPENDING

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

Mr. DUNCAN. Madam Speaker, the President has announced we will soon be sending an additional 17,000 troops to Afghanistan, bringing our total there to approximately 55,000.

A few days ago, I read a one-line mention in a story that the Defense Department, which is now the Department of Foreign Aid, was going to spend $100 million to build a new road in Afghanistan. I think our Founding Fathers would think we had flipped out or lost our minds to spend $100 million to build a road in Afghanistan, especially since we are over $11 trillion in debt and thus are spending money that we do not have. Of course, $100 million is just a tiny drop in the bucket of the billions and billions that we have spent over there since 2001, in an impoverished country that is no realistic threat to us whatsoever.

Of course, every giant bureaucracy is doing everything it can to expand its mission and exaggerating its threats so it can get more money. That is what the war in Afghanistan is really all about—money and power instead of any real threat.

According to the Congressional Research Service, we have spent $173 billion in Afghanistan since 2001, and as far as I'm concerned, it's pouring money down a rat hole. It is a complete waste. I think if there are any fiscal conservatives left in Congress, they should be horrified by the waste that is going on over there.

General Petraeus said in an article in the Washington Post a few days ago that the situation in Afghanistan, despite all of this money, has deteriorated markedly in the past 2 years. Those were his words. He said Afghanistan has been known over the years as the graveyard of empires, and if we're not careful, it's going to help be the graveyard of our empire as well.

Professor Ian Lustick of the University of Pennsylvania wrote recently about the money feeding frenzy of the war on terror and he wrote this: ''Nearly 7 years after September 11, 2001, what accounts for the vast discrepancy between the terrorist threat facing America and the scale of our response? Why, absent any evidence of a serious terror threat, is a war on terror so enormous, so all-encompassing, and still expanding?

''The fundamental answer is that Al Qaeda's most important accomplishment was not to hijack our planes but to hijack our political system.

''For a multitude of politicians, interest groups and professional associations, corporations, media organizations, universities, local and State governments, and Federal agency officials, the war on terror is now a major profit center, a funding bonanza, and a set of slogans and soundbites to be inserted into budget, project, grant, and contract proposals.''