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House of Representatives

The House met at 12:30 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. EDWARDS).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
March 23, 2009.

I hereby appoint the Honorable DONNA F. EDWARDS to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 6, 2009, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 30 minutes and each Member, other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip, limited to 5 minutes.

PRESIDENT OBAMA'S BUDGET

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, for the past year we have been on an economic roller coaster, with scary turns and falls coming ever faster, making the sinking feeling in the pit of our stomachs even worse.

Along the way, the Federal Government, spurred by the most-dire predictions, has taken sweeping actions. Some, like the bailout, I opposed; others, like the Economic Recovery Package of President Obama, I supported. But action was warranted to help the struggling economy and restore public confidence. Yet we continue to react to part of the problem with partial stopgap actions.

This week, Congress has an opportunity to deal with the bigger picture and comprehensive solutions as we consider President Obama's budget.

For decades we have been living beyond our means and the environment's capacity to be a dumping ground for toxic waste, and air and water pollution, especially carbon pollution, that is destabilizing the climate, raising global temperature and sea levels, and changing things we rely on, like growing seasons and water supply.

We have been living on borrowed time and borrowed money. The previous administration cut taxes for those who needed help the least, increased spending but avoided long-term investments in education and our infrastructure like roads, bridges and rail.

The day of reckoning is here, accelerated by the global financial meltdown, the causes of which are clearer than the remedies. The sad truth is that the geniuses who figured out how to enrich themselves were clueless about the broader implications. Too much energy, brain power and lobbying has been spent on making money for a few, not on creating underlying economic value for the Nation. We have been left with two starkly different paths: we can muddle on through doing what we have done, only less of it, with a battle over who will take the biggest losses while continuing these past patterns. Given the array of special interests and the history involved, we have a pretty good idea what that path will look like.

The other approach is outlined in the President's budget: tackle comprehensively the challenges of health care, education, the long-term fiscal stability of the United States and global warming and its real costs and danger.

The health care system is the biggest opportunity for savings. We spend more money than anyone else in the world for health care, but ours is a system where Americans are sick more often and die sooner than people in most developed countries and in even some poor ones. It is not just foreign countries that have figured this out, but many American communities provide better health care while spending less money than the Nation as a whole. We as a Nation can do this.

Energy dependence and carbon pollution doesn't just threaten our way of life in the future, it attacks our pocketbook and our communities now. The President's plan will save families money, make America more secure, and protect the planet.

In the middle of the economic meltdown, we shouldn't and we won't raise taxes. But over the long haul, we are going to have to pay our debts and find money for rebuilding and renewing America. There are areas in the budget that point the way, like keeping some portion of the expiring tax cuts on the most well-off and reinstituting the Superfund tax to clean up toxic waste.

Finally, there is the question of tackling unnecessary spending. The President points out agricultural subsidies for the rich agribusiness interests, while shortchanging most farmers and ranchers. There is a way to make more rational our support of agriculture. We need to support him as we all face the question whether Cold War weapons that the military doesn't need, and in some cases doesn't even want, are worth the costs to the American taxpayer.

The path contained in the budget will be the first chance for Congress, the administration, and, most important, the public to weave together the elements of change and reform. There are short-term political risks, to be sure. But the long-term benefits are breathtaking, especially when compared to

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continuing the short term, business as usual, unsustainable course that has led us to this point of economic and fiscal disaster.

My hope and prayer is that Congress will be able to meet the President's challenge and work with him to refine his bold budget, treat our problems with the gravity they merit, and the public with the respect that it is due.

FRUIT OF THE BAILOUT MANIA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, it is time for a brief history lesson. In the fall of 2008, the Bush administration came running to Congress with an historic ask: $700 billion with no strings attached to save the country from financial meltdown. At the time I didn't buy it, so I voted against the bailout plan twice. In fact, my distaste for the bailout plan and the unfettered access to taxpayer money that it gave the Treasury Department and the executive branch was so strong that I soon introduced a bill to stop the bailout mania.

It was a simple bill, but it had to be considered by Congress thanks to the way the bailout law had been written. In a nutshell, it would have stopped the second half of the $700 billion TARP bailout. I introduced it in 2008 and again in 2009. President Bush's request for the second half of the bailout money in early 2009 triggered consideration of my bill. That's when things got interesting.

The week before we considered my bill to stop the bailout, we also considered another bill called the TARP Reform and Accountability Act. Nice name, but what it essentially did was give a tacit thumbs-up on the second half of the bailout and even more wasteful bailouts with taxpayer money of failed automakers. It had some provisions to increase oversight and transparency. But ultimately, it would have expanded the use of taxpayer money for bailouts.

As I look back over the debates from those two days in January and in the ensuing weeks, I found some comments to be rather surprising, especially in light of the news last week about the outrageous bonuses awarded at AIG, a company which received another $30 billion this month in government bailout cash. The comments and questions from my friends on the other side of the aisle focused on their unwavering trust in the Obama administration's intentions to stop these sorts of executive bonus payments at companies that received bailout money.

During the debate on the anti-bailout measure, my colleague, Chairman FRANK said, ''We saw bankers saying I got the money, it's none of your business what we do with it. We saw bonuses given that shouldn't be given. I am confident that the Obama administration has learned from that.'' In his defense, I know that the chairman of the Financial Services Committee does not support these AIG millionaire bonuses, but we can draw a useful lesson from his comments. It's a simple lesson: the Obama administration pledging that there will be no more excessive bonuses does not make it so.

While I regret that my colleague was so gravely mistaken about the Obama administration, I do think that it is important to point out how quickly the new administration's actions have fallen short of its inflated rhetoric.

Let's take a look at some of the other comments made over the past couple of months. Last month, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. JACKSON) trumpeted President Obama's promise to limit executive compensation at bailed out companies. He said, ''Today, the President will limit executive compensation for executives of companies that take advantage of taxpayer bailout funds. This is the right thing to do.'' And in January, Mr. POMEROY of North Dakota defended his vote to give the Obama administration the $350 billion in bailout cash, ''The written pledges of the Obama administration to operate TARP with firm conditions, greater oversight and transparent accountability abide with the conditions passed by the House.''

So what exactly did the Obama administration pledge to do? It pledged to ensure that bailed out financial institutions did not go overboard with excessive executive compensation bonuses. Specifically, his National Economic Adviser wrote a letter to Congress on January 12 that stated: ''The President-elect is committed to using the full arsenal of tools available to us to get credit flowing again to families and businesses. He will ask his Department of Treasury to put in place strict and sensible conditions on CEO compensation and dividend payments until taxpayers get their money back.'' He continued: ''We will ensure that resources are directed to increasing lending and preventing new financial crises and not to enriching shareholders or executives. Those receiving exceptional assistance will be subject to tough but sensible conditions that limit executive compensation until taxpayer money is paid back.''

One of my colleagues, Mr. MCGOVERN, was very encouraged by this letter from the incoming administration. I will read what he said in response to the administration's pledge: ''And I should say that the statement by the Obama administration, the statement by Larry Summers, is all very encouraging. It demonstrates a real appreciation of what average people are going through.''

I will leave it to the American people to judge how well the Obama administration has stood by its pledge to ''limit executive compensation until taxpayer money is paid back,'' and I will leave it to the American people to judge how well this administration appreciates what average people are going through—unless, of course, you consider people who get million-dollar bonuses for running a massive company into the grounds to be average.

SAFE MARKETS DEVELOPMENT ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DOGGETT) for 5 minutes.

Mr. DOGGETT. Madam Speaker, with all of the recent talk about unearned bonuses, I want to talk about a bonus that we Americans can give to ourselves and the world. We can do that by approving President Obama's plan to ''make clean, renewable energy the profitable kind of energy.'' Because we can build a clean energy economy by reducing greenhouse gas emissions—carbon pollution—through a market-based system, as the President has proposed, I am today, together with a number of my colleagues, introducing the Safe Markets Development Act.

This legislation will help to ensure that any future market for carbon allowances is not abused by price speculators or undermined by excessive price volatility. This is the first cap-and-trade measure to be filed in this Congress, and it is unique both in responding to concerns about market manipulation, and in its broad support bringing new members and a broader array of interests behind this new idea about how to resolve one aspect of our transition to a cleaner world.

The Safe Markets bill offers an approach that will provide a narrow auction and trading environment for the start-up phase for a cap-and-trade or cap-and-invest system. Experts on commodities markets tell us that price volatility is not unusual with new markets. And certainly legitimate concern recently over speculation in fossil fuel and financial markets must not stand in our way of new clean energy policy.

How does this bill achieve science-based emission reductions? It creates an independent board with strict conflict-of-interest provisions and post-employment restrictions to determine the annual prices per ton of carbon necessary to meet science-based annual emission targets from 2012 to 2020. The Treasury Department would conduct quarterly allowance auctions designed to maintain this price. Under the legislation, the board would conduct an annual review of its success in meeting emission goals in order to adjust for gas prices to ensure compliance with the next year's targets.

Just as a child removes training wheels after becoming comfortable cycling, or tries the shallow end of the pool before moving into the deep end, so too we can gain experience over these first eight years to move eventually to a more traditional cap-and-trade system.

□ 1245

Like President Obama, I believe that the best approach is one that relies

upon a 100 percent auction—that does not give away to polluters ''pollute free'' cards. Budget Director Dr. Peter Orszag has correctly noted that giving away allowances would represent the largest corporate welfare program that has ever been enacted in the history of the United States. As noted in another recent statement by over 600 economists calling for auctioning all allowances, free allocations do little or nothing to protect families and businesses from higher energy costs. The significant shortcomings of the European cap-and-trade system are largely linked to the pursuit of this politically easy but very ineffective course. An abundance of free allocations just leads to more price speculation and would hinder the ability of the system to properly reduce emissions.

The bill that I am introducing today represents the type of legislation that I will continue offering, building block by building block, to help us achieve a comprehensive solution. Next will be a plan that I will advance to ensure the competitiveness of American importers and exporters in the new energy economy. I am pleased this legislation enjoys support from a number of members of the Blue Dog coalition, such as Representative JIM COOPER and Representative HEATH SHULER, as well as members of other caucuses here in Congress and a broader array of business interests such as the National Venture Capital Association.

Last week, Speaker PELOSI brought together key House committee chairs to sign a statement that they are uniting behind one bill to achieve our shared goal with President Obama of a more accessible, affordable health care system for every American. I believe we need to do the same thing to resolve global warming. Today's bill represents one new element of that broader legislation that must be developed through cooperation and collaboration of the House Energy and Commerce and Ways and Means Committees as well as many other Members.

I believe that a role exists for every Member of this Congress who is willing to work in good faith based on good science to end obstruction and reduce the real threat of global warming. The more Members we bring together, the more successful we will be in enacting the solution that President Obama has offered and move us to a clean energy economy.

THE ECONOMIC CRISIS—WHAT LIES BENEATH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. STEARNS. Madam Speaker, our Federal Government has taken drastic measures in the past 6 months, mainly in the form of taxpayer-funded bailouts, in an attempt to put a stop to the complete deterioration of our financial system. Trillions have been spent and companies such as AIG have been deemed ''too big to fail.'' But the Wall Street bailouts have proven to not be a sustainable cure to our financial ills. These bailouts constitute an assault on American capitalism and have introduced a large degree of financial hazard into our economic system.

The nationalization of private assets is inherently un-American. With all the money we have spent thus far, we should have been able to stem much of the economic collapse—but we haven't. We have failed to grasp the root of the problem—the unregulated, out-of-control derivatives market.

The recent disclosure that AIG will pay out $165 million in bonuses to employees of their Financial Products division—the very unit that made bad bets on toxic mortgages and credit default swaps—is wrong. The Federal Government owns 80 percent of AIG and the Treasury and the Federal Reserve has infused more than $170 billion in taxpayer bailout money trying to rescue this company. As these recent events demonstrate, the administration's plan of recovery by bailout is not working. Bailout after bailout is not a strategy. It's a formula for waste, fraud and abuse of taxpayer funds.

The Federal Government has spent an exorbitant amount of money trying to rescue the economy but it appears to have had little effect. Beyond the $700 billion for TARP funds, the government has made commitments of more than $9 trillion and has spent $2.2 trillion. And there is very little oversight of this money as the case of the AIG bonuses makes clear. This begs the question: What are we getting for our money?

Clearly the real cause of the financial crisis is more than just the bursting of the housing bubble, since over 90 percent of all homeowners are current on their mortgages. A closer look at the root causes of the crisis reveals flawed incentive structures and an inadequate regulatory system that allowed the derivatives market to spiral out of control.

Specifically, the credit default swap market is completely unregulated and it helped spread the risks generated by subprime mortgages to investors and financial institutions around the world. In the U.S. alone, the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency reported the amount of outstanding credit derivatives from reporting banks to be $16.4 trillion just a year ago. Among the G10 countries—the United States, the U.K., Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Sweden plus Switzerland—the amount of outstanding credit default swaps is about $57 trillion.

Many have called credit default swaps and the larger derivatives market the true culprit in the global financial crisis. Derivatives trading also helped to contribute to AIG's near collapse and it seems as if no amount of money can save AIG at the moment, yet the company has been deemed ''too big to fail.'' However, no one has defined what ''too big to fail'' means in the real world.

Beyond just credit default swaps, the Bank for International Settlements—the world's oldest international financial organization headquartered in Basel, Switzerland—reports the total outstanding amount of over-the-counter derivatives to be $684 trillion. This large amount of outstanding derivatives demonstrates the world financial system could be in a huge amount of additional trouble during this worldwide economic crisis. Since over-the-counter derivatives are negotiated between parties and not on an exchange, the risk of the contract falls on both of the parties. So if one of the parties is not able to meet the terms of the contract, the first party stands to lose as well. With $684 trillion of outstanding money, we are playing with very hot fire.

As these statistics show, this is a problem not just in the United States but around the globe.

So what is the solution? Let's break up these firms and sell the pieces off or separate the toxic loans and let the free market correct the economy as it was designed. The viable portion of these massive financial institutions can still be salvaged. However, we need to examine their asset sheets to determine how deeply involved each company is in the derivatives market.

There are better options than endless bailouts and the nationalization of private assets in this country. We must put an end to throwing trillions at the wrong source of the problem.

WALL STREET BAILOUTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. SHERMAN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. SHERMAN. I thank the gentleman from Florida for his remarks, where he refers to AIG as ''too big to fail.'' The latest from Wall Street is, well, it's not so much too big to fail, but too interconnected with the rest of financial institutions. ''Too interconnected to fail'' is the new line. The fact is this: AIG was too well-connected to fail. AIG should have been in receivership, but that would have disadvantaged the richest, most powerful interests in the world.

Now let us look at the new public-private partnership plan being put forward by the Treasury. It involves a thousand times as much money as AIG executives received in bonuses and it would make the American people a thousand times as angry, except for the fact that it is so technical that the American people may not fully understand it.

Here is how it's supposed to work. The taxpayer puts up 94 percent of the money. The taxpayer takes 94 percent of the risk that the assets purchased will end up being worth nothing. Ninety-four percent. And the taxpayer gets 50 percent of the profits. The private

Wall Street interests put up 6 percent of the money, maybe less, and they get 50 percent of the profits. What this will mean is that this new entity that's created, the public-private partnership, will go out and buy these extremely difficult-to-value assets. They're going to overpay for some. They're going to underpay for others. They're going to make money on some. They're going to lose money on others. When they make money, half the profit goes to Wall Street. When they lose money, 94 percent of the loss goes to the taxpayer.

These entities are going to be 94 percent government-owned and financed. At least we're putting up 94 percent of the money. AIG was 80 percent government-owned and when they paid a million-dollar bonus, the country was angry. Well, what about an entity that's 94 percent government-owned? You can be sure this entity will be paying out million-dollar salaries, million-dollar bonuses. I wonder whether the American people will focus on it.

What we have had is a circumstance where so far this government has transferred hundreds of billions of dollars of wealth to Wall Street. But all that money has gone to the big, well-known, publicly traded companies on Wall Street. Well, there is another important tribe on Wall Street, and that is the hedge funds. Now with this new program, we can transfer hundreds of billions of dollars to the right side of Wall Street and hundreds of billions of dollars of taxpayer equity, taking hundreds of billions of dollars of taxpayer risk, for the benefit of the left side of Wall Street. Apparently some people think that's what fairness is—massive wealth transfer to both sides of Wall Street.

Now last week we passed a tax bill. That bill has been criticized by Wall Street and the administration. But they've ignored the statements of Lawrence Tribe, the foremost expert on constitutional law, the professor at Harvard Law School, who outlines step by step why that law was constitutional. Now I had problems with the law because it had loopholes in it. It will allow the Merrill Lynch executives to keep their bonuses. It allows million-dollar-a-month salaries. And I will introduce tomorrow what I think is a much more comprehensive effort to say that those who work for bailed-out firms shouldn't get more than a half million dollars a year, that whatever they get in excess to that they ought to return to their companies, and I hope we will have some cosponsors for that bill. But it is very plain from Lawrence Tribe's analysis that the approach we took in this House yesterday is fully constitutional and that the flimsy constitutional arguments that are being made against it hold water only because they're repeated over and over and over again in somber tones by Wall Street and the establishment.

Let me give you another example. Congress, the Republican Congress in 1996, passed a 200 percent excise tax which is now law, and that excise tax falls on excess bonuses and excess salaries to executives, and it was retroactive, 6 months retroactive from when it was passed and it took effect 6 months earlier. Why does nobody know about this code section with a 200 percent tax on excess compensation? Because it didn't affect Wall Street, so it was not controversial. It affected those who received excess compensation from charitable organizations.

I look forward to working with my colleagues to pass reasonable limits on executive compensation and to make sure that the taxpayer gets more than half the benefits when we put up 94 percent of the equity.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 58 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until 2 p.m.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. LARSEN of Washington) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer:

Lord God, contrary lines run parallel; they may never meet. Holding their own, they forever respect equal distance to each other. Contradictory lines are sure to clash because they are determined only by self-direction. A straight line demands everyone to take a side. A curved line, however—however subtle it is—in the end will form a circle and find oneself.

Lord, help us not to be rigid in our own sense of direction or rash in drawing lines for others. Draw us closer to Your presence, Lord, so we may respond to Your influence upon us; and allow us to have Your way with us, both now and forever.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LARSEN of Washington). The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. LYNCH) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. LYNCH led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

> I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

LEARNING A LESSON FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

(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, according to a recent Rasmussen poll, two-thirds of the American people have more confidence in their own judgment than they do in Congress. I couldn't agree more, which is why I and many of my colleagues in Congress believe we can learn from the American people.

We can tighten our budgets when times are tough; we can cut out the things we don't need; we can make some difficult choices rather than mortgaging the future of the next generation and threatening Social Security. We should respect the fact that Americans know better how to spend their own money.

Congress doesn't need an expert economist to tell us how to be fiscally responsible. We have millions of American families, small businesses, and homebuilders all across this Nation who are fine examples of leadership and resolve. We should be promoting small businesses to create jobs, not tax their success.

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

BUDGET CALAMITY

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the proposed budget is going to double the national debt. What that means to Joe Sixpack is every American will be responsible for $70,000 apiece to pay off this massive debt incurred by money-grabbing government. Does anyone know there's a recession going on?

Government cannot spend America into prosperity with somebody else's money. We shouldn't even be borrowing more money during these hard times. The Treasury Secretary says part of the reason government got into this economic mess was government borrowing. Also, government has plans to raise taxes on working citizens to pay for all these fancy projects in the budget.

Americans already pay too much in taxes during this recession. Americans don't want more taxes. Americans don't want to incur more debt. Americans don't want government to spend money it does not have.

Government is taking America's money to reward failure, and sending money to special interest groups.

Meanwhile, Americans are losing their jobs. Americans are tired, weary, and mad about government ''ripoffs, payoffs, and layoffs.''

And that's just the way it is.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Persons in the gallery will refrain from applause.

HONORING DAYNA HILTON FOR HER NATIONAL RECOGNITION

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

Mr. BOOZMAN. My constituent, Dayna Hilton, was recently named the 2009 Educator of the Year by the National Fire Protection Association. She has diligently been involved in fire service for 9 years. She currently serves as the Public Fire and Life Safety Educator for Johnson County's Rural Fire Department in Clarksville, Arkansas, and is an instructor for both the Arkansas Fire Academy and the National Fire Academy.

Dayna encouraged the Rural Fire Department in Johnson County to make fire prevention part of its mission. Now it has a Fire Prevention Division and, thanks to Dayna's efforts, has received almost $150,000 in grants and awards for fire prevention efforts.

In addition to serving the State of Arkansas, Dayna has published numerous articles, appeared on several television networks, and recorded educational videos to promote fire and safety on the national level. Dayna owns Firehouse Dog Publishing, and is the published author of Sparkles the Fire Safety Dog.

I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Dayna.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
The Speaker, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MADAM SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on March 23, 2009, at 9:40 a.m.:

Appointments:

Congressional Award Board.

Health Information Technology Policy Committee.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

LORRAINE C. MILLER,
Clerk of the House.

COMMUNICATION FROM DEPUTY STAFF DIRECTOR, COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from Paul Arcangeli, Deputy Staff Director, Committee on Armed Services:

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, March 19, 2009.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MADAM SPEAKER: This is to notify you formally, pursuant to Rule VIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, that I have been served with a subpoena, issued in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia, for testimony in a criminal case.

After consultation with the Office of General Counsel, I have determined that compliance with the subpoena is consistent with the precedents and privileges of the House.

Sincerely,

PAUL ARCANGELI,
Deputy Staff Director.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote incurs objection under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken after 6:30 p.m. today.

NATIONAL BRAIN INJURY AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. LYNCH. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 178) expressing the need for enhanced public awareness of traumatic brain injury and support for the designation of a National Brain Injury Awareness Month.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 178

Whereas traumatic brain injury is a leading cause of death and disability among children and young adults in the United States;

Whereas at least 1.4 million Americans sustain a traumatic brain injury each year;

Whereas each year, more than 125,000 of such Americans sustain permanent life-long disabilities from a traumatic brain injury, resulting in a life-altering experience that can include the most serious physical, cognitive, and emotional impairments;

Whereas every 21 seconds, one person in the United States sustains a traumatic brain injury;

Whereas at least 3.17 million Americans currently live with permanent disabilities resulting from a traumatic brain injury;

Whereas traumatic brain injuries may have a life-altering impact on both Americans living with resultant disabilities and their families;

Whereas concussions are serious injuries to the brain and multiple concussions can lead to lifelong disability and death;

Whereas most cases of traumatic brain injury are preventable;

Whereas traumatic brain injuries cost the nation $60 billion annually;

Whereas the lack of public awareness is so vast that traumatic brain injury is known in the disability community as the Nation's ''silent epidemic'';

Whereas traumatic brain injury is the signature wound of the global war on terrorism as a result of roadside bombs and blasts;

Whereas the military personnel who have served in the Armed Forces of the United States in such war and who return to the United States with traumatic brain injuries will require additional Federal, State, and local resources;

Whereas there is a need for enhanced public awareness of traumatic brain injury;

Whereas the designation of a National Brain Injury Awareness Month will work toward enhancing public awareness of traumatic brain injury; and

Whereas the Brain Injury Association of America has recognized March as Brain Injury Awareness Month: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That House of Representatives—

(1) supports the designation of an appropriate month as National Brain Injury Awareness Month; and

(2) urges the President to issue a proclamation calling on the people of the United States, Federal departments and agencies, States, localities, organizations, and media to annually observe a National Brain Injury Awareness Month with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. LYNCH) and the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. AKIN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LYNCH. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Massachusetts?

There was no objection.

Mr. LYNCH. Mr. Speaker, I now yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, as a Member of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, I am joined by my colleagues in the consideration of House Resolution 178, which expresses support for enhanced public awareness of traumatic brain injury and for designation of National Brain Injury Awareness Month which, for years, has been commemorated annually during the month of March.

House Resolution 178 was introduced by the great Representative BILL PASCRELL of New Jersey, on February 13, 2009, and has the support and cosponsorship of over 90 Members of Congress. The reason for such generous congressional support is the fact that traumatic brain injury impacts nearly 1.5 million Americans a year.

The measure was considered by the Oversight panel on March 10, 2009, and was passed by voice vote with unanimous support from myself and my fellow committee members.

Mr. Speaker, each and every March the National Brain Injury Association of America and its State affiliates come together with other organizations, businesses, schools, and of course those who have survived or sustained

traumatic brain injury and their families, to promote greater awareness and understanding of brain injury.

Mr. Speaker, before consideration of this resolution, how many of us were aware that every 21 seconds an individual in our country sustains a traumatic brain injury, or the fact that among our servicemen and women engaged in the Global War on Terrorism, brain injury has been identified as a ''signature wound,'' usually resulting from roadside bombs and explosive devices.

Often described as a somewhat ''silent epidemic,'' brain injury, whether as a mild concussion or severe enough to result in comatose conditions, certainly deserves the attention of the Congress and the resources and research of this country.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I'd like to again thank my colleague from New Jersey, Congressman BILL PASCRELL, for working to make sure we recognize the need for greater public awareness of brain injury and for highlighting the National Brain Injury Awareness Month which, this year, I should add, will focus specifically on brain injury in sports and youth recreational activities.

House Resolution 178 is certainly worthy of the support of this body, and I hope my colleagues will vote accordingly.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. AKIN. I yield such time as he may consume to a highly respected and distinguished colleague, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PLATTS).

Mr. PLATTS. I appreciate the distinguished gentleman from Missouri yielding to me. I am honored to join with the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. LYNCH), as well as my good friend and colleague, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PASCRELL), in speaking in favor of this resolution to express the important need for increased public awareness of traumatic brain injury, and to designate March as National Traumatic Brain Injury Awareness Month.

For the past 4 years, I have been honored to cochair the Congressional Traumatic Brain Injury Task Force with my good friend, Representative PASCRELL from New Jersey. While it's been a pleasure to work with BILL for the last 4 years, I especially want to highlight his great leadership long before I joined the task force—for many years—leading the cause and helping to raise awareness about this important issue.

Together, we have worked to increase awareness of TBI, which many people do not realize is the leading cause of death and disability among children and young adults in the United States.

Mr. Speaker, this year alone, over 1.4 million people will sustain a traumatic brain injury. Sadly, at least 80,000 of these individuals will remain permanently disabled from the trauma.

Falls, motor vehicle crashes, sports injuries, and violence are among the major causes of TBI, leaving every individual susceptible. Additionally, TBIs can manifest themselves in various ways, from small behavioral changes to more tragic injuries, including complete physical disability and death.

Brain injuries affect the whole family emotionally and financially, often resulting in huge medical and rehabilitation expenses. The recent tragic death of Natasha Richardson amplifies the importance of bringing awareness to this critical issue. Because Ms. Richardson appeared to be unaffected immediately after a skiing accident in which she hit her head, she did not receive medical treatment. Unfortunately, only hours later, after experiencing a severe headache, she was admitted to the hospital, lapsed into a coma and, tragically, died. Tragedies such as these happen every day and can often be prevented.

TBI has also been named the ''signature wound'' of the war in Iraq, with approximately more than 20 percent of our deployed men and women returning with this injury. Thanks to the state-of-the-art body armor with which our men and women overseas are equipped, they are able to survive violent attacks while still receiving a blunt force to the head.

Fortunately, in recent years, Congress and the administration have worked together to provide increased funding for military TBI screening and treatment programs. However, more still needs to be done.

Mr. Speaker, because all of our fellow citizens have families, friends, and neighbors who could fall victim to TBI at any time, I strongly urge support from all of our colleagues for this resolution here today, and urge a ''yes'' vote.

□ 1415

Mr. LYNCH. Mr. Speaker, at this time I take great pleasure in recognizing the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PASCRELL) for 5 minutes.

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend from Massachusetts, and my good friend TODD PLATTS who is the co-chair of the Traumatic Brain Injury Task Force.

Mr. Speaker, I learned about this injury about 10 years ago when I was approached by one of my constituents, Dennis Benigno, whose son was struck by a car, leaving him with severe cognitive and physical disabilities.

In response, former Congressman Jim Greenwood from Pennsylvania and I formed the Congressional Brain Injury Task Force to further education and awareness of brain injuries and support funding for brain injury research. There wasn't too much at that time. In fact, most of the Members of Congress didn't know about the seriousness of the injury and how 1.5 million Americans are affected every year.

I think people often wonder why we spend so much time talking about brain injury. Unfortunately, it took the war to crystallize what this entire issue is all about.

Someone in America suffers a traumatic brain injury every 21 seconds. At least 1.5 million Americans sustain this injury, as I mentioned. That is more than breast cancer, HIV, multiple sclerosis, and spinal cord injuries combined. Of those, 50,000 will die every year. An estimated 3.22 million Americans are currently living with a long-term disability because of TBI. As many as 20 percent of the 1.8 million deployed troops in Afghanistan and Iraq, that is 360,000 soldiers, have sustained TBIs in Iraq and Afghanistan. That is an astonishing figure.

TBI is one of the rare afflictions that is widespread among both the civilian population and among our soldiers. There has been a weakness in the Defense health care system, and many injured soldiers weren't receiving the level of care that they deserved. The military has made great strides in the last several years to better prevent, identify, and treat brain injuries among our brave men and women in uniform, and Congress has been a willing partner in the effort to ensure sustained progress on this front.

Mr. Speaker and my good friend from Massachusetts, just today on the USA Today front-page review: GI's at Risk By Fitness Practices. Many of the soldiers are not fit to go to the battlefield. Many of our football players in colleges and in high schools throughout America are not fit to go on to the field. If they are not screened, we are doing an injustice to the cause.

Accordingly, the Brain Injury Task Force brought together experts from all over the world at St. Joseph's Regional Medical Center in Paterson, New Jersey, in October for the International Conference on Behavioral Health and Traumatic Brain Injury. These experts generated recommendations that were presented to the Congress 2 weeks ago.

We cannot forget that, for these Wounded Warriors and their families, the war will not end when the last shots are fired. Despite the staggering statistics and heart-shattering stories that come to us from Iraq and Afghanistan, public awareness continues to lag and TBI remains a silent epidemic plaguing our Nation.

Traumatic brain injury can strike anyone and leave devastating results. We probably all know someone or know the story of someone whose life was irreversibly changed because of a brain injury. Just last week we saw a flurry of media accounts of the tragic death of actress Natasha Richardson, who sustained a brain injury while skiing. If that tragedy taught us anything, it is that, as far as science has come, we still know relatively little about this pervasive injury.

The Congressional Brain Injury Task Force continues to seek increased funding for the programs authorized by the Traumatic Brain Injury Act, after an unprecedented amount of congressional support in these recent years.

Designating a month to recognize the prevalence and the seriousness of brain injuries among both civilians and military community will bring much needed public attention to this frequently forgotten malady.

And I might add, Mr. Speaker, that this Wednesday throughout the day, from 10 in the morning until 2 in the afternoon, in the Rayburn building we will have a fair with twice as many displays, close to 50 displays; and then we will have the leading folks from the military and civilian talk about it in the Cannon Building from 3:30 to 4:30, and then in the evening a reception. We are bringing the military and civilians together in order to help our soldiers and help Americans.

This resolution will honor the families who, day in and day out, care for and love their family members who have afflictions, and do so without fanfare, without applause.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. LYNCH. I grant the gentleman an additional 1 minute.

Mr. PASCRELL. They do it because they love their sons or daughters or brothers or sisters each day of every month. I invite all Members and the staff to join Wednesday in the Rayburn foyer to meet some of the folks as we recognize Brain Injury Awareness Month here on Capitol Hill. We are hosting a fair with hundreds of individuals from the brain injury community.

Let's pass this resolution to confirm congressional commitment to promoting awareness, education, prevention, and research by reminding all Americans of those individuals and families who suffer from a brain injury.

We have come a long way, Mr. Speaker, in ten years. We could have fit the amount of people in our caucus in a phone booth. That has all changed. We are now close to 125, 130 Members from both sides of the aisle. We are really seeing results, particularly in the last 3 or 4 years.

I want to thank the gentleman from Massachusetts, and I want to thank my friend from Pennsylvania. Of course, this is only the beginning of a fight where we will respond, and our men and women who put their lives on the line will know that we really mean what we say, that we love them and we will do everything we can for them.

Mr. AKIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Last week, the devastation of traumatic brain injury was once again brought to our attention with the death of actress Natasha Richardson. This tragedy was but one type of traumatic brain injury that brings about death or physical debilitation to over 1.4 million people each year.

While the leading cause of traumatic brain injury is the result of falls, they are followed by automobile accidents, being struck by or against a hard surface, and assault. Men are at the greatest risk of brain injury, and African Americans have the highest death rate from this injury. All of these cold, hard facts do not tell the story of shattered lives of the individual, if they survive, and untold heartache and lifelong impact on loved ones and friends of the injured. In America, there are 125,000 citizens living with life-long disabilities from traumatic brain injuries.

These head injuries come about in many ways, not the least of which are the injuries sustained by our soldiers fighting in Afghanistan and Iraq. The cost in lives and the ongoing suffering is tragic for these brave men and women. Their injuries will continue to require costly medical assistance from State, Federal, and local agencies.

Generally, a concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury that is caused by an injury to the head that many people underestimate. It is critical to recovery that any type of blow to the head, whether it is a child's fall from a swing to a teen sport or automobile accident, be taken seriously. Often, symptoms don't show up immediately, so keeping a close watch on the injured person is imperative so that medical attention can be sought, if needed.

We are grateful for organizations such as the Brain Injury Association of America who are invaluable in generating understanding and awareness of brain injury. We join with all who wish to broadcast a message of hope and action of this often underestimated condition during March, which has been designated as the National Brain Injury Awareness Month.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LYNCH. Mr. Speaker, in closing, I just want to point out the relentless work done on this issue of traumatic brain injury by Mr. PASCRELL from New Jersey, who is the chair, and also by Mr. TODD PLATTS from Pennsylvania, who is the co-chair. I have accompanied both of those gentlemen, I have seen their work in Iraq and Afghanistan. They have seen the situation in Balad, in the field hospitals in Iraq, as well as the military hospital at Landstuhl, Germany, the military hospital there, as well as going back to Walter Reed Army Hospital. They know full well the extent of this. They are our most outspoken advocates on behalf of families whose loved ones have been affected with TBI, and we are all indebted to their hard work.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all of my colleagues to support the measure of Mr. PASCRELL of New Jersey and Mr. PLATTS of Pennsylvania and support House Resolution 178.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. LYNCH) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 178.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

STAN LUNDINE POST OFFICE BUILDING

Mr. LYNCH. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 918) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 300 East 3rd Street in Jamestown, New York, as the ''Stan Lundine Post Office Building''.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 918

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. STAN LUNDINE POST OFFICE BUILDING.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The facility of the United States Postal Service located at 300 East 3rd Street in Jamestown, New York, shall be known and designated as the ''Stan Lundine Post Office Building''.

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the facility referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the ''Stan Lundine Post Office Building''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. LYNCH) and the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. AKIN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LYNCH. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Massachusetts?

There was no objection.

Mr. LYNCH. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, in my role as chair of the House Subcommittee with oversight authority of the United States Postal Service, I am pleased to stand before the body in consideration of H.R. 918, which is the measure before us that is designed to rename the United States postal facility located at 300 East Third Street in Jamestown, New York, as the Stan Lundine Post Office Building.

This legislation was introduced by my friend BRIAN HIGGINS, the gentleman from New York, on February 9, 2009, and it was considered and reported out of the Oversight Committee by voice vote on March 10, 2009. In addition, H.R. 918 enjoys the support of the entire sitting New York House delegation.

A native of the city of Jamestown, Stanley Nelson Lundine has devoted over four decades of his life to public service in New York State. Born in Jamestown on February 4, 1939, Mr. Lundine graduated from Jamestown High School in 1957. He received his B.A. from Duke University in 1961, and in 1964 received his juris doctorate from New York University School of Law. Only 5 years after gaining admission to the New York State bar, Mr. Lundine was elected to his first term

as mayor of Jamestown, having previously served as the city's associate corporate counsel and chairman of the City Planning Commission.

As mayor of his beloved hometown until 1976, Mr. Lundine dedicated his efforts to addressing long-standing labor strife in the city. To this end, he developed a unique labor-management strategy, and subsequently garnered Jamestown national attention as a widely successful labor-management partnership model, a model that we could dearly use today.

In 1976, Mr. Lundine was elected to represent New York State's 39th Congressional District, becoming the first Democrat to hold that seat since 1874. While representing New York's southern tier district in Congress until 1987, Mr. Lundine continued his commitment to labor-management cooperation through the development of legislation to establish labor-management councils and employee stock ownership plans. Mr. Lundine also remained dedicated to economic development issues, serving as a subcommittee chairman of the House Banking Committee.

In 1986, Mr. Lundine was elected to statewide office as lieutenant governor of New York, under Governor Mario Cuomo, serving until 1994.

□ 1430

Mr. Lundine worked to further develop the State's economy and increased the availability of job training programs and also strengthened New York's housing and technology sectors.

Currently Stan Lundine serves the citizens of New York State through his continued public service on a wide variety of nonprofit, private sector efforts. Notably, in April of 2007, Mr. Lundine was appointed as chair of the State's newly created Commission on Local Government Efficiency and Competitiveness. The panel is tasked with promoting local government collaboration and efficiency in the name of saving taxpayer dollars.

Mr. Speaker, let us honor Stan Lundine's decades of public service through the passage of this legislation to designate his hometown post office in his name. I urge my colleagues to join with me and Congressman BRIAN HIGGINS, who is the chief sponsor of this legislation. And I ask my colleagues to join us in supporting H.R. 918.

I reserve the balance of our time.

Mr. AKIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in support of H.R. 918, legislation to designate the post office in Jamestown, New York, as the ''Stan Lundine Post Office Building.'' Stan Lundine is one of Jamestown, New York's most steadfast public servants. He served as mayor of Jamestown, as a United States Representative and as Lieutenant Governor of New York. A Jamestown native, Stan Lundine was elected mayor of his hometown in 1970, just 6 years after graduating from New York University School of Law. Realizing his success as a mayor, the people of New York's 39th District elected Lundine to the House of Representatives in 1976. In his five terms as congressman from New York, Lundine continued to focus on labor/management issues. In the Congress, he focused on finance and banking servicing as subcommittee chairman of the House Banking Committee.

After his House career, he was elected Lieutenant Governor of New York under Mario Cuomo and served New York working on housing, technology, and economic development initiatives, as well as training and programming policies. Putting his labor management skills to use, he now serves as a director of the National Forge Company, U.S. Investment Services, and John Ullman Associates. He also serves as executive director of the Chautauqua County Health Network, a group of four hospitals and their physicians dedicated to improving the local health care delivery system in his community.

In recognition of Congressman Stan Lundine's contributions to the country, the State of New York and the city of Jamestown, let us now commemorate his 25 years of public service by naming the post office in his hometown of Jamestown, New York, as the ''Stan Lundine Post Office Building.''

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LYNCH. Mr. Speaker, in closing I want to thank my colleague for his generous remarks. And I do want to give great credit to Congressman BRIAN HIGGINS from the Buffalo area. He is the central sponsor of this measure to name this post office after Stan Lundine, who is very deserving of this honor.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. LYNCH) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 918.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. LYNCH. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

LANCE CORPORAL DREW W. WEAVER POST OFFICE BUILDING

Mr. LYNCH. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1218) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 112 South 5th Street in Saint Charles, Missouri, as the ''Lance Corporal Drew W. Weaver Post Office Building''.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1218

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. LANCE CORPORAL DREW W. WEAVER POST OFFICE BUILDING.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The facility of the United States Postal Service located at 112 South 5th Street in Saint Charles, Missouri, shall be known and designated as the ''Lance Corporal Drew W. Weaver Post Office Building''.

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the facility referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the ''Lance Corporal Drew W. Weaver Post Office Building''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. LYNCH) and the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. AKIN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LYNCH. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Massachusetts?

There was no objection.

Mr. LYNCH. Mr. Speaker, I present for consideration H.R. 1218, a bill to designate the United States postal facility located at 112 South 5th Street in St. Charles, Missouri, as the ''Lance Corporal Drew W. Weaver Post Office Building.'' This legislation was introduced on February 26 by my colleague and friend, Representative TODD W. AKIN of Missouri, and considered and reported out of the Oversight and Government Reform Committee by a voice vote on March 10, 2009. Additionally, H.R. 1218 enjoys the support of the entire Missouri congressional delegation.

A native of St. Charles, Missouri, Lance Corporal Drew W. Weaver bravely served with the 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, 1st Marine Division, 1st Marine Expeditionary Force out of Twenty-Nine Palms, California. On February 21, 2008, the young marine was killed in action in al Anbar province in Iraq while conducting combat operations in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Born on July 5, 1987, Lance Corporal Weaver decided to join the United States Marine Corps shortly before his graduation from St. Charles West High School in 2005. He was best known for his positive attitude, his sense of humor, his love of adventure, and above all, his dedication and commitment to his family, his friends, his unit and his country.

St. Charles West Assistant Principal Scott Voekl remembers seeing Lance Corporal Weaver take daily morning runs on Zumbehl Road near the school in preparation for boot camp. Upon the young man's return from basic training, Mr. Voekl asked him if serving in the Marines was what he wanted to do. ''Absolutely,'' replied Lance Corporal

Weaver. Ken Mayer, another St. Charles West administrator, recalls that Lance Corporal Weaver ''truly believed in what he was doing.'' And St. Charles Mayor Patti York noted that Lance Corporal Weaver was a ''true hero'' and a beloved member of the St. Charles community.

Mr. Speaker, Lance Corporal Weaver's life and service stand as a testament to the strength and support of his devoted family as well as the bravery and dedication of the young men and women that have joined him in offering the ultimate sacrifice on behalf of our Nation.

It is my hope that we can honor this outstanding soldier through the passage of this legislation without objection. I urge my colleagues to join us in supporting Congressman AKIN in his sponsorship of H.R. 1218.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. AKIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Today I rise in strong support of H.R. 1218, a bill I introduced to honor the life of Drew W. Weaver by designating the post office in St. Charles, Missouri, as the ''Lance Corporal Drew W. Weaver Post Office Building.''

A resident of St. Charles, Missouri, Lance Corporal Drew W. Weaver was part of the 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, 1st Marine Division, 1st Marine Expeditionary Force.

On February 21, 2007, Lance Corporal Weaver died while conducting combat operations in the al Anbar province of Iraq. As Captain Mark C. Brown noted, Drew was ''known for his enthusiasm and his ability to motivate people around him.''

Drew's contribution to his country was honored by his community when hundreds, maybe more than hundreds actually, showed up for his memorial service and procession. A graduate of St. Charles West High School, friends and family of Drew remember him as an energetic young man who was eager to serve his country. Ryan Hanson, his best friend and a fellow serviceman, said, ''Drew loved what he was doing and was proud of what he did for the Marine Corps.''

As a father of two marines, one of whom has served in Iraq and in Fallujah, it is a privilege to stand here today to honor one of our fallen soldiers. Drew's commitment and dedication to his country is a shining example of how our military men and women are the finest our Nation has to offer. His and his family's sacrifice should serve as a reminder to all that the freedom we enjoy as Americans is not always free but the result of tremendous bravery and selfless service of men and women willing to put themselves in harm's way for freedom's cause.

As Reverend James Benz noted during Drew's funeral, ''I think we can learn from them that the freedom we enjoy in this country is precious, that it is special, and that it must be preserved sometimes at great personal cost.''

Our Nation will be forever indebted to Lance Corporal Drew Weaver.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me today in honoring Lance Corporal Drew Weaver. Vote ''yes'' on H.R. 1218.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LYNCH. Mr. Speaker, I ask all of our Members to join with the gentleman from Missouri in supporting this bill, H.R. 1218.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. LYNCH) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1218.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. LYNCH. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 6:30 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 42 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until approximately 6:30 p.m.

□ 1830

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. MASSA) at 6 o'clock and 30 minutes p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on motions to suspend the rules previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

H.R. 918, by the yeas and nays;

H.R. 1218, de novo.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. The remaining electronic vote will be conducted as a 5-minute vote.

STAN LUNDINE POST OFFICE BUILDING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 918, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. LYNCH) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 918.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 396, nays 0, not voting 35, as follows:

[Roll No. 145]

YEAS—396

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Aderholt
Akin
Alexander
Altmire
Andrews
Arcuri
Austria
Baca
Bachmann
Bachus
Baird
Baldwin
Barrett (SC)
Barrow
Bartlett
Barton (TX)
Bean
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
Berry
Biggert
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blumenauer
Blunt
Boccieri
Boehner
Bonner
Bono Mack
Boozman
Boren
Boustany
Boyd
Brady (TX)
Bright
Broun (GA)
Brown (SC)
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Buchanan
Burgess
Burton (IN)
Butterfield
Buyer
Calvert
Camp
Campbell
Cantor
Cao
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carney
Carson (IN)
Carter
Cassidy
Castle
Castor (FL)
Chaffetz
Chandler
Childers
Clay
Clyburn
Coble
Coffman (CO)
Cohen
Cole
Conaway
Connolly (VA)
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Courtney
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Dahlkemper
Davis (CA)
Davis (IL)
Davis (KY)
Davis (TN)
Deal (GA)
DeFazio
DeGette
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Dicks
Doggett
Donnelly (IN)
Doyle
Dreier
Driehaus
Duncan
Edwards (MD)
Edwards (TX)
Ehlers
Ellsworth
Emerson
Eshoo
Etheridge
Fallin
Fattah
Filner
Flake
Fleming
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Frank (MA)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Gerlach
Giffords
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Gonzalez
Goodlatte
Gordon (TN)
Granger
Graves
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffith
Guthrie
Hall (NY)
Hall (TX)
Halvorson
Hare
Harman
Harper
Hastings (FL)
Hastings (WA)
Heinrich
Heller
Hensarling
Herger
Herseth Sandlin
Higgins
Hill
Himes
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Hirono
Hodes
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hoyer
Hunter
Inglis
Inslee
Israel
Issa
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jenkins
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Jones
Jordan (OH)
Kagen
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilpatrick (MI)
Kilroy
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kirk
Kirkpatrick (AZ)
Kissell
Klein (FL)
Kline (MN)
Kratovil
Kucinich
Lamborn
Lance
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
LaTourette
Latta
Lee (CA)
Lee (NY)
Levin
Lewis (CA)
Linder
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Luján
Lummis
Lungren, Daniel E.
Lynch
Mack
Maffei
Maloney
Manzullo
Markey (CO)
Markey (MA)
Marshall
Massa
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (CA)
McCarthy (NY)
McCaul
McClintock
McCollum
McCotter
McDermott
McGovern
McHenry
McHugh
McIntyre
McKeon
McMahon
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Melancon
Mica
Michaud
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller (NC)
Miller, George
Minnick
Mitchell
Mollohan
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Moran (KS)

Moran (VA)
Murphy (CT)
Murphy, Patrick
Murphy, Tim
Murtha
Myrick
Nadler (NY)
Napolitano
Neugebauer
Nunes
Nye
Oberstar
Obey
Olson
Olver
Ortiz
Pallone
Pastor (AZ)
Paul
Paulsen
Payne
Pence
Perlmutter
Perriello
Peters
Peterson
Petri
Pingree (ME)
Pitts
Platts
Poe (TX)
Polis (CO)
Posey
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Putnam
Radanovich
Rahall
Rangel
Rehberg
Reichert
Reyes
Richardson
Rodriguez
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothman (NJ)
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Salazar
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Scalise
Schakowsky
Schauer
Schiff
Schmidt
Schrader
Schwartz
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sestak
Shadegg
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuler
Shuster
Simpson
Sires
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (NE)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Souder
Space
Speier
Spratt
Stearns
Stupak
Sutton
Tanner
Tauscher
Taylor
Teague
Terry
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Tierney
Titus
Tonko
Towns
Turner
Upton
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walden
Walz
Wamp
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watson
Watt
Waxman
Weiner
Welch
Wexler
Whitfield
Wilson (OH)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Wolf
Woolsey
Wu
Young (AK)
Young (FL)

NOT VOTING—35

Adler (NJ)
Boswell
Boucher
Brady (PA)
Braley (IA)
Brown, Corrine
Clarke
Cleaver
Costello
Davis (AL)
Dingell
Ellison
Engel
Farr
Grijalva
Gutierrez
Hoekstra
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, Sam
Kosmas
Lewis (GA)
Marchant
Miller, Gary
Neal (MA)
Pascrell
Pomeroy
Rohrabacher
Sarbanes
Schock
Smith (NJ)
Stark
Sullivan
Tsongas
Westmoreland
Yarmuth

□ 1856

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

LANCE CORPORAL DREW W. WEAVER POST OFFICE BUILDING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the question on suspending the rules and passing the bill, H.R. 1218.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. LYNCH) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1218.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

RECORDED VOTE

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 399, noes 0, not voting 32, as follows:

[Roll No. 146]

AYES—399

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Aderholt
Adler (NJ)
Akin
Alexander
Altmire
Andrews
Arcuri
Austria
Baca
Bachmann
Bachus
Baird
Baldwin
Barrett (SC)
Barrow
Bartlett
Barton (TX)
Bean
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
Berry
Biggert
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blumenauer
Blunt
Boccieri
Boehner
Bonner
Bono Mack
Boozman
Boren
Boucher
Boustany
Boyd
Brady (TX)
Braley (IA)
Bright
Broun (GA)
Brown (SC)
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Buchanan
Burgess
Burton (IN)
Butterfield
Buyer
Calvert
Camp
Campbell
Cantor
Cao
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carney
Carson (IN)
Carter
Cassidy
Castle
Castor (FL)
Chaffetz
Chandler
Childers
Clay
Clyburn
Coble
Coffman (CO)
Cohen
Cole
Conaway
Connolly (VA)
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Courtney
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Dahlkemper
Davis (CA)
Davis (IL)
Davis (KY)
Davis (TN)
Deal (GA)
DeFazio
DeGette
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Dicks
Doggett
Donnelly (IN)
Doyle
Dreier
Driehaus
Duncan
Edwards (MD)
Edwards (TX)
Ehlers
Ellsworth
Emerson
Eshoo
Etheridge
Fallin
Fattah
Filner
Flake
Fleming
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Frank (MA)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Gerlach
Giffords
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Gonzalez
Goodlatte
Gordon (TN)
Granger
Graves
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffith
Guthrie
Hall (NY)
Hall (TX)
Halvorson
Hare
Harman
Harper
Hastings (FL)
Hastings (WA)
Heinrich
Heller
Hensarling
Herger
Herseth Sandlin
Higgins
Hill
Himes
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Hirono
Hodes
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hoyer
Hunter
Inglis
Inslee
Israel
Issa
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jenkins
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Jones
Jordan (OH)
Kagen
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilpatrick (MI)
Kilroy
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kirk
Kirkpatrick (AZ)
Kissell
Klein (FL)
Kline (MN)
Kratovil
Kucinich
Lamborn
Lance
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
LaTourette
Latta
Lee (CA)
Lee (NY)
Levin
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (GA)
Linder
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Luján
Lummis
Lungren, Daniel E.
Lynch
Mack
Maffei
Maloney
Manzullo
Markey (CO)
Markey (MA)
Marshall
Massa
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (CA)
McCarthy (NY)
McCaul
McClintock
McCollum
McCotter
McDermott
McGovern
McHenry
McHugh
McIntyre
McKeon
McMahon
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Melancon
Mica
Michaud
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller (NC)
Miller, George
Minnick
Mitchell
Mollohan
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Moran (KS)
Moran (VA)
Murphy (CT)
Murphy, Patrick
Murphy, Tim
Murtha
Myrick
Nadler (NY)
Napolitano
Neugebauer
Nunes
Nye
Oberstar
Obey
Olson
Olver
Ortiz
Pallone
Pastor (AZ)
Paul
Paulsen
Payne
Pence
Perlmutter
Perriello
Peters
Peterson
Petri
Pingree (ME)
Pitts
Platts
Poe (TX)
Polis (CO)
Posey
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Putnam
Radanovich
Rahall
Rangel
Rehberg
Reichert
Reyes
Richardson
Rodriguez
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothman (NJ)
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Salazar
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Scalise
Schakowsky
Schauer
Schiff
Schmidt
Schrader
Schwartz
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sestak
Shadegg
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuler
Shuster
Simpson
Sires
Skelton
Smith (NE)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Souder
Space
Speier
Spratt
Stearns
Stupak
Sutton
Tanner
Tauscher
Taylor
Teague
Terry
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Tierney
Titus
Tonko
Towns
Turner
Upton
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walden
Walz
Wamp
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watson
Watt
Waxman
Weiner
Welch
Wexler
Whitfield
Wilson (OH)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Wolf
Woolsey
Wu
Young (AK)
Young (FL)

NOT VOTING—32

Boswell
Brady (PA)
Brown, Corrine
Clarke
Cleaver
Costello
Davis (AL)
Dingell
Ellison
Engel
Farr
Grijalva
Gutierrez
Hoekstra
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, Sam
Kosmas
Marchant
Miller, Gary
Neal (MA)
Pascrell
Pomeroy
Rohrabacher
Sarbanes
Schock
Slaughter
Smith (NJ)
Stark
Sullivan
Tsongas
Westmoreland
Yarmuth

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). Members have 2 minutes remaining to vote.

□ 1905

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated for:

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 146, had I been present, I would have voted "aye."

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H. RES. 252

Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that my name be removed as a cosponsor of H. Res. 252.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from South Carolina?

There was no objection.

NOTICE OF INTENTION TO OFFER RESOLUTION RAISING A QUESTION OF THE PRIVILEGES OF THE HOUSE

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 2(a)(1) of rule IX, I hereby notify the House of my intention to offer a resolution as a question of the privileges of the House.

The form of my resolution is as follows:

Whereas, The Hill reported that a prominent lobbying firm specializing in obtaining defense earmarks for its clients, the subject of a ''federal investigation into potentially corrupt political contributions,'' has given $3.4 million in political donations to no less than 284 Members of Congress.

Whereas, multiple press reports have noted questions related to campaign contributions made by or on behalf of the firm; including questions related to ''straw man'' contributions, the reimbursement of employees for political giving, pressure on clients to give, a suspicious pattern of giving, and the timing of donations relative to legislative activity.

Whereas, Roll Call has taken note of the timing of contributions from employees of the firm and its clients when it reported that they ''have provided thousands of dollars worth of campaign contributions to key Members in close proximity to legislative activity, such as the deadline for earmark request letters or passage of a spending bill.''

Whereas, CQ Today specifically noted a Member getting ''$25,000 in campaign contribution money from [the founder of the firm] and his relatives right after his subcommittee approved its spending bill in 2005.''

Whereas, the Associated Press also noted that Members received campaign contributions from employees of the firm ''around the time they requested'' earmarks for companies represented by the firm.

Whereas, clients of the firm received at least $300 million worth of earmarks in fiscal year 2009 appropriations legislation, including several that were approved even after news of the FBI raid of the firm's offices and Justice Department investigation into the firm was well known.

Whereas, the persistent media attention focused on questions about the nature and timing of campaign contributions related to the firm, as well as reports of the Justice Department conducting research on earmarks and campaign contributions, raise concern about the integrity of Congressional proceedings and the dignity of this institution.

Now, therefore, be it *Resolved*, That

(a) the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct, or a subcommittee of the committee designated by the committee and its members appointed by the chairman and ranking member, shall immediately begin an investigation into the relationship between the source and timing of past contributions to Members of the House related to the raided firm and earmark requests made by Members of the House on behalf of clients of the raided firm.

(b) The Committee on Standards of Official Conduct shall submit a report of its findings to the House of Representatives within 2 months after the date of adoption of this resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under rule IX, a resolution offered from the floor by a Member other than the majority leader or the minority leader as a question of the privileges of the House has immediate precedence only at a time designated by the Chair within 2 legislative days after the resolution is properly noticed.

Pending that designation, the form of the resolution noticed by the gentleman from Arizona will appear in the RECORD at this point.

The Chair will not at this point determine whether the resolution constitutes a question of privilege. That determination will be made at the time designated for consideration of the resolution.

THE ADMINISTRATION ISN'T PROTECTING AMERICANS' JOBS

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

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, in 2006, Senator Obama told his colleagues, ''We need an electronic verification system that can significantly reduce the employment of illegal workers, and give employers the confidence that their workforce is legal.''

E-Verify is the voluntary Federal program that does just that by allowing employers to check the employment eligibility of their newly hired employees. Yet the Democrats have blocked every single attempt made so far this year to enact a long-term extension of E-Verify.

Instead of protecting jobs for U.S. citizens and legal workers, President Obama signed a bill that will provide 300,000 jobs to illegal immigrants in just the construction industry alone.

With 12 million Americans out of work, we should save jobs for American workers and legal immigrants, not give jobs to illegal workers.

ECONOMIC 9/11

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

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I want to commend our President, the administration, for the bold action they took today to help resolve our economic morass that we are expressing because of the past administration and the lack of regulations by this Congress. The stock market responded positively with a 500-point gain.

I think it's important that people recognize the good that the administration is doing and trying to do, that we need to work together as a team, as Americans.

After 9/11, Republicans and Democrats came together to support the President and support us in a great crisis. This is an economic 9/11. People should support the President and not do critical things.

Some of them have even suggested, oh, he had time to fill out his NCAA bracket, where he correctly had the Memphis Tigers going to the Sweet Sixteen. There's nothing wrong with that. President Obama is good on the Sweet Sixteen, and he's good on the economy.

COMMENDING KEVIN PETERSEN

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

Mr. MCCARTHY of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the career of a committed public servant, Kevin Petersen, who retires April 3, 2009, as director of NASA's Dryden Flight Research Center located in my district. Kevin has served at Dryden for 38 years and is currently NASA's longest-serving field center director.

Kevin began his career at Dryden as a university cooperative student in 1971, was hired as an aerospace engineer when he graduated from Iowa State in 1974, and later received a Master of Science degree from UCLA.

Kevin was appointed to be Dryden's director in 1999. His tenure as director has seen Dryden's focus on aeronautics research expand to also support work in environmental and space science, space exploration, and human spaceflight. Currently, Dryden has the important task of testing the new Orion Launch Abort System. I appreciated Kevin showing me around that key program when I visited.

Kevin Petersen is a role model for all American students considering a career in science, technology, engineering or mathematics. Kevin, you've been a great public servant. I appreciate your dedication, and I wish you the best of luck.

CHIEF MARK MCCURRY: FIRE CHIEF OF THE YEAR

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

Mr. MCHENRY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Fire Chief Mark McCurry of Forest City, North Carolina. Chief McCurry was recently named Fire Chief of the Year by the North Carolina Association of Fire Chiefs. It is their highest honor.

Thirty-five years ago, Mark's uncle encouraged him to go into the family business of fire service. Now, 35 years later, Chief McCurry is still serving the community of Forest City. He says putting his life on the line to protect those of his fellow citizens is ''like a calling.''

Chief McCurry understands that his men no longer just put out fires. All Forest City firemen are now certified EMTs and trained to deal with hazardous materials and weather emergencies.

Mark McCurry recently said, ''It takes a crazy person to run into a building that everyone else is running out of.'' I think we all agree, but no, Chief, it takes an extraordinarily brave man to run into a burning building. And this year, your peers have recognized you as the bravest of all. Congratulations.

□ 1915

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

EARLY ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, this week I will be introducing the EARLY Act: The Breast Cancer Education and Awareness Requires Learning Young Act of 2009. The EARLY Act is designed to empower young women to learn the facts, know their bodies, speak up for their health, and embrace support.

Despite the perception, young women can and do get breast cancer. More than 10,000 women under 40 are diagnosed with breast cancer every year in the United States. Although the incidence of breast cancer in young women is much lower, young women's breast cancers are generally more aggressive, are diagnosed at a later stage, and result in lower survival rates.

Additionally, certain ethnic groups, including Ashkenazi Jews and African American young women, have an increased risk of breast cancer.

I became acutely aware of all of this information, and more, a little more than a year ago. After finding a lump in my breast while doing my routine breast self-exam in the shower, I learned a few weeks later from my doctor that I had breast cancer.

Upon learning of my diagnosis and after genetic counseling, I also decided to have a blood test that would show whether I had a genetic mutation in the BRCA1 or BRCA2 gene. As a woman of Ashkenazi Jewish descent, I was in a category of at-risk populations for these gene mutations. The test results showed that I did indeed carry the BRCA2 genetic marker that suggests a greater susceptibility to breast and ovarian cancers.

After further consultation with my doctors and my husband, I decided to have a double mastectomy and have my ovaries removed to reduce the likelihood of a recurrence of cancer. Today, with a clean bill of health and cancer-free, I plan to introduce the EARLY Act.

The EARLY Act encourages young women to be familiar with the look and feel of their breasts. By knowing what feels normal, a young woman has a better chance of knowing when something feels different.

The EARLY Act will also work to educate young women about changes in their body that could be warning signs of breast cancer. We want them to know that it doesn't only start with a lump. It can be swelling, a rash, breast pain, nipple pain, redness or scaliness, too.

The EARLY Act will encourage young women to be their own voice—to speak up for themselves and know when they need to go to their doctor.

The EARLY Act will teach both young women and medical professionals alike about risk factors, warning signs of breast cancer, and predictive tools such as genetic testing, that can help women make informed decisions about their health.

It will also provide grants to organizations dedicated to supporting young women and the unique issues we face when diagnosed with breast cancer, as well as managing and understanding their risks.

Today, we often fail to teach about risk in this country. As a result, many of us face serious consequences in our lives. We need to change the educational dialogue and empower not only young women, but everyone to take control of the risks they face. And that begins with education and awareness.

I thought I knew all of my personal risk factors for breast cancer. Because of those risk factors, I performed self-exams, went to my doctor regularly, and have been a longtime legislative advocate in the fight against breast cancer. But when I was diagnosed, I found out I had more risk factors than I was aware of.

For example, I had absolutely no idea that as an Ashkenazi Jewish woman, I was five times more likely than the general population to have an altered BRCA1 or BRCA2 gene, or what the risks of carrying that gene entailed.

This bill will give all young women the tools they need to take control of the risks by teaching awareness of their personal risks and what they can do to manage those risks.

At the end of the day, the old saying rings true: Knowledge is power. By making sure young women know their risk factors, the EARLY Act is the first step in transforming how we approach the fight against breast cancer.

In hearing my story, some people might say I was lucky. While I was certainly fortunate enough to have access to good health care, I didn't find my tumor early because of luck. I found my tumor early because of knowledge and awareness. I knew I should perform breast self-exams, and I was aware of what my body was supposed to feel like.

It is my hope that by sharing my story we will pass the Breast Cancer Education and Awareness Requires Learning Young Act of 2009 into law this year and further reduce the death rate of young women diagnosed with breast cancer.

We need to ensure that every young woman in America can rely on more than just luck. Their survival depends on it.

I urge my colleagues to cosponsor this vital legislation. Thank you very much.

HONORING AN AMERICAN ANIMAL-LOVING CHAMPION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, my family and I have always been pet lovers. In fact, we have always been owned by at least one cat and one dog. We support many animal rescue organizations. The current dog and cat we have are both rescue pets. However, we cannot hold a candle to a person whose life has been dedicated to saving animals.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of a great American, a woman with a passion for the humane treatment of animals, my friend, Gertrude Maxwell. Gertrude Maxwell is the founder, past president, and lifetime chairman of Save-A-Pet of Illinois, which she founded more than 35 years ago. Later, she founded and served as president of Save-A-Pet of Florida. Then, 15 years ago, she started the National Save-a-Pet Foundation, where she currently serves as director and chairman.

Her Save-A-Pet organization exists for one reason—saving animals. It is a nonprofit group dedicated to saving abandoned, homeless, or lost pets, and is committed to shielding pets from the practice of animal euthanasia.

Gertrude is a champion of abandoned and unwanted pets and, as a fellow animal lover, I am inspired by her pioneering work with Save-A-Pet. When she discovered in 1972 that more than 90,000 pets were destroyed every month in the United States, she set about the work of shrinking and hopefully one day eliminating the number of pets euthanized in America.

Throughout her lifetime of work on behalf of animals, Gertrude has established and maintained many animal hospitals and adoption centers. Thanks to her unwavering commitment to saving pets, her work has directly saved nearly 100,000 pets over the course of her decades-long campaign on behalf of animals.

After more than 35 years of advocacy for animals, she is still working for the humane treatment of animals. Her tireless efforts also find her lobbying for laws to aid animal welfare, and recently bore fruit when the Save-A-Pet Act was signed into law in Florida last spring.

This legislation creates what is known as a Direct Support Organization that will raise funds from individuals, corporations, and small businesses to provide grants to animal shelters in emergency situations. This organization will provide for spaying and neutering of abandoned cats and dogs, reduce the need for euthanasia of animals, and reduce animal cruelty.

The Save-A-Pet Act was widely supported by Governor Charlie Crist and organizations like the Florida Veterinary Medical Association; the Florida Association of Kennel Clubs; the Florida Animal Control Association, and the National Rifle Association.

Gertrude has received over 200 awards and honors for her dedication to defenseless and vulnerable animals in America. Today, I honor this outstanding woman for a lifetime of selfless service to her community and for her love for animals.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. WOOLSEY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

TARP FUND RECIPIENTS EXERCISE NO RESTRAINT

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

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, last week, the American people were justifiably outraged by news that American International Group—AIG—would be paying out $165 million in bonuses. AIG would be rewarding its employees for helping the economy post a record $62 billion loss—and it would be doling out these bonuses while dipping its hands in the taxpayer till.

When a company is 80 percent owned by U.S. taxpayers and it has accepted $173 billion in Federal bailout funds, the American people expect more.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, with the start of a new week, the U.S. taxpayer is hit with reports of another ''TARP-funded corporation gone wild.''

ABC News reported that JPMorgan Chase, a bank that has received $25 billion in TARP funds, is moving ahead with a $138 million plan to buy two brand new, luxury corporate jets. The bank will also build a lavish corporate aircraft hangar to house the new jets. According to JPMorgan Chase architects, the new hangar will even be built with a vegetated roof garden.

Mr. Speaker, why can't these TARP beneficiaries get a clue? Where does it end?

Last fall, I voted against the $700 billion government bailout because U.S. taxpayers should not have to pick up the tab for the poor business decisions of high-flying Wall Street firms.

Let's not forget—no more than a week after Congress passed this $700 billion bailout, AIG spent over $400,000 on a lavish retreat for company executives—after they had accepted $85 billion in Federal bailout money.

The behavior of these financial institutions shows that taxpayers will certainly get a raw deal when the Federal Government does not demand oversight and accountability. These corporations have resorted to taking taxpayer dollars to stave off failures, yet they are still spending like it's business as usual. All the while, the working people of this country are tightening their wallets and coping with a tough economy.

Our country's outstanding public debt is more than $11 trillion, and it grows by nearly $4 billion every day. When will the Federal Government stop digging the American taxpayers into this debt?

Mr. Speaker, it's time for our government to start working for the American taxpayer and not the other way around. The American taxpayer is tired and fed up with business as usual. We have got to change the way we do business and remember that the taxpayers pay the bills and the debt of this government.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will say God continue to bless our men and women in uniform, and God continue to bless America.

□ 1930

TRIBUTE TO FOUR FALLEN OAKLAND POLICE OFFICERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. LEE of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening with a heavy heart on behalf of the residents of my congressional district, the Ninth Congressional District of California, to pay tribute to four fallen heroes from the Bay Area.

This weekend, Sergeant Mark Dunakin, Sergeant Ervin Romans, Sergeant Daniel Sakai and Officer John Hege, all members of the Oakland Police Department, were brutally gunned down while serving in the line of duty.

Oftentimes members of law enforcement go unnoticed. But they provide a critical service to help protect our communities. These men performed their jobs to the fullest every day, knowing that there was a possibility that they would ultimately give their lives in service to their community. Today we honor them and join their families and our community in not only mourning their loss but remembering the sacrifices that they made to protect the people of Oakland, California.

I feel that it is very important that everyone remember that these brave men were not nameless, faceless individuals. They were husbands, they were fathers, they were brothers, they were dear friends to many.

Sergeant Dunakin lived in Tracy, California, and was on the police force for 18 years. He was a graduate of Chabot College in Hayward. He was promoted to sergeant in 1999 and worked homicide cases in the criminal division. Following his transfer to the traffic division, he was active in the Click It or Ticket campaign and took part in multi-agency crackdowns on drunken driving suspects. Captain Ed Tracey described Sergeant Dunakin as ''Just a cop's cop. He's OPD to the bone. He is absolutely committed to anything that he leads.'' He leaves to mourn his wife, Angela, and his three children.

Sergeant Romans, 43, of Danville, was an Oakland officer since 1996. He was a member of the entry team, and was considered one of the most adept members of the Oakland Police SWAT team by his colleagues. Erv, as he was affectionately known, was promoted to sergeant in 2005 and worked narcotics cases, making a number of high-profile drug busts. He leaves behind three children.

Sergeant Daniel Sakai of Castro Valley was 35 years old. He was considered a rising star on the Oakland Police SWAT team and was recently named a leader of the entry team. Before joining the SWAT team, Sergeant Sakai worked as a K–9 officer responding to calls with his dog, Doc. He loved nature and studied forestry at UC Berkeley, where he also worked as a community service officer escorting students around campus at night. After graduation, he spent a year in Japan teaching English. He leaves his wife, Jennifer, and a young daughter.

Officer John Hege, who was 41 years old, joined the Oakland Police Department 10 years ago after serving as a reserve officer. He graduated from St. Mary's College in Moraga, California, and had taught physical education and oversaw study hall at Tennyson High School in Hayward. He lived with his dog on a small cul-de-sac in Concord, California. While off-duty, he was a high school baseball umpire. Officer Hege also wanted to be a motorcycle cop for many years, and in the last few months he finally got his wish. His colleagues noted that he was always the first to respond on the radio to actually assist other officers or to help on a project.

It is my sincere prayer that, in light of this tragedy, we begin to reexamine how we are addressing the ongoing violence which plagues our country. The events in Oakland this weekend are a prime example of why we must address the gaps that we have in our parole system and also renew our efforts to ban the sale of military style assault weapons in this country. It is hard enough being a police officer without the added pressure of knowing that there could be assault rifles embedded throughout our communities.

We cannot bring back these brave men, but through their deaths we can work and put in place policies that will make our communities safer for the people who live there and also for the police officers who oftentimes have a very dangerous job protecting them. The death of these four officers is really an incomprehensible tragedy that is difficult for all of us to fathom.

I extend my deepest sympathies to the family members of the four officers. This is a very difficult time for members of the Oakland Police Department, the City of Oakland and my entire congressional district, actually, for the entire State of California. My heart goes out to all of those members of the police force who are mourning the loss of their brothers. Our prayers

are with the family and the friends of these brave young men and women during this very solemn time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATERS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. WATERS addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

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

TAX THEM TO DEATH

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the government answer to government-created problems is to tax people and businesses that are producing. The economic philosophy is simple: Punish success by the power of the tax.

The latest government tax plan is the energy tax. The idea is, tax anything that uses energy. And it contains several philosophies. The first one is raise the gasoline tax 10 cents. I guess the government bureaucrats don't think gasoline prices are high enough already. Americans pay 18 cents in Federal gasoline tax, about 20 cents in State tax; and gasoline is approaching $2 a gallon, so they are going to raise taxes and make it harder for us to drive.

But that is not all. The idea also is to tax mileage of cars. It is called the car user tax. In other words, for every mile an American citizen drives, they are going to get taxed for that mile. Of course, that hurts people in rural areas, it hurts people who don't have mass transit and don't have a choo-choo train to ride to work. But it is the car user tax, and we don't know yet how much that is going to be.

But we have more. The idea also is to tax the use of energy in your home. In other words, when you turn on the lights, you are using electricity and you are going to get taxed for using that energy. If you have hot water in your home and you use a hot water heater that is run by natural gas and you turn on the hot water, since you are using natural gas you are going to get taxed again for the use of energy. And of course in the winter in some places in the United States they use home heating oil to keep warm in the winter. And since they are using energy, they are going to get taxed for that. It is the home use energy tax on all Americans. And of course the same is going to be applied to businesses. But businesses, they are going to pass their taxes on down to the consumer who has to pay all of those taxes as well.

There is more. There is the cap-and-trade tax, or the cap tax as I call it. What that is, it is based on the unproven mythical theory of global warming and the use of CO_2; so if you use any CO_2, you are going to get taxed for that.

There are other taxes. Those include taxes on energy production. What that is, is those businesses—we call them oil companies—that produce energy for the rest of us to use, they are going to be taxed with so many different taxes I don't have time to go through it; but what it amounts to, it will cost the American consumer another 41 cents per gallon of gasoline to pay for that tax on energy production that is being passed from the oil companies down to the American consumer. And, of course, the effect of that, whether intended or unintended, will be to send those energy-producing companies, those oil companies, somewhere else. We already find out that some of them are moving to Switzerland.

When that happens, we will get less tax revenue to begin with. You see, we already have the second highest corporate income tax in the world. And why would we fault oil companies for moving overseas when they are already paying so much taxes? And these energy taxes will increase and encourage people to move offshore and to other places.

Mr. Speaker, whether people know it or not, we do not have alternatives for the use of crude oil or gasoline yet. Some day we might have one of those electric cars that we all get to drive around in, but we don't have it now. So if we keep sending energy companies overseas, make it harder for them to produce, tax the energy consumption, it is going to be more difficult for us to exist in this world.

So why don't we do something a little novel. Why don't we allow more energy exploration, instead of continuing to subsidize the Middle Eastern oil countries who don't like us anyway.

If we explore more, that will create jobs that stay in America. It will bring revenue to the American Treasury, because those oil companies have to pay for those leases. We can then get more tax revenue from those oil companies, and money will stay here, instead of shipping it overseas to foreign countries. A novel idea. And there is not a tax included in any of that.

But it seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that the current bureaucrats never saw a tax they didn't like. So we will all just get to ride bicycles and freeze in the cold dark of winter, and for light we will have to use candles since we can't afford to pay the electricity tax on our homes.

And that's just the way it is.

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

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

ENERGY AND ECONOMICS

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

Mr. INGLIS. Mr. Speaker, following up on the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) in talking about energy, I have got a different take on that, and the different take is this: It is all about economics.

Actually, technologies exist right now to be the alternatives. The problem is, they don't compete real well against the incumbent technology, because the incumbent technology doesn't have all of its negative externalities attached to it. If you attach those externalities to those incumbent technologies, all of a sudden new things would happen. And rather than being driven by government and grant programs for this or that, it would be driven by free enterprise, with people making money selling the competing technology.

What do you have to do to get there? You have got to figure out a way to, what economists call, internalize the externals. You have got to figure out a way to attach to the incumbent technologies, which in this case with transportation is gasoline, attach the negative externalities to the price. In other words, demand accountability. Insist on accountability. Say we are going to attach the national security risk, for example, to gasoline, and we are going to say, what is it really costing us for a gallon of gasoline? Is it the $1.90 that I paid recently in my car, or is it a lot more than that? The answer is, it is a lot more than that.

If you consider just the supply chain that we have to protect the assets that we have forward deployed to protect the supply chain, and attribute some percentage, it doesn't have to be 100 percent, but some percentage of the cost, for example, of protecting the shipping lanes that carry this stuff that we are addicted to, to us, if you just attach the cost of a percentage of that, maybe 50 percent of it, give 50 percent cost accounting to somebody else, somebody else's account. But let's account to gasoline at least 50 percent of the cost of the operations in protecting the shipping lines. If you do, it is not $1.90 a gallon. It is a lot more.

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But as long as there is an unrecognized externality, then what happens? There is a market distortion. And as long as that market distortion exists, nothing happens in free enterprise. Because what free enterprise is about is a wonderful thing called ''making a profit.'' And the people generally on this side of the aisle understand very well that we are in business to make money, to make a profit. But when

your competitor gets a freebie in the national security realm or a freebie when it comes to climate change impact, or a freebie when it comes to, say small particulates, when it comes to coal, nuclear doesn't develop, and alternative energies don't develop because you have got this freebie.

Why not continue on with the cheap old technology, the one that really doesn't take a lot of rocket science? You stick pipe in the ground, out comes some crude, you refine it, stick it in a car and you run it. Not real rocket science. But how about some rocket science of hydrogen, for example? Well, you have to internalize some externals in order to make that work for a profit-making venture.

Until then, we will be talking science projects. I'm on the Science Committee. I'm happy to do science projects. But what I really want to have happen is to have people making money selling the competing technology. Here is a way to do it. We are just hearing about how we don't want more taxes. So let's start with a tax reduction. What if you reduce taxes on something, say payroll or income, and then in an equal amount, apply a tax to carbon-based fuels? Then we will see what happens. What would happen then is all kinds of exciting things. The new entrepreneurs in the energy field, the Bill Gates of the world in energy would suddenly do for energy what Bill Gates at Microsoft and Steve Jobs at Apple did for the PC and the Internet. America would break free. It would be no additional intake to the government, and Mr. Speaker, we would be on our way to energy independence.

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

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

SUPPORT H.R. 1245, HOMEBUYER TAX CREDIT ACT OF 2009

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

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I'm going to do something novel tonight. I am going to reach out to my Democrat colleagues. And I'm glad to see some of them, like DON, over there tonight to listen to my exhortations.

Mr. Speaker, the $8,000 tax credit for first-time homebuyers was one of the reasons why home sales went up by about 5.1 percent last month. That was an indication that we are probably moving in the right direction as far as stimulating some economic growth in the housing industry. But the housing industry is in a depression right now. And we need more than just the $8,000 tax credit for first-time homebuyers.

Now, back in 1975, Congress passed the Tax Reduction Act of 1975, which included a tax credit not just for first-time homebuyers, but for all homebuyers, up to $2,000 in a tax credit. As a result, they increased within the next year by 400,000 the number of houses that were sold, and in 2 years they were back up to the 2 million house level.

So we need to stimulate economic growth in the housing industry across the board, not just for first-time homebuyers. Now KEN CALVERT of California, our colleague, has introduced a bill, H.R. 1245. I'm a cosponsor of it. And it will give a 10 percent credit, 10 percent of the home price, up to $15,000 for all homebuyers for 1 year. Now if we did that like they did back in 1975—and this was sponsored mainly by Democrats back in 1975—if we did that across the board for homebuyers up to $15,000, we would stimulate a huge movement towards home purchasing. Twenty-five percent of the people in this country say they want to buy a home within the next 10 years. We can move that up pretty rapidly if we extend the tax credit to $15,000 and allow everybody to get it for 1 year. And if we did that, I think that would go a long way toward solving the economic problems we are facing right now. Right now, what we are doing is we are throwing money at the problem, and we are hoping that that will solve it. It is probably going to help a little bit in the short run. But in the long run, if we really want to stimulate economic growth and activity, we have to get the free market working again. And the best way to do that in my opinion, and I'm saying this to my Democrat colleagues as well as my Republican colleagues, is to give an incentive for people to buy homes, not just first-time homebuyers, but everyone who would like to buy a home or move into a better one.

So if we allow, say, a 10 percent tax credit up to an amount of $15,000 for just 1 year, I think you would see a huge movement in the purchase of homes in this country, and it will really help the economy.

Now the realtors of this country and the homebuilders of this country really need help. They want this bill. They think it is extremely important. They are out here this week and they are going to be talking about it. So I would like to say to you, DON, and all my Democrat colleagues and my Republican colleagues, let's get together on this one. We can fight on something else. But right now we have an opportunity to really stimulate home purchases in this country and get this economy moving more rapidly in the right direction.

So I hope you will join with me in cosponsoring KEN's bill, H.R. 1245, and I'll be glad to sign any of you up tonight.

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

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

JORGE LUIS GARCIA PEREZ ''ANTUNEZ,'' CUBAN FREEDOM FIGHTER

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

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. This last Friday, I had the honor of being able to speak by telephone with five brave human rights activists, pro-democracy leaders, inside the totalitarian nightmare that is Castro's Cuba.

One of the great heroes of the pro-democracy movement inside the Cuban totalitarian nightmare is Jorge Luis Garcia Perez Antunez. A black man now in his 40s, Antunez was first imprisoned while he was in high school because of his support for democracy and his opposition to totalitarianism. For 17 years, Antunez was regularly beaten as a political prisoner in Castro's gulag. He never gave in. He was released from the gulag last year, but since he never surrenders, he doesn't stop denouncing the thugs and pirates who have destroyed, impoverished and oppressed the Cuban people for 50 years, Antunez has been routinely detained, dozens of times, thrown into a dungeon and subsequently released, since his release from the gulag.

Some days ago, Antunez began a hunger strike in his city of Placetas, in Sancti Spiritus province, Cuba, calling for the end of the death threats being leveled against Cuban political prisoner Mario Alberto Perez Aguilera; an end to the physical and psychological torture of all Cuban political prisoners; and the cruel and cynical prohibition by the dictatorship against Antunez's sister, Caridad Garcia Perez, being able to rebuild her own house. They don't allow her to rebuild her own house, which was destroyed by one of the devastating hurricanes that passed by Cuba.

Accompanying the hero Antunez when I was able to contact him by telephone on Friday, March 19, was his wife, the pro-democracy leader, Iris Perez Aguilera, whose brother, Mario Alberto Perez Aguilera, is a political prisoner receiving death threats, I'm sure one of many, but the one specified by Antunez, receiving death threats by his jailers. And I also spoke to pro-democracy leaders, Carlos Michael Morales Rodriguez, Alejandro Tur Valladares and Ernesto Mederos. It was my honor to speak with all of them.

Antunez's house was surrounded by state security thugs while we spoke. And he and his colleagues knew very well that our telephone conversation was being monitored by the thug-regime. The courage of these pro-democracy leaders is simply awe-inspiring. They all explained their human rights work and reiterated their commitment to freedom. I told Antunez that I would be speaking in the U.S. Congress this week about him, about his hunger strike, about his heroic struggle for

freedom and the heroic struggle of the other pro-democracy leaders I spoke to, and about all of Cuba's political prisoners.

Fidel Castro and his brother, who now has some titles because of the dictator's intestinal illness, constitute the historical revenge of the brutal, racist European colonialism that the Cubans fought to overthrow for almost a century. But they ultimately prevailed.

Antunez, Biscet and the other pro-democracy leaders who continue to fight the Castros' dyarchy represent today's version of Maceo, Banderas, Moncada and all the freedom fighters who ultimately obtained freedom for Cuba.

Now one of the disgusting realities of today is that the fight of the unarmed Cuban people doesn't exist for the international media and the press, with very dignified exceptions. Why are the Cubans non-persons for so much of the media? Their racial discrimination is as shameful as it is condemnable. But Antunez, Biscet and the other Cuban freedom fighters will prevail. They are the future leaders of free Cuba. Antunez's last words to me on Friday said it all. ''Tell your colleagues, the representative of the American people, Antunez ni se rinde, ni se va.'' ''Antunez neither surrenders, nor leaves.''

Some are advocating that the new administration agree to the expulsion from Cuba to the U.S. of Biscet, Antunez and other future leaders of Cuba in exchange for some Castro spies currently in U.S. Federal prisons, serving time for conspiring to murder U.S. citizens. That would be a condemnable act that would violate international law as well as the elemental human rights of Cuba's future leaders.

From the floor of the U.S. Congress, I reiterate my admiration for those leaders who confront the totalitarian monster from within Cuba today and who will lead free Cuba tomorrow.

AFRICA DESERVES PARITY IN OUR OVERALL FOREIGN POLICY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. FUDGE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Ms. FUDGE. Mr. Speaker, the Congressional Black Caucus, the CBC, is proud to anchor this hour. Currently the CBC is chaired by the Honorable BARBARA LEE from the Ninth Congressional District of California. My name is Congresswoman MARCIA FUDGE, and I represent the 11th Congressional District of Ohio.

CBC members are advocates for families nationally and internationally. We have played a significant role as local and regional activists. We continue to work diligently to be the conscience of the Congress. But understanding that all politics are local, we provide dedicated and focused service to the citizens and congressional districts we serve. The vision of the founding members of the Congressional Black Caucus, to promote the public welfare through legislation designed to meet the needs of millions of neglected citizens, continues to be a focal point for the legislative work and political activities of the Congressional Black Caucus today.

As Members of Congress, CBC members also promote legislation to aid neglected citizens throughout the world. We understand that the United States, as a bellwether, has the ability to positively impact our neighbors abroad.

Mr. Speaker, at this time I yield to our chairwoman, the Honorable BARBARA LEE.

Ms. LEE of California. Thank you very much. And let me thank the gentlelady for yielding and also for your leadership. Once again, thanks to you, we are here talking about the many, many issues which face our country, but also many of the issues which the Congressional Black Caucus is very involved in leading. And oftentimes the public really isn't aware of these issues and exactly what we are doing. So thank you again, Congresswoman MARCIA FUDGE, for your leadership and for staying the course.

As Chair of the CBC, I'm very proud to point out that we are privileged to draw upon the wisdom and expertise of one of our many colleagues on the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Congressman DON PAYNE of New Jersey. Congressman PAYNE I must say is more than a member. Of course, he is the Chair of the Africa and Global Health Subcommittee, but he is our resident expert on Africa. And Congressman PAYNE I always say is a Member of Congress who not only understands what our foreign policy should be towards the continent of Africa, but he also understands that Africa deserves parity in our overall foreign policy and oftentimes is in the midst of bringing peaceful solutions to conflicts when others won't go there in many, many dangerous and treacherous situations. He also is on the CBC International Affairs Task Force. And I just want to commend Congressman PAYNE tonight. Thank you for your sacrifices and for your leadership.

We are also represented on the Foreign Affairs Committee by Congressman GREGORY MEEKS of New York, Congresswoman DIANE WATSON of California, Congresswoman SHEILA JACKSON-LEE of Texas and Congressman DAVID SCOTT of Georgia.

I would like to briefly talk tonight about Darfur and Sudan. I mentioned Mr. PAYNE earlier, and let me just say that he was the lone voice in the wilderness for many years saying that we should declare that genocide is taking place in Darfur, because that is exactly what did take place.

□ 2000

He finally brought bipartisan consensus to that, the policy of designating this as genocide, and it took a lot. But the country, our country, has in place, as its foreign policy, that genocide is taking place in Darfur. But it is also important to recognize that we haven't been able to go the next step to really help to end the genocide.

The people of Sudan, they have a desire for a just and lasting peace, but it has been crushed repeatedly by one of the most brutal regimes in the world. More than 2 million South Sudanese have died in the 21-year war and have suffered countless atrocities, mostly committed by the same regime in Khartoum.

Darfurian children, born at the height of the genocide, are now 6 years old, and many of them are still in displaced camps in Darfur or in Eastern Chad as refugees.

Fifteen years ago in Rwanda, the international community turned a blind eye with a million civilians butchered. Have we really done more in the case of Darfur, in South Sudan in Abyei and in Nuba? We declared genocide in 2004, but we haven't acted decisively to stop it. If we had, we could have saved many, many innocent people.

And I have visited Darfur on three occasions, and I have just seen the conditions in the camps deteriorate over the years. And so, now it is very important, given what has just taken place, for the United States to raise its role and elevate our work as it relates to trying to help the world community understand that we have got to do the right thing. We need to support the International Criminal Court in its efforts to hold Sudan President Bashir accountable for his crimes against humanity, and for the President, and we support the President, our President, in appointing a Special Envoy for Sudan. Congressman PAYNE and myself wrote to President Obama, and we are delighted that he has appointed an Ambassador or a Special Envoy to be empowered, and we want him to have the resources to focus on Sudan as a whole with special attention to the ongoing genocide in Darfur. We want full implementation of the CPA and to address the humanitarian crisis because, now as General Bashir has expelled the humanitarian workers, we have an even worse crisis emerging on the humanitarian front.

And so our new Special Envoy is Major General Gration. He will be the Special Envoy, and he is uniquely qualified. Some of us met him in Darfur, and we know that he is very qualified to undertake these critically important efforts. As the President said, and I quote, he said that ''he knows the region, he has broad experience and has my complete confidence.''

Let me also say that we have to work very closely with the Special Envoy. And again, we want the Special Envoy to have a team of people with the resources to be able to do this job so he can bring peace to the long-suffering people of the Sudan.

Also, in conclusion, let me just highlight the fact that the CBC has led for many, many years in developing our global HIV/AIDS initiatives and the U.S. response to that.

We were instrumental, last year in taking—and can you believe this, Congresswoman FUDGE, Nelson Mandela and the ANC was on the terrorist watch list until last December. So we were able to get him off of the terrorist watch list before his 90th birthday.

We have established June as Caribbean American Heritage Month, honoring those of Caribbean descent who have contributed immensely to this great country.

We are working now on the Shirley Chisholm Caribbean Education Exchange Program, and trying to make sure that our country, Haiti, the poorest country in this hemisphere, receives the type of attention and resources it deserves to help stabilize the country. Hurricanes, natural disasters, poverty, health care needs are badly needed in Haiti, and the CBC has been working very hard to try to help stabilize that country.

I won't go on and on now, but I just wanted to thank Congresswoman FUDGE because the CBC, again, is continuing to be the conscience of the Congress, not only in our domestic policy, but in our foreign policy, and each and every Member understands that we have to think globally and act locally, and we try to work strategically on both the home front and the international front.

Thank you very much, Congresswoman FUDGE.

Ms. FUDGE. Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I would very much like to thank our Chair for her leadership, for her vision, and certainly for her support of this special hour for the CBC.

Mr. Speaker, I would now like to yield to the gentlelady from Maryland (Ms. EDWARDS).

Ms. EDWARDS of Maryland. I thank the gentlelady for yielding.

From the beginning, our great Nation has been generous, and it has been a safe harbor for immigrants, providing asylum to individuals fleeing political turmoil and humanitarian crisis. But that philosophy has been challenged very seriously, forcing people who have resided lawfully in the United States for over 15 years to return to their country of origin that is no longer their home.

And so today, I rise to urge President Obama to reverse former President Bush's executive order forcing Liberian refugees back to their country. I ask the President to extend lawful status to these persons who have been law-abiding and tax paying citizens for years. These are people who have built lives in this country, who have children who are U.S. citizens, and who do not want to tear their families apart.

Families like Janvier Richard, who lives in my congressional district in Maryland. She fled Liberia for America in 1991 after she and her family were threatened during the Liberian civil war. Janvier has spent 18 years in America, a generation, a lifetime in America. And yet, today, Janvier Richards, and her family, after they were granted Temporary Protected Status by the United States because of the political turmoil and atrocities being committed in Liberia, have now built a home here in these United States for 18 years.

But in 2007, President Bush effectively ended Temporary Protected Status for Liberians by signing a memorandum authorizing Deferred Enforced Departure.

What does that mean?

That means that President Bush ordered all Liberians who had been granted TPS, temporary protected status, to leave the United States by March 31, 2009.

Now, to be sure, Liberians have made tremendous progress, back on the road to democracy under the able leadership of President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. But today, the question before us and the justice challenge is really about those who came to this country, like Janvier, from Liberia, started families and businesses, worked hard, paid taxes. Their children are now United States citizens and grew up in America.

Janvier Richards wrote me a letter saying: ''I am being told to return home to a country that has no place for me. I have a 5-year-old son born at Holy Cross Hospital in Silver Spring, Maryland, and should be starting school this fall as a new kindergarten student. I have been working and paying taxes since I was 16, and I am happy contribute to American society by all means. This has been my home for 18 years,'' Janvier writes.

Richard has followed the proper procedures to become a U.S. citizen. She fled here to the United States with her father, who was a U.S. citizen, who filed for citizenship on her behalf. But since he passed away in 2002, immigration officials have continuously ignored Janvier Richard's inquiry about the status of her application, and now she faces deportation.

This is not about people wanting to take advantage of the United States or use Social Services. Janvier has been working and paying taxes since she was 18 years old and has never received government assistance.

This Congress and this administration must work to allow Liberians like Richards and her family to remain lawfully in this country as contributors, as taxpayers, and as citizens. We need to support these families that have become integral parts of our communities.

In closing her letter, Janvier Richards writes, and I quote, ''Immigrants started this country. Immigrants are needed in this country. It shouldn't take up to 10 to 15 years before someone can get their green card or citizenship papers. We are working,'' she continues to write, ''we are helping the country succeed. We are needed.''

Ms. Richards and her son, the 5-year-old born at Holy Cross Hospital in Silver Spring, others like her who have come to this country and started new productive lives, have done nothing to deserve deportation. And they came here under the spirit in which we have granted asylum status to millions around the world for the generations of this country.

And I, therefore, ask President Obama to stand with Janvier Richards and other Liberians like her and reverse the current executive order.

I thank you, gentlelady, and I yield back.

Ms. FUDGE. I want to thank my colleague for her very moving remarks and because she is here and even though she doesn't feel well, because it is such a very important issue. So I want to thank her.

Mr. Speaker, I would now yield to the gentlelady from Wisconsin (Ms. MOORE).

Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin. Well, thank you so much, Congresswoman FUDGE, for sponsoring this hour. I think it is extremely important to educate our constituencies to a greater extent than we are somehow able to do in 1 minute or even in the heat of a debate.

Mr. Speaker, I am so delighted again to join these distinguished colleagues, the Chair of this special hour, Congresswoman FUDGE, as well as our Dean, I guess, of foreign affairs in the Congressional Black Caucus, Congressman PAYNE. And certainly, I would like to associate myself with the comments of our dear Representative from Maryland. I would like to associate myself with her remarks because I also want to talk about Liberia, but I want to talk about it from the perspective of protecting the investments that we have made in Liberia.

Liberia's relationship to the United States is certainly longstanding. Liberia was settled in the early 1800s by freeborn Blacks and former slaves from the United States of America. These settlers used the Constitution of the United States as the model for their new government. They designed a flag with red and white stripes with a single white star. And, of course, in 1824, the settlement was named Monrovia, after the American President James Monroe, and Monrovia remains the capital of the modern-day Liberia.

I can tell you that, unfortunately, because of arbitrary rule, economic collapse, corrupt governments, Liberia fell into two devastating civil wars in the span of a little more than a decade, as well as a legacy of a ruthless and reckless leader in Charles Taylor, who nearly destroyed the country, created regional instability, drawing in Sierra Leone, another country, and really creating an insecure situation. The most egregious of those things, in my mind, Congresswoman FUDGE, was the engagement of child warriors, children warriors in this fight.

During that fighting, Liberians suffered immensely. Over a quarter of a

million lives were lost, and more than half of all of Liberia's 3.5 million people were driven from their homes, including those who found safe haven in our country to escape the violence.

I have visited Liberia a couple of times and heard some of the stories of people, women who were crossing the roads, pregnant and found themselves killed on the road right there for their food. I saw, looked into the vacant eyes of some of the child combatants that they are trying to rehabilitate in the country.

And so I was really pleased when late, late last week, our President, Barack Obama, given all of the challenges that he has, stopped to allow Liberians, who took refuge in our country from the civil war in their home nation to receive deferred enforced departure protection for 12 more months. The President's recent order is so important because Liberians who have been granted either this temporary protected status, TPS, or deferred enforcement departure, DED, are allowed to remain in the U.S. rather than be forced to return to a country in the midst of war.

And let us not think for one moment, Congresswoman FUDGE, that this country is not still at war. And they are still at war because, despite the sage leadership of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, she is taking tremendous steps to overcome the ravages of war. She is basically having to start from scratch from the destruction that was caused by these two wars. She is been busy trying to rebuild the nation's education and health care system, oversee the deactivization and reintegration of the old security forces and ex-combatants. I mean, they need a new police service. Who do you trust and who don't you trust?

□ 2015

And this is a very excruciating process which the United States, of course, thank God, is helping them to do.

They have got to decommission these ex-combatants and help restore its shattered economy in the midst of the worst global recession in decades. Because of the extensive damage done by Charles Taylor and the conflict, things that we take for granted, such as roads, police to protect residents, courts to convict criminals, a basic economy, and confidence people have in its government have all got to be rebuilt. This is not a time to send President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf another whole slew of people to provide educational opportunities for jobs. It is shocking to go to Liberia. It is the poorest day I have ever had in my life, Congresswoman FUDGE. I have never lived in a community that did not have a library, and I went to Liberia, a place where they do not even have a library in major parts of Liberia.

The challenges are many. Again, they lack health care, education; they suffer from an unemployment rate of 80 percent—yes, eight-zero—80 percent, lingering cultural and social effects from the legacy of war, and again, the haunting eyes of those child soldiers who have got to be reintegrated into society after experiencing or committing serious crimes. Seventy-six percent of Liberians in 2006 lived on less than $1 per day. Fifty-two percent live on less than 50 cents per day. One hundred fifty-seven infants per 1,000 die before their first birthdays. Over 1,000 mothers die per 100,000 live births.

Most Liberians do not have access to safe drinking water. I was there in Liberia, and I had a bottle of water. Kids came up to me, fighting over the bottle of water, and I was very reluctant to give these children a bottle of water that I had drank from. Someone said to me, ''Ma'am, that is the cleanest water that they will ever have, perhaps, in their entire lives that is in that bottle.'' These are the conditions that they are living under. Electricity is sporadically available. The list goes on and on and on, and this is only an hour that we have here, Madam Chair.

One tool that the President does have, though, is the economic support flowing into her country from Liberians here in our country, some because of the special protections granted to them by TPS and DED. With the Liberian economy struggling and a global economic recession not making things any easier, money being sent to a country from relatives living in the U.S. is a veritable lifeline.

According to the Liberian government, remittances from the U.S. totaled $60 million in 2007, providing essential support. According to the International Monetary Fund, Liberia's two civil wars have reduced Liberia's real gross domestic product to about 40 percent of its prewar level between 1989 and 2003. There is no magic wand available to President Johnson-Sirleaf to restore 60 percent of GDP overnight. Again, it would be extremely egregious for us to return citizens to that country without the prerequisite infrastructure. She has also, I hope, the steadfast support of this Congress and of this administration to Liberia and its people.

A couple of years ago, she was right here in this Chamber, and addressed a joint session of Congress, an honor thrust upon this inspiring leader because of the historic connection and special relationship between our two countries. In that address, she said, ''The Liberian people are counting on me and my administration to create the conditions that will guarantee the realization of their dreams. We must not betray their trust. All the children I meet, when I ask what they want most, say, 'I want to learn.' 'I want to go to school.' 'I want an education.' We must not betray their trust.''

The transition from conflict to peace is never quick nor easy. Madam Chair, I am afraid for the future of Liberia if we do not provide them with adequate support. I am going to amend my remarks and submit them for the RECORD.

In closing, I just want to commend President Obama for his welcomed step. He shares the strong belief that there is a beautiful democracy budding in Liberia, and I congratulate President Obama for his strong expression of support for our Liberia. The good thing about it is that this Nation is just rich with natural resources and that we now have a leader with credibility in President Johnson-Sirleaf. She is so decent as well as being brilliant. This can help create tremendous wealth for its people. It now has this capable leader for its vision, and the diamonds and minerals and its port can all lead to great prosperity, and we should be proud to be their great friend.

With that, I yield back my time to you. Thank you again for your stewardship over this hour.

Ms. FUDGE. Thank you very much.

Mr. Speaker, I would very much like to thank my friend and colleague, the gentlelady from Wisconsin, for her passion and for her insight.

At this time, I would now like to yield to the gentleman from New Jersey who, indeed, is the dean of the CBC as it relates to matters of Foreign Affairs, especially those in Africa.

Mr. PAYNE.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you very much, Representative FUDGE. Let me commend you for taking the leadership for this hour on behalf of the Congressional Black Caucus. We certainly have appreciated your experience as a former mayor and as a person involved in politics in the State of Ohio and how you have come in, not as a trainee, but fully running. We know of the untimely death of your predecessor, Representative Stephanie Tubbs Jones, but we certainly appreciate your taking up the mantle and moving forward.

I would just like to speak briefly on several of the countries that we have mentioned.

We have just heard the gentlelady from Wisconsin talk about Haiti, and I might just mention briefly that Haiti has had a long and difficult history, highlighted by prolonged poverty, political instability and underdevelopment, resulting in a politically fragile state with the lowest standards of living in the entire western hemisphere. With the assistance of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti and large amounts of international aid, Haiti has been attempting to establish a foundation for longer economic development. Security issues have presented the primary risk to stability while restoring economic growth, investment, employment, and access to basic services have been the major and equally formidable challenges to sustainable development.

President Preval, since assuming his second nonconsecutive term in office in May of 2006, has emphasized the importance of rebuilding democracy, rebuilding Democratic institutions and of establishing conditions for private investment, which is key to the development of any country to create jobs.

The success of his government will depend largely on its ability to improve security and social economics.

The condition in the country: 76 percent of the population lives on less than $2 a day. These are conditions that make it very difficult. Security conditions have improved, but Haitians have seen their already substandard living conditions deteriorate further with the rise in global food prices and in the recent devastation by a series of hurricanes.

When people say, ''Why Haiti? Why should we be concerned?'' number 1, they are very close to our shores. Number 2, there has been a history of United States' involvement in Haiti. As a matter of fact, in the Battle of Savannah, when we fought for independence of the United States of America from Britain, Haiti sent soldiers over to fight in the Battle of Savannah. As a matter of fact, recently—and I visited last year—the statue that has been dedicated to Haitian soldiers who fought for the independence of the United States' 13 original colonies away from Great Britain.

Also, as we know, Haiti became the first revolt of enslaved people to defeat the colonists, and that sent a message throughout Central and South America. As you know, Haiti in 1804 defeated the forces of the great Napoleon's army, and as a result of this 12-year war between France and Haiti, France was defeated. There is great wealth that France would get from Haiti, which actually was more than all the 13 colonies of the United States provided for Britain. The one portion of the island of Español, of which Haiti is half of it and the other half is the Dominican Republic, gave more wealth to France. So, when France lost Haiti, it lost economics, and as a result, the Louisiana Purchase came about.

As you may know, at that time, the United States was landlocked. The United States only went to the Mississippi River, and it was the land that was owned by France. Because France after the long war with Haiti needed cash—it was land rich and cash poor—it sold the Louisiana Territory for, I think, about $15 million and, therefore, opened up the West. The Lewis and Clark expedition started in St. Louis as a result of the purchase of the Louisiana Territory. So Haiti has had a tremendous impact on the United States of America.

Finally, about Haiti, part of the erosion which we see was spurred along in World War II. With the U.S. being cut off from the Pacific region, there was a need for rubber to be grown and produced. There was a Haitian grower who said that it was going to be impossible for rubber trees to grow in Haiti. However, the Haitian leadership wanted to help in the war effort and wanted to placate President Roosevelt, and so they cut down natural kinds of ecology, and tried to introduce rubber trees, which would not grow, which was already known by Haitian farmers, but they did it anyway. As a result, erosion started. This was one of the areas that, with the natural habitat taken down and the foreign intervention of other plants, Haiti's erosion also began.

So I just would like to say that we need to take a look at the status of Haitians in America. We need to change that situation so that people who have come to this country will definitely have an opportunity to become full-fledged citizens of our country.

Let me just quickly talk about the Liberians who we have heard about, another country. We just heard our previous speaker talk about the fact that there was Deferred Enforcement Departure status which expired on March 31 of 2009 for Liberians as a result of the war with Charles Taylor. People got TPS, Temporary Protective Status, from Liberia. Then when that ran out, they had the Deferred Enforcement Departure, and we have gotten word that we believe that Liberians will be able to have a 1-year extension of the DED, from words that I received from President Obama's office.

Let me just say that, once again, in 1820, $100,000 was funded by the U.S. Congress that went to help start Liberia. As you know, Monrovia was named after President Monroe, and many free black men and women went to Haiti. As a matter of fact, there was an integrated group of blacks and whites that went back originally, but the whites all died, and were unable to survive. Only the blacks survived.

□ 2030

And so we have had a long relationship with Haiti and with Liberia, and we should, certainly, with the 3,600 people who are in the DED current status, I hope that within the next year—and there will be a rally on Wednesday at 1:30 here at the west terrace at the Capitol that will allow Liberian leaders to come and show their appreciation for the extension, and we urge anyone who is free on Wednesday of this week at 1:30 to come and participate in the rally.

Finally, we've heard about Darfur. I was pleased that we were able to get the genocide resolution through, but I did expect more to happen from the world, and I have been disappointed.

I went to eastern Chad, and I spoke to an elderly woman who talked about what happened in her town: a pregnant woman was bayonetted there, a neighbor was shot. Even in huts they would lock, tie the door together and burn the huts and the boys would be burned to death, all of this by al-Bashir, the president who has been indicted by the International Criminal Court and should stand for trial.

As has been mentioned, there's been a long, north-south battle between the NIF government, the National Islamic Front, and the SPLA, the Sudanese Freedom—South Sudanese Liberation Movement, the late Dr. Garang, for 21 years. Four million people have been displaced, two million people have died.

And 21 days after Dr. Garang was able to get the comprehensive peace accord signed, his plane mysteriously crashed and Dr. Garang was killed

I immediately went there and participated in the mourning and attended the funeral of him. His wife and children—Rebecca, his wife, is very strong and continues to move forward on the question of South Sudan, the comprehensive peace agreement must be upheld and Darfur, the International Criminal Court, should go forward with the prosecution of al-Bashir. He has put out 13 nongovernmental organizations who are feeding people and are bringing in food and so forth. This must not stand, and he must be stopped.

We could talk about the Congo, but I will yield back the balance of the time so our chairperson of tonight's special order may be able to conclude in any manner that she sees fit. But let me once again thank you for taking this hour, and we still have much to do. The CBC, the conscience of the Congress, will continue to move forward, not only domestically, but internationally.

Ms. FUDGE. Mr. Speaker, I would very much again like to thank our teacher, our dean, our resident expert for his remarks this evening.

And now, Mr. Speaker, I would yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, the United States is a leader in advocating for human rights and humanitarian assistance. These ideals are embodied in the desire to assist and guide others that have lost hope.

At the United Nations World Summit in 2005, 191 members of the UN expressed support for the idea of a responsibility to protect. This responsibility to protect proclaims that mass atrocities that occur in one country are the concern of all countries. This echoes the great Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s, declaration that injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.

With Dr. King's words in our hearts, I rise today to speak about the grave tragedies affecting individuals in Darfur and the temporary protective status, better known as TPS, for individuals from Liberia and Haiti.

I begin with the humanitarian emergency that is taking place in Darfur.

The history of the information in the Darfur region of Sudan is long and complicated. Sudan has been embroiled in a civil war for decades. The conflict took a turn for the worst in 2003 when the Sudanese government mobilized militias known as Janjaweeds to attack opposition groups. The militia has brutalized the people of Darfur with murder, rape, torture, and pillage. They have burned down entire villages forcing people to flee their homes and their livelihoods. Entire portions of the region are now ruled by roving bands of armed gunmen.

Since 2003, 300,000 Darfuris have died as a result of a conflict, and approximately 2.7 million have been forced from their homes.

The conflict in Darfur is also having a devastating effect on its western neighbor, Chad. Nearly 200,000 refugees from Sudan have joined the 90,000 persons displaced by the civil war in Chad. To further complicate matters, both Chad and Sudan have accused each other of supporting rebellions in their countries. Last week, however, the situation in Darfur took a grave turn for the worse.

Sudan's President, Omar al-Bashir, expelled 13 nongovernmental organizations, or NGOs, and 6,500 aid workers from the country. This was in direct retaliation for Bashir's indictment on war crimes and crimes against humanity by the International Criminal Court, better known as the ICC, on March 4, 2009. Bashir's unsubstantiated accusation that the NGOs were cooperating with the ICC investigation only heightens the urgency and necessity for an international response.

The civilian population is composed of two million people who are spread out among 200 refugee camps in Darfur, and in 12 refugee camps in eastern Chad. The UN estimates that 40 percent of Darfuris depend on outside assistance for their survival. This expulsion of humanitarian groups, such as Oxfam and Doctors Without Borders, will adversely affect millions of civilians who rely on NGOs for their most basic food and medical needs. Who will continue to provide these urgent services, Mr. Speaker?

The Sudanese government has clearly demonstrated that it is unwilling or unable to assist its citizens throughout this very conflict. The expulsion of the NGOs is only the most recent act that endangers millions of lives. This is why the international community must unite and forcefully declare that Sudan's government not hold its citizens hostage.

Last week, I and nearly 80 Members of this Congress sent letters to the Secretary General of the League of Arab States, the chairman of the African Union and the President of China urging them to insist that the government of Sudan allow humanitarian organizations to re-enter the country.

President Bashir must separate the ICC action from the charity relief efforts of relief groups. The expulsion violates international humanitarian law and damages efforts to resolve the conflict. Without the NGOs, more than one million Darfuris will be left vulnerable to disease and starvation. These are civilians, Mr. Speaker. They are caught in the cross hairs of a conflict they did not begin and they have no power to end.

By sacrificing his people for political gain, President Bashir has shown a call as disregard for human life that the international community cannot ignore. President Bashir must reverse the expulsion order and allow NGOs back into Sudan. The people of Darfur have suffered enough. To compound their anguish at this critical time is unconscionable.

I applaud President Obama's appointment of a special envoy to Sudan. President Obama named retired Air Force General Scott Gration last week as a special envoy to Sudan, choosing a close adviser with broad experience in the region. The President has indicated that the conflict in Darfur is a priority for his administration. The CBC is encouraged by the administration's stance, and we look forward to working with the President and the Special Envoy Gration.

At this time, Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield to my colleague from the State of Texas, the gentlewoman from the State of Texas, Ms. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. I would like to thank the gentlelady from Ohio, first of all, for her leadership in helping to share with our colleagues hour after hour enormously important issues facing not only the United States but facing the world. And I join her this evening.

And I was very appreciative of joining with my chairperson of the Congressional Black Caucus, who I just saw at another meeting who was able to be here, Congressman BARBARA LEE. I want to thank her for her leadership. The chairperson of my Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health, Chairman DONALD PAYNE, who speaks volumes about Africa, and as well, chairs the Foreign Affairs Task Force, of which I am a member of the Congressional Black Caucus; and one of our great leaders as well, Congresswoman GWEN MOORE. I know there were probably others that were here, and I did not get a chance to see them on the floor. But I do want to acknowledge that this is an important hour for us. And I am pleased to be able to join my colleague.

Let me just suggest that there are many ways that we can look at Liberia, Haiti, and Sudan. And it is my intent because I think we have talents here in the United States, Representatives of African nations, that, frankly, we don't get a chance to interact with as much as we would like. And I am going to accept the challenge given to me to host a meeting of African ambassadors that our colleagues will have a chance to sit down with and hear their story, their insight certainly on the issues that we're now raising, particularly Liberia and Sudan—obviously Haiti is in the Caribbean, and I will speak to that issue.

But let me tell you why I want to offer that suggestion. And the reason is because I sat down with one of our distinguished ambassadors last week who mentioned that with all of the meetings on the economy, the worldwide crisis in the economy, interestingly enough, the Continent of Africa is not on the agenda.

We heard an eloquent speech by Prime Minister Brown, and all of us were moved by his passion and his values, the Prime Minister of Great Britain. And I am told that he is as eloquent and as energized before his own Parliament and in international meetings as he was with us in the joint session.

And we are very blessed, if you will, by having an administration that has the cultural nexus and the heart and the intellect to be concerned about these issues. President Obama has been received overwhelmingly, his election, on the continent. I think we are poised to be of a gigantic opportunity to do what Prime Minister Brown has charged us to do: Don't forget the impoverished. Don't forget the journey we were on trying to address the question of poverty. And that was a big issue as it relates to Africa.

Now, of course, the economy has come and there may be donor nations who have made pledges who have not completed their pledges, but Africa still has the same concerns and therefore, it will be very important to hear from these ambassadors on the issues that we're talking about, which I expect to talk about here tonight.

For example, our esteemed president of Liberia who came out of the World Bank and who has a great respect of not only women of this country, but certainly of our administration and our past administration. She came to Liberia after Charles Taylor in a country that was void of infrastructure, void of water, void of—when I say ''water resources,'' infrastructure that would have clean running water; void of infrastructure that would have utilities or any mode of, if you will, phone, utility service; void of operating school systems. So we know that she has made great strides, and I have details here.

But at the same time, we are well aware that she needs more resources. We have to have this on the agenda. We have to be able to partnership with the African Union, for example, strengthen it as the African Union attempts to develop its own mission and mandate on how it addresses the issue of conflict.

So I think if I said anything about Liberia, there are certainly two major points: one, the Liberian Americans, but Liberia and the new president, Mrs. Johnson, is someone who has the, if you will, the monetary knowledge because of her experience here in the United States and her training in some of the financial structures of our country, but, also, the will to do it.

□ 2045

We must not forget Liberia in its journey toward economic independence, but it is a microcosm of the needs of the continent.

I also want to thank the administration, President Obama, for heeding the cry of many Members who wrote a letter about Liberian Americans. I'm told by our chairperson, Chairperson PAYNE, Liberian Americans will be here in the Congress or on the West steps to highlight their plight of continued TPS status, deferred, if you

will, deportation that has been going on and on and on.

We have got to solve that. That is something we can look to as we reform immigration. Many times when we discuss immigration, people start thinking it's not their problem, it's a global problem, it's a problem that faces many different ethnic groups. And we all need to come together as a family and fix it so people can be here legally; they can pay taxes; they can, in essence, be separated from those who want to do them harm.

So I want to put Liberia in the eye of the storm as it relates to the economy, and the challenge that the ambassador gave me was why don't you consult with us who are here and let us tell you the economic impact on the continent, what we need to be involved.

The second is, of course, Sudan and I might have been one of the last CODELs, congressional delegations, of three that were able to actually get into Darfur, into the camps. And I had spent time in Chad as well some years back before I was able to get into Darfur. I've been denied—it's a very long story of how long it took, and I frankly didn't know whether I'd get in the time that I went since we were among those who got arrested in front of the Sudanese embassy.

But we went into those camps, and the key thing that I want to say to the distinguished gentlelady is how valuable the NGOs were. They were literally the lifeline of the camps. They were a lifeline of the children. They were the lifeline of the women. And the women were the anchor of the camps because any man that would venture out to try to be a supportive family member, to provide income, would be killed by the janjaweed, or whatever the conflicts, they were targets. And so, mostly, it would be the women. Tragically, the women would be raped, and so things are not well.

And the complete disregard that the leadership of Sudan, the President of Sudan, has for the indictment, for the world family, there is no respect there. And we have a challenge, and we have got to be able to match the will of this country and our foreign policy, our belief in democracy, our belief in the security of children and family and the ability to live on your land without threat and danger and murder and pillage, we've got to the match that with the will of the countries on the continent, the African countries, the heads of States.

This is a new day now. This is in essence an America that has a commonality, that people are not only interested and are sacrificing on behalf of Sudan and the crisis there, but likewise, we have an administration that accounts Susan Rice, who is the U.N. envoy who I worked with on the crisis between Ethiopa and Eritrea. She is a committed and knowledgeable person about the world but particularly about Africa, and I count on her wisdom. I count on the wisdom of the Secretary of State, Hillary Rodham Clinton, and I count on that foreign policy team, along with the envoy that our President has just selected, Major Scott Gration, that adds to the team that can now focus on Sudan but also focus on the continent of Africa.

I join in denouncing the treatment of our, if you will, NGOs. Just about a year or so ago, we lost a valiant State Department employee that was killed in Sudan, and I frankly have never gotten over it, and I offer my deepest respect and sympathy to his family. It was a horrific act.

And so it is important that we put our foot down on the atrocities that has occurred in Sudan, and people should understand, people are in Darfur because they have been moved off of their land. You can't help to rebuild this area, irrigate it, give people—these are farming people. Don't tell them, well, just go to the city and get another life, get a life. These people have lived on their land, and they have bothered no one. They've raised their families, and now they're being literally torn apart.

Southern Sudan, that tried to get on its feet, that has a lot of oil, it's still in conflict between the Khartoum government and Sudan. Southern Sudan, who has all the oil and cannot seem to get an agreement, to my current knowledge—and I may have need of some additional update to my current knowledge—has not been able to solve the distribution of the oil moneys, and so they're suffering. This is an immediate crisis that needs to be fixed.

As it relates to Haiti, let me again mention the work of the Congressional Black Caucus. We have been working on Haiti for, I don't know, as long as I've been here, but we have had wonderful conversations with President Preval who is a committed and dedicated leader, who is looking for funding for infrastructure, funding, if you will, to rebuild after the terrible onslaught of hurricanes that they had in the last year, 2008. He is looking to work with us and the Congressional Black Caucus in the appropriations process, and we're looking to work with him.

Haiti is a wonderful ally of the United States. We can never pay them for the blood that they shed standing alongside us in the Revolutionary War, and their victory was our victory. Our victory was their victory, and they're hardworking people. You can see that here in the United States, and you can see that obviously in Haiti.

And so what I think, as I close, that you selected hot spots that symbolize the need for us to be engaged, and as I said, finally with respect to immigration, Haiti, too, so many distraught cases of Haitians treated unfairly in the United States because they don't have the parity that happens when Cubans are fleeing persecution as is defined. Haitians have been fleeing persecution, economic persecution, political persecution, who are here and cannot return back. I want them to get parity, and any immigration bill that I have any hands on, it will be part of that bill.

And so I think it is extremely important, Mr. Speaker, that we look at these issues and be assured that we work on behalf of all of these people. It is our commitment to make their lives better by our statements here today on the floor, but also our collaboration to continue to work on the issues that impact people's lives and as well the quality of life. We need to save lives and we certainly need to save them.

I just want to put on the record that I am working with a Haitian teacher who has suffered so much. She teaches math. She's well-respected. She had a court order that said she was not going to be deported. It's a long story, but I simply want to let the Haitians in Houston know we have not forgotten her, and we want her to stay united with her family.

Thank you very much for your leadership.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in support of Sudan, Liberia and Haiti. These are three of the most troubled nations in the world, desperately in need of support from other nations, including the United States.

SUDAN AND DARFUR

I am pleased that President Obama has appointed a Special Envoy to Sudan. Major General Scott Gration is both a humanitarian and a professional soldier. He has proudly served our country but more importantly brings to this position the experience and gravitas necessary to lead our mission.

The United States has for most of our history been a leader among nations in attempting to help foment democracy and bring peace to warring parties in regions throughout the world.

Sudan's western region of Darfur has been embroiled in violent conflict since 2003, which has brought a weighty death toll and displaced over 2 million people. Just recently, Darfur rebels killed 200 people near the capitol city of Khartoum. With violence continuing to worsen in the region, I call on the international community to renew it's commitment to finding a solution to the conflict in Darfur.

In 2007, I had the chance to lead a Congressional Delegation to the region of Darfur to see the first hand devastation that has swept through the region.

As Chair of the Congressional Children's Caucus, I am very concerned about the displaced children who suffer due to the lack of nutrition and access to clean water. Additionally, child mortality remains a significant problem throughout the region. I am also concerned that the global food crisis could exacerbate the conflict, placing more children at risk.

We, as a Global community, must unite to address this issue. Let us not let race, religious ties, or bureaucratic systems hinder us from fight for the people of Darfur. As a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, I will continue to work towards a solution for the ongoing conflict in Darfur. We must remain steadfast to gaining peace in the region.

Darfur has been embroiled in a deadly conflict for over four years. During that time, at least 400,000 people have been killed; more than 2 million innocent civilians have been

forced to flee their homes and now live in displaced-persons camps in Sudan or in refugee camps in neighboring Chad.

And more than 3.5 million men, women, and children are completely reliant on international aid for survival. Not since the Rwandan genocide of 1994 has the world seen such a calculated campaign of displacement, starvation, rape, and mass slaughter.

Since early 2003, Sudanese armed forces and Sudanese government-backed militia known as ''Janjaweed'' have been fighting two rebel groups in Darfur, the Sudanese Liberation Army/Movement (SLA/SLM) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM).

The stated political aim of the rebels has been to compel the government of Sudan to address underdevelopment and the political marginalization of the region. In response, the Sudanese government's regular armed forces and the Janjaweed—largely composed of fighters of Arab nomadic background—have targeted civilian populations and ethnic groups from which the rebels primarily draw their support—the Fur, Masalit and Zaghawa.

The Bush Administration recognized these atrocities—carried out against civilians primarily by the government of Sudan and its allied Janjaweed militias—as genocide. António Guterres, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, has described the situation in Sudan and Chad as ''the largest and most complex humanitarian problem on the globe.''

The Sudanese government and the Janjaweed militias are responsible for the burning and destruction of hundreds of rural villages, the killing of tens of thousands of people and rape and assault of thousands of women and girls.

With much international pressure, the Darfur Peace Agreement was brokered in May 2006 between the government of Sudan and one faction of Darfur rebels. However, deadlines have been ignored and the violence has escalated, with in-fighting among the various rebel groups and factions dramatically increasing and adding a new layer of complexity to the conflict.

This violence has made it dangerous, if not impossible, for most of the millions of displaced persons to return to their homes. Humanitarian aid agencies face growing obstacles to bringing widespread relief. In August 2006, the UN's top humanitarian official Jan Egeland stated that the situation in Darfur is ''going from real bad to catastrophic.'' Indeed, the violence in Darfur rages on with government-backed militias still attacking civilian populations with impunity.

On July 30, 2004, the UN Security Council adopted resolution 1556 demanding that the government of Sudan disarm the Janjaweed. This same demand is also an important part of the Darfur Peace Agreement signed in May of 2006.

On August 31, 2006, the Security Council took the further step of authorizing a strong UN peacekeeping force for Darfur by passing resolution 1706. Despite these actions, the Janjaweed are still active and free to commit the same genocidal crimes against civilians in Darfur with the aid of the Sudanese government.

International experts agree that the United Nations Security Council must deploy a peacekeeping force with a mandate to protect civilians immediately. Until it arrives, the under-funded and overwhelmed African Union monitoring mission must be bolstered. And governments and international institutions must provide and ensure access to sufficient humanitarian aid for those in need.

The Darfur Accountability and Divestment Act of 2006, H.R. 180, sponsored by my colleague BARBARA LEE would require: The Securities and Exchange Commission's (SEC) Division of Corporate Finance and the U.S. Treasury to require all companies listing securities on United States capital markets, either directly or through a parent or subsidiary company, including partly-owned subsidiaries, having business operations in a country with a genocide declared by the Department of State or Congress, to disclose the nature of their business operations.

The United States Government (federal) to prohibit contracts with multi-national business enterprises if: They maintain business relationships and investments with national, regional and local governments involved in genocide; and they participate in business activities with any warring parties or rebel groups perpetrating genocide. States and Cities that have divested or are in the process of divesting State and City funds from companies that conduct business in Sudan; and United States colleges and universities that have divested their funds from, or placed restrictions on investments of their funds in, companies that conduct business in Sudan.

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) to investigate the existence and extent of all Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board investments with national, regional and local governments involved in genocide; or business activities with any warring parties perpetrating genocide; or related to debt-obligations issued by the government of Sudan.

Also, the Chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission is charged with maintaining and publishing a list of the names of the business enterprises identified by the Securities and Exchange Commission as having ties with perpetrators of genocide.

It also reasserts Section 11 of the Darfur Peace and Accountability Act (stripped from the Senate version) that nothing in that act or any other provision of law shall be construed to preempt any State law that prohibits investment of State funds, including State pension funds, in or relating to the Republic of the Sudan.

LIBERIA

Mr. Speaker, A part of the world that has been neglected for many years is West Africa. And one of the gems of this region is Liberia. I am pleased that Liberia's temporary protective order was extended.

Temporary Protected Status (TPS) is the statutory embodiment of safe haven for those aliens who may not meet the legal definition of refugee but are nonetheless fleeing—or reluctant to return to—potentially dangerous situations.

There are numerous regions throughout the world where discrete and insular minorities might need this type of relief. TPS is blanket relief that may be granted under the following conditions: there is ongoing armed conflict posing serious threat to personal safety; a foreign state requests TPS because it temporarily cannot handle the return of nationals due to environmental disaster or there are extraordinary and temporary conditions in a foreign state that prevent aliens from returning, provided that granting TPS is consistent with U.S. national interests.

The Secretary of Homeland Security in consultation with the Secretary of State, can issue TPS for periods of 6 to 18 months and can extend these periods if conditions do not change in the designated country. To obtain TPS, eligible aliens report to U.S. Citizenship and Immigrant Services (USCIS) in the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), pay a processing fee, and receive registration documents and a work authorization. The major requirements for aliens seeking TPS are proof of eligibility. The regulation specifies grounds of inadmissibility that cannot be waived, including those relating to criminal convictions and the persecution of others.

The United States currently provides TPS or deferred enforced departure (DED) to over 300,000 foreign nationals from a total of seven countries: Burundi, El Salvador, Honduras, Liberia, Nicaragua, Somalia, and Sudan. Liberians have had relief from removal for the longest period, first receiving TPS in March 1991 following the outbreak of civil war. Liberians currently have DED until March 31, 2009, and has now been extended by the Obama Administration.

Liberia is Africa's oldest republic, but it became better known in the 1990s for its long-running, ruinous civil war and its role in a rebellion in neighboring Sierra Leone. By the late 1980s, arbitrary rule and economic collapse culminated in civil war when Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) rebels overran much of the countryside, entering the capital in 1990 and killing then President Samuel Doe. In 1995, a peace agreement was signed, leading to the election of Mr. Taylor as president. Another war began in 1999, escalated in 2000, and ended in 2003.

It pitted the forces of Charles Taylor, elected president in 1997 after Liberia's first civil war (1989–1997), against two armed anti-Taylor rebel groups. It also destabilized neighboring states, which accepted Liberian refugees and, in some cases, hosted anti-Taylor forces and became targets of the Taylor regime.

In 2003, Mr. Taylor—under international pressure to quit and hemmed in by rebels—stepped down and went into exile in Nigeria.

A transitional government headed by Chairman Gyude Bryant steered the country towards elections in 2005. Around 250,000 people were killed in Liberia's civil war, and many thousands more fled the fighting. The conflict left the country in economic ruin and overrun with illegal weapons. 15,000 U.N. peacekeepers were deployed to help in stabilizing the country.

Liberia held elections in October 2005, with a presidential runoff in November, a key step in a peace-building process following its second civil war in a decade. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, an economist, won the presidential runoff vote, with 59.4 percent of votes cast and took office in mid-January 2006, becoming the first female president of an African country.

Most observers viewed the vote as orderly, free and fair. It fulfilled a key goal of an August 2003 peace accord that had ended the second civil war and led to an ongoing, U.S.-aided post-war transition process, which is bolstered by the multifaceted peacekeeping and development-focused U.N. Mission in Liberia (UNMIL).

Liberia's security situation is stable but subject to periodic volatility. Liberia's economy and state structures remain devastated by war. Humanitarian conditions are improving.

Liberia receives extensive U.S. post-war reconstruction and security sector reform assistance. In March 2006, former President Taylor was arrested in Nigeria and transferred to the U.S.-supported Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL) to face war crimes charges. He was later transferred to The Hague, the Netherlands, where he is on trial by the SCSL.

In addition to providing substantial support for Liberia's post-war peace and reconstruction processes, Congress has maintained a continuing interest in the status of Charles Taylor and in ensuring funding for the SCSL. Other legislation proposed in the 109th and noth Congresses centered on immigration, debt, and tax haven issues, and the commendation of Liberia for successfully holding elections.

The United States has voiced continuing support for President Sirleaf's government since she took office. In February 2008, former President Bush and Mrs. Bush traveled to Liberia, among other African countries. The general aim of the trip was to discuss continued U.S. partnerships with African countries in the areas of democratic reform, respect for human rights, free trade, open investment regimes, and economic opportunity.

In Liberia, President Bush's trip focused on U.S. help in strengthening Liberia's post-war democratic institutions, Governance and Economic Management Assistance Program (GEMAP) efforts to improve management of public finances and combat corruption.

It also highlighted Liberia's status as a target country of the President's Expanded Education Initiative, which through a program component called the Ambassador's Girls' Scholarship program had as of early 2008 supported 2,700 scholarships for girls in Liberia, and its status as new President's Malaria Initiative recipient country. It also drew attention to U.S. security sector reform efforts in Liberia.

Former First Lady Laura Bush and Former Secretary of State Rice, among other prominent U.S. guests, attended President Sirleaf's inauguration in 2006. Their presence, Sirleaf noted in her inaugural speech, ''manifests a renewal and strengthening of the long-standing historic special relations which bind our two countries and peoples.'' She also stated that it ''reflects a new partnership with the United States based on shared values'' and that Liberians are ''confident that we can continue to count on the assistance of the United States [. . .] in the urgent task of rebuilding of our nation.''

President Bush awarded the U.S. Presidential Medal of Freedom to Sirleaf in November 2007. President Sirleaf has made several official visits to the United States, including in February 2007, when she attended a World Bank-organized Liberia Partners' Forum donor meeting in Washington, DC. She made another such visit in March 2006, during which she addressed a joint session of Congress on March 15 and met with President Bush on March 21.

She reportedly closely consulted with U.S. officials regarding her priorities for Liberia and the status of Charles Taylor. During a pre-inaugural December 2005 trip to the United States, Sirleaf also met with key U.S. and international financial institution officials.

Liberia-related activities by the 110th Congress built on those pursued by the 109th Congress. Congress continued to monitor the activities of the SCSL and, in particular, the Taylor war crimes case, and provide funding for the SCSL. Congress's focus on Liberia also centered on aiding Liberia's efforts to consolidate its post-war governance and economic rebuilding processes. Issues that drew particular congressional attention included:

Efforts to rehabilitate schools, clinics, roads and other public facilities; Progress under the GEMAP transparency initiative; Progress of U.S.-backed security sector restructuring, and possible expansions of related assistance, e.g., for the creation of a quick reaction gendarme unit; increased mobility capacity building for the police and military; and maritime waters and land border monitoring and interdiction capacity building.

Consideration of potential continued support for UNMIL and the pace of its projected drawdown; and U.S. decision-making on debt relief for Liberia and the status of future Brooke Amendment restrictions on Liberia. The U.N. voted to lift a ban on diamond exports, which fueled the civil war, in April 2007. A ban on timber exports was lifted in 2006.

Liberia's security situation is stable but subject to periodic volatility. Progress in governance under the interim government that preceded that of President Sirleaf was mixed; widespread corruption within it was widely reported. Liberia's economy and state structures remain devastated by war.

Humanitarian conditions are improving. Liberia receives extensive U.S. post-war reconstruction and security sector reform assistance and in addition to providing substantial support for Liberia's post-war peace and reconstruction processes, Congress has maintained a continuing interest in the status of Charles Taylor and in ensuring funding for the SCSL.

I hope that President Obama makes his way to Africa very soon. And his presence in a country like Liberia would be a bold statement that change is on the way.

HAITI

Mr. Speaker, I also rise today in solidarity with my colleagues on the Congressional Black Caucus, to speak against the United States' unfair treatment of the people of Haiti.

Haitians should also receive a Temporary Protective Order. Haiti is one of the most impoverished countries in the western hemisphere and the fourth poorest country in the world. There are 8.3 million people residing in Haiti.

The people of Haiti are also facing a severe medical crisis as a result of their poverty. Haiti is the home of 90% of all HIV/AIDS patients in the Caribbean. Over 200,000 Haitian children will be orphaned by HIV/AIDS. Child mortality rates in Haiti are also excessively high. For every 1,000 births in Haiti, 74 infant deaths will occur.

The social conditions in Haiti are as deplorable as the medical condition. Of the millions of Haitian residents, only 46% have access to clean drinking water. Furthermore, 53% of all Haitian residents are malnourished.

Despite our close proximity to Haiti, and the widespread publication of the social and medical plight of Haitian residents, the U.S. government has insisted on blocking humanitarian aid. The U.S. government is attempting to shape the political landscape in Haiti to the severe detriment of the innocent people of Haiti.

The United States government owes Haiti substantial funds in foreign aid. Substantial loans have been negotiated for the people of Haiti. Some estimates have the loans valued at as much as $146 million dollars. The United States government is delaying the disbursement of these funds to advance their political aims. While the U.S. government stubbornly maintains these restrictive policies the people of Haiti are suffering and dying.

The U.S. government has promised Iraq $80 billion in aid to rebuild their war torn country. The people of Haiti have suffered as well. But instead of providing much needed aid, the U.S. government blocks humanitarian efforts and refuses to honor outstanding loans.

Mr. Speaker, it is a disgrace that our Congress stands by while the people of Haiti suffer and die. I join my colleagues on the Congressional Black Caucus in imploring the U.S. government to let Haiti live.

Ms. FUDGE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my friend and colleague because she always does bring great focus and great insight, and I thank you so much.

Mr. Speaker, I will close with a few comments.

Mr. Speaker, the suffering of the people of Haiti and Liberia are pressing issues. The United States has more options available in dealing with Haitians and Liberians. It is time for the United States to exert that control and extending temporary protected status, or TPS, for individuals from Haiti and stand by our TPS for Liberians.

As a signatory to the United Nations protocol relating to the status of refugees, the United States has agreed that it will not return an individual to a country where his life or freedom would be threatened. U.S. immigration law employs TPS designations to address this very issue. TPS protects individuals from being deported to a country where that person would be threatened on the basis of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular group, or political opinion.

TPS is also sought by those aiming to flee extreme poverty, depravation, violence, and the dislocation brought on by famines or natural disasters in their home countries.

Mr. Speaker, I think that it is time for this country to understand the significance of helping those who cannot help themselves.

I began this hour talk about a quote from Dr. Martin Luther King, and I will close with the same one, that injustice anywhere is injustice everywhere.

Mr. Speaker, I just ask that this Congress and the Members who are hearing this or who will read this at some other point do make themselves aware of the plight of the people who we spoke about today.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, on March 4th, the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued an arrest warrant for Sudanese President Omar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

That very same day, following the ICC's decision, the Government of Sudan expelled 13 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from

Darfur, accusing them of cooperating with the ICC investigation. These non-governmental organizations include many of the most respected humanitarian organizations in the world. Among them are Oxfam, Doctors Without Borders, International Rescue Committee, and Mercy Corps.

The withdrawal of these organizations will leave millions of civilians without access to food, clean water, and medical assistance. This outrageous action is just another example of the cruelty of the Government of Sudan towards its own people. And it proves that the ICC's decision to issue an arrest warrant for Bashir was entirely justified.

The Government of Sudan has been carrying out a campaign of genocide against the people of Darfur since 2003. The Sudanese government is supporting militia groups that are engaged in genocidal practices in communities of African farmers in the Western province of Darfur. These militias are razing villages, systematically raping women and girls, specifically targeting and destroying food and water supplies, and massacring communities. In the last five years the conflict has taken the lives of hundreds of thousands of civilians. On October 1, 2008, the United Nations reported that there were almost 2.7 million internally displaced persons in Darfur, almost 300,000 of whom were newly displaced in 2008, and an additional 2 million people continue to be directly affected by the conflict.

In July of 2007, the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 1769, which authorized the deployment of a joint United Nations/African Union peacekeeping force in Darfur, known as UNAMID. The force was to consist of a total of 26,000 troops. However, UNAMID was deployed at only 63 percent of its full strength as of December 31, 2008, and does not have the capacity to fulfill its mandate to protect civilians in Darfur. UNAMID must immediately deploy its forces at their full strength, and take all necessary and appropriate action to protect the people of Darfur.

Early in 2006, I visited the Darfur region with my good friend from California, Speaker NANCY PELOSI, and I was deeply disturbed by what I saw. As far as the eyes could see, there were crowds of displaced people who had been driven from their homes, living literally on the ground with nothing but little tarps to cover them. That was three years ago, and yet this genocide has been allowed to continue.

If we are serious about opposing genocide, we must take decisive action to stop it.

We must demand that all nations respect and enforce the decision of the ICC.

We must demand that humanitarian organizations be allowed to return to Sudan.

We must enact and enforce comprehensive sanctions against Sudan without exceptions.

We must demand that China stop bankrolling the genocide.

And we must demand that the United Nations immediately deploy its peacekeeping forces and do everything necessary to protect civilians and save the people of Darfur.

It's long past time to get serious about genocide.

ECONOMIC SITUATION FACING OUR COUNTRY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. SCALISE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. SCALISE. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to address the House for an hour. We're going to be talking about the economic situation facing our country and specifically the budget situation.

Just about a month ago, the President right here on this floor laid out some of the proposals for what his budget would represent, and then the next day he laid out the blueprint for that budget. And I think it caught a lot of people around the country by surprise, really caused some great concern by people, especially as it relates to this record level of funding, taxing, and borrowing

And over the last few weeks, you've heard a lot of people laying out those details, just what that spending means, just what those taxes mean in terms of the average cost to American families. The middle class families, not just rich people as was purported, but middle class families will be paying over $3,000 on an energy bill.

And then what I think really frightened the American people was the record level of borrowing that this budget represents, and with over $1.7 trillion in the first year in next year's budget that the President has submitted, over a tripling of the deficit that was, quote, unquote, inherited.

And so, as these record levels of spending and taxes and record levels of borrowing have been laid out, you've heard a chorus of echoes, not just by those of us here in this Chamber who are strongly opposed to that irresponsible spending, to that unprecedented level of taxing that will literally stifle the growth of small businesses and middle class families, but also the borrowing that affects our next generation. This isn't money that we have. This is money that would be borrowed from our children and our grandchildren, saddling them with, on estimates, of over $3,000 of debt just in the President's spending bill, that $800 billion piece of legislation called stimulus, that just in its first few weeks added more than $3,000 of national debt on to the backs of every man, woman and child in this country.

And so with that, I wanted to lay out some of the details of just what the spending means, just what these record deficits mean to the American people, to a budget process, and historically, to lay out where these deficits that the President's budget really stand in relation to history in time because these are things that have not passed yet.

And the American people all across the country, they've had these tea parties that have been sprouting up in States all throughout the Nation and literally hundreds, in some cases thousands, of people are showing up and saying enough is enough, Mr. President and Members of Congress, stop this reckless spending, stop and back away from these tax increase proposals that will stifle middle-class families and our small businesses and don't go and borrow trillions—not hundreds of billions—but trillions of dollars from our families, from our children and our grandchildren who we want to leave a better life to. We don't want to saddle them with trillions of dollars in new debt.

And some of these charts that we're going to show and talk about really illustrate what this means, what these budgets mean because these budget documents that are being debated up here in Congress, they talk about big numbers and they talk about programs. And some of these are government programs that are good, successful programs. Some of these are government programs that should have never been in place in the first place. Some of them are programs that are failing, yet will be getting more money from the Federal Government.

And where is this money coming from? And as people look and ask these tough questions, what they realize is this is money we don't have. This is money that would be borrowed in record numbers, and this chart right here shows real well, leading into this administration taking office just 2 months ago, the fact that the deficit at the end of the current fiscal year will be more than tripled by the President's proposed budget.

This budget in 2010 is the President's proposed budget, over $1.7 trillion, and in fact, on Friday, the Congressional Budget Office came out with revised numbers. And unfortunately, those revised numbers were not good for the President. They surely were not good for the taxpayers of this country. They were not good for our children and grandchildren.

My daughter, Madison, who's 2 years old, will be inheriting more of this debt, thousands of dollars in national debt. Now this deficit that was projected to be $1.7 trillion has risen to $1.9 trillion just in the last few days.

□ 2100

There's no end in sight. What we're saying is: Mr. President, don't go down this road. There is a better way. We need to rein in the spending that is going on here in Washington. We need to look out across the country and see what other people that are dealing with these tough economic times are doing.

Families are cutting back, Mr. Speaker. Families are cutting back to deal with these tough economic times. They're making adjustments in their household budget. They're stretching their dollars. Some people are saving and paying down debt. And at time that we're seeing families making responsible decisions and States dealing with their deficits—and yes, States are hurting too—but States are making cuts to be responsible.

It seems like here in Washington is the only place where spending is out of

control and people just think there's no end. But there is an end. As people ponder these record deficits that are shown on these charts, one of the things we're going to try to do here in this House, at least, is to let the people's voices be heard and say: Enough is enough.

We've got to stop this out-of-control spending. It hasn't happened yet. These bills have not even been filed yet. Just the outlines. This $1.7 trillion number for next year's deficit hasn't even gone through a committee process yet.

So there's still time to stop this. There's still time to stop this out of control spending. That's what we're going to be talking about tonight.

We're going to show some more charts and we're going to talk some more about the historical and future numbers. First, I'd like to yield to the gentleman from Ohio, a friend of mine who has been talking about this same issue for weeks and months as well, my friend, Mr. JORDAN.

Mr. JORDAN of Ohio. I thank my friend and colleague from Louisiana. I appreciate his good work on this issue and many others. My friend mentioned the tea parties that are taking place across this country. The reason you see families and taxpayers and Americans gathering at these events is because they get it. I learned a long time ago that the people always get it before the politicians do. And they understand that this kind of spending and what it means for their kids and their grandkids and what it means for future generations of Americans is just plain wrong.

My colleague has pointed out some of the numbers. But just put it in perspective of just what has happened in the last 6 weeks. First, we had the $700 billion so-called stimulus and all the program spending that was in that bill. The bill was designed to help jump-start our economy, but we all know it was mostly just spending on Federal Government programs.

Then we had the $410 billion omnibus with its over 800 earmarks. Now, this week, with the budget vote going to happen in the Budget Committee, which I have the privilege of being a member of, we will now have, as my colleague pointed out, a budget that has the 10 largest annual deficits in American history. A budget that will go from—and this is important—from 29 percent of GDP spending to over 28 percent of the gross domestic product. A budget that will increase spending over $1 trillion this year; a budget that will double the national debt in the next 8 years.

Frankly, and I think this is interesting, a budget that adds more to the debt in 6 years—now, think about this—this administration is going to add more to the national debt with their budget numbers in the next 6 years than it took all 43 previous Presidents to accumulate. So more than 6 years that it took over 200 years to get to. That's how much spending we are talking about.

You don't take my word for it. Take the statement that Senator GREGG made today, where he said this budget is going to, in his words, ''bankrupt the country.'' This is the same guy that the Obama administration wanted as a part of their administration. Initially offered him the job of Commerce Secretary.

Take some senior Democrat Members of the Senate. Senator CONRAD said, ''More discipline on the spending side is also going to be required of this budget.'' Some Democrats are getting the idea this budget is way out of line. They understand what my colleague talked about, and that is this budget is harmful to future generations of Americans, harmful to our economy, and is the wrong direction to go.

We need a budget that spends less, taxes less, and borrows less. That is what we want to talk about this evening.

I'm happy to yield back to my colleague, and look forward to participating more in this hour. But I appreciate his leadership on this issue and reserving this time this evening.

With that, I yield back.

Mr. SCALISE. Again, I want to thank my friend from Ohio for pointing that out. One of the things you talked about is where all of this spending has gone just in the last few months. We've heard a lot of talk over the past few months—the last 2 months, really, that President Obama has been in office—about all of the problems that have been inherited; that were laid on his doorstep when he became President.

We've got to be very careful at paying attention to the facts and looking at in fact how we did get here today, now that we are in March. This isn't something that started before January 20 when the President took the oath of office.

We've got a chart right here that actually shows some of the spending that my friend from Ohio was talking about. When we go into this stimulus bill, as it was called, a stimulus bill that spent $787 billion in today's dollars, the Congressional Budget Office expects that with interest and debt service it will end up costing over $1.2 trillion in deficit spending—money we did not have.

This bill was a bill that President Obama himself filed—not a bill, in our opinion, that will help get the economy back on track. It was a bill that did some spending on some infrastructure issues. Less than 10 percent of that bill in fact was spending on infrastructure.

The vast majority of that bill was spending on government—growing the size of government, both Federal Government and State governments, and actually adding employees not to the private sector, which is what many of us want to see. When we talk about stimulus, we think about how we help those small businesses get that loan to go out and use their entrepreneurial spirit to create jobs in the private sector, to put people to work, to give people the opportunity for a lifelong career, not creating more jobs in government, growing the size of a government that's already too big.

In fact, that's what that stimulus bill did. It added over $1 trillion. And you see a spike in spending there. And then immediately right after that, less than a week, a bill that got little notice because it happened right after the President's spending bill, which he dubbed the stimulus bill, was this omnibus spending bill—over $400 billion, a bill that grew the size of government by 8 percent in 1 week. In 1 week.

Over $400 billion coming on the heels in February of that stimulus bill. And you see the spike that it created in spending. None of this was spending that the President inherited. This was all spending that he created on his own. In fact, we just found out—we're going to continue for months, unfortunately, finding out some of the things that were in that bill because that so-called stimulus bill was over 1,000 pages long. Again, over $1 trillion in actual spending.

That bill was filed on a Thursday night. That final bill that was voted on in the House on a Friday, it was filed at 11 p.m. on a Thursday night. Nobody on the Democratic side, even those who were actually on the conference committee, had the opportunity to read it.

And now we are starting to find out some of the things that were in that bill—not things that help stimulate our economy to get our economy back on track. In fact, just last week we found out as the country was outraged, rightfully so, finding out that executives from AIG were receiving bonuses—over $160 million in bonuses—from Federal money that they got from that financial bailout, which many of us here opposed.

But we found out that they got that money under the authority of language that was put in the President's stimulus bill. That's right. The stimulus bill that this President signed in February actually contained language that was inserted by dark of night. No one wants to take credit for it. But we know now Senator CHRIS DODD, the Democrat chairman of the Banking Committee, was instructed by White House officials to put language in the President's stimulus bill protecting the ability of AIG to give out bonuses. That was in that stimulus bill.

Who knows what else is in there because we continue to find out more of the damaging repercussions from that bill. Yet, that bill gave us over $800 billion of immediate increased national debt. Over $3,000 for every man, woman, and child came from that stimulus bill in new deficit spending.

Again, another chart that displays just how high these record deficits are, because when you start talking about numbers and billions of dollars become hundreds of billions and then it becomes trillions of dollars, as we're talking now, sometimes it's hard for people to grasp numbers when you get into that range because it's just numbers that this country has never seen

before. These are unprecedented amounts of spending.

Yet, when you talk about a $400 billion deficit, which occurred in 2004 and, as can you see, there was a trend downward. Those deficits were actually decreasing under President Bush. Still, spending that many here are not comfortable with and would not have liked to see continue.

I am a cosponsor of a bill to balance the Federal budget. We should have a balanced budget in Washington. Unfortunately, we don't. But at least there was a trend downward to reduce the size of those deficits. Then, here comes the President's budget. Files it. Over $1.7 trillion in deficit spending. You see this massive spike. Largest deficit in the history of our country. That comes off the back of the President making the quote, ''We cannot simply spend as we please and defer the consequences.''

President Obama said that right here on this House floor on February 23. ''We cannot simply spend as we please and defer the consequences.'' Then, the next day he filed a bill, his budget outline, that actually adds a $1.7 trillion addition to our national debt in 1 year.

So, ultimately what people are more concerned about is the actual deeds. Not as much the words, but the actions. The actions are scaring a lot of people in terms of these record levels of spending.

With that, we've got a friend of ours from Louisiana, a new Member, somebody who has been passionate in this cause of controlling deficit spending, getting a hold of runaway spending in Washington, Dr. Fleming.

Mr. FLEMING. Well, I thank the gentleman, my fellow Louisianan, Mr. SCALISE, for yielding for a moment. I also thank my friend from Ohio (Mr. JORDAN) for his comments as well.

You know, we are talking a lot about budget deficits. And we hear this word to the point where we're almost numb. We have to ask ourselves: Well, what difference does it make? If we go another year in deficit spending or perhaps over $1 trillion in deficit spending, is it going to change our lives?

So I think the average person out there who's maybe watching us on C–SPAN this evening has got to contemplate: What difference does that make?

Well, let me point out a couple of things in history that maybe we should think about. You may recall that during World War I, the allies defeated Germany and, after doing so, we required war reparations. The only way that Germany could deal with that, could actually make those war reparation payments, was just to print more money. They had to deficit spend big time.

It became such a problem that it literally took a wheel barrow to carry enough currency to go buy a loaf of bread. Of course, that sounds silly. It sounds like a caricature. But these people were in desperate need.

We, of course, suffered during the Great Depression. But the Germans, because of this, were in a tremendous need. It caused a complete collapse of their culture and their society. And what did we get in return? We got Nazism. We got Adolph Hitler. He took control of Germany only because that country became so desperate that it could not keep what was otherwise a democracy, could not keep that going.

We fast forward to the 1960s when we went through this second wave, if you will, of social programs in America; the first being, of course, the New Deal under FDR and so forth.

We have Lyndon Johnson who, of course, instituted many entitlement programs, many of which we have today. We saw that that deficit spending began at that point, and it began to accelerate. It was worsened by a prolonged war in Vietnam. But we really didn't see evidence of it, just like today.

Well, are we really seeing evidence of budget deficits? Are we really impacted in our daily lives?

Well, slowly but surely as the seventies rolled around and we began to also have problems with energy, we began to see inflation going up to the tune of 10, 12, 13 percent. We also went into a period of stagflation, where the economy became stagnant, prices remained high. The people who were hurt the most in all that were people on fixed incomes, because every year their dollars bought less.

□ 2115

And so then this country got into something we call cost of living increases, and everybody looked forward to that. They had to have the cost of living increases. But some got more than others and some didn't get any at all, and so we saw the deterioration in our economy and our standard of living as a result of inflation. To solve this, we put the hammer down by cutting off the supply of money, which made interest rates go up. I can remember trying to buy a house and getting a mortgage for an 18 percent interest rate, and that is because we were trying to bring the growth of money under control.

Mr. Speaker, the impact of deficit spending and budgets that are out of control do affect us in everyday life. I am old enough to have seen this happen, have studied it in school, have family members who were injured during World War II indirectly as a result of some of these financial consequences that occurred.

I feel like one of the main problems we have with our government today is we don't learn from history. History just seems to repeat itself over and over and over again. If there is anything we have learned in the past, that is that we have got to have fiscal discipline in our government. At home, I have to balance my budget, as difficult that is sometimes. My city, my State, they all have to balance the budget. Why is it that my Federal Government, the most important government, the most powerful government in this world, why is it that it can't keep its fiscal house in order?

I am a newbie Congressman, I have only been here 2 or 3 months. Before I came here, I really have had this nagging question: What is it about Washington that Washington can't get it right? And I was hoping that in coming here I would get at least some insight as to why we do crazy things with our spending and so forth. Unfortunately, now that I am here, it is worse than I ever thought. I am still seeking those answers.

Mr. SCALISE. If I can reclaim my time. I sure don't want to discourage you. There is a Chinese proverb: May you live in interesting times. And we are definitely living in interesting times.

I think the good news is, this is the best time for people with the focus that you have got, as a new member, somebody coming here to try to rein in out-of-control spending, this is the exact time to be here because this is the time where speaking up can stop this train, this train of runaway spending, as this bill that has been proposed has not passed into law yet.

The public is starting to have the same level of discomfort that those of us here tonight have, and I think the opportunity for us to galvanize that energy that is going on all around the country as we talk about these tea parties that people are having spontaneously to protest about this record level of spending and borrowing and taxing. We have got the ability to stop this from happening, because some of this has happened, as we have pointed out, but the worst has not yet happened. But if nothing changes, then it will happen. And that is where we have an opportunity. And I know my friend from Ohio has something to add, and then we have other people to join us.

Mr. JORDAN of Ohio. I appreciate the gentleman.

Not only is it record levels of spending; it is being done at a record pace. Let me just give you a couple facts. Think about this. This is why Americans, as we have talked about already, are showing up, Mr. Speaker, at these tea parties, because they are sick of this type of activity from their government that their tax dollars support.

Think about this: $24 billion is being spent each day. Over the first 50 days of the new administration, Democrats have spent approximately $24 billion a day, most of it with borrowed money. Over the first 50 days of this new administration, Democrats have spent approximately $1 billion an hour, most of it with borrowed money.

So it is not just the amount; it is the pace at which this spending is going on. And you wonder why thousands of people are showing up in cities across this country, families, taxpayers, small business owners are showing up and saying, enough is enough. We are tired of this bailout fever, this spending fever that has got a hold of Washington. We want some sanity back in

our government. We want some sanity back in our Congress.

And it's not just about the numbers. We are going to give tons of numbers here in this hour, and the gentleman from Louisiana and the doctor from Louisiana have given some numbers and some history as well. But in the end, it is about people and the impact this has. Think about this budget that is going to be in the Budget Committee for a vote this Wednesday, 2 days from now, this budget with record levels of spending, record deficit, tenth largest annual deficit in American history over the next 10 years, think about this budget. And I don't think it is being an alarmist to say this: This is an attack on freedom, because think about what this budget does. It is the largest tax increase in history. When you take money out of the pockets of families, and I have said before, I am convinced some politicians won't be happy until they have an IV hooked up to the taxpayers' wallet and they can hit the drip button any time they want. They want the money. They think they are smarter than the American family out there.

So record level of taxes, unprecedented continuation of the spending that we have been talking about, a further nationalization of health care. Now, think about all three of those for a second. When they take your money, you have less freedom. When they spend and spend and spend and mortgage our kids' and grandkids' future, that simply means the next generations of Americans are going to have less freedom because they are going to have to pay that money back, which means less money in their pockets to go after their goals and dreams. When you have a further nationalization of health care and you have some centralized board here in Washington deciding what kind of health care you and your family are going to get, that is a loss of liberty. And the worse one, which we haven't even got to, and I know my colleague from Louisiana understands this issue probably better than anybody on the floor tonight, that is this cap-and-trade, cap-and-tax concept, which will be the largest tax increase in history. Every single family, every single business owner is going to pay more in energy and utility costs. All those in this budget.

So I think when we talk about an attack on liberty and an attack on freedom, it is not using too strong of language, I think it is just being honest. Because the word and principle we most associate with the United States of America is freedom, and that is what this budget is attacking. And that is why we are here tonight under the leadership of our friend from Louisiana talking about how bad this is and the direction that it takes our country, and why we think our policies of keeping taxes low, getting spending under control, not imposing this crazy cap-and-trade concept on American families and business owners is the right approach to take.

With that, I yield back to my colleague from Louisiana.

Mr. SCALISE. Again, I thank the gentleman from Ohio. And what you talked about, we definitely are going to cover in detail later on throughout this hour tonight on both the historical side, as my friend from North Louisiana talked about even going back to World War II and some of the flaws of the spending that was encountered during the New Deal leading up to World War II, but also on today's proposal, that proposal that you will be looking at in the Budget Committee.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things we want to point out on this tax proposal, because when the President talked throughout the campaign, when he talked here on the House floor just a few weeks ago, one of the things he said was 95 percent of the American people will not see their taxes raised by a dime. And while he may have been technically accurate in that statement, what many people are finding out now by the cap-and-trade, what many of us call an energy tax or a cap-and-tax proposal, those American families that are making in the bottom 95 percent, so to speak, in this country, they won't be seeing a dime increase, they will be seeing over $3,000 a year in tax increases in the form of higher energy bills, and that is this proposal that is in the President's budget, $1.4 trillion in new taxes.

Some of this falls on the people making over $250,000. Here, we are playing class warfare, something that I don't agree with because it is not good policy. But this right here, the small business and investor's tax, generates $630 billion. This is what the President talks about when he says for those people who are in the top 5 percent of income earners, people making over $250,000, will see a tax increase. What he is talking about is a $636 billion tax increase, half of which will fall on the backs of small business owners in this country. The people that actually employ more than 70 percent of the American workforce will be seeing a tax increase.

Now, anybody that can explain how that is good fiscal policy, especially during tough economic times, the floor is open for them to discuss it, because no one has yet to come and explain that. This is a horrible proposal. But on top of that, what they have also proposed is this cap-and-trade tax, and it is $640 billion. That hasn't been talked about much by the President in terms of its impact, but what this tax means, in fact the budget director for the President just 1 year ago when he was working for the Congressional Budget Office said that this would mean over $1,600 a year in new taxes that people would pay on their electricity bills.

So I guess what he means when you are not going to pay another dime, $1,300 to $1,600 a year in new energy taxes is not a dime, but it something that would break many families in this country. But it would fall on the backs of every family in this country. No family under the current proposal is exempted. So a married couple making $30,000 a year with two kids will be paying about $1,300 a year more in energy costs from the President's own budget.

This is bad policy. This is policy that we are going to fight. We are going to fight it in committee. It hopefully will not get to this House floor, but we will fight it on this floor. And one of the people that will be fighting that battle with us is our good friend from Georgia (Mr. BROUN).

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. I thank my good friend from Louisiana for yielding.

This is a steamroller of socialism that is being shoved down the throats of the American public, that is going to strangle the American economy and is going to choke the American people economically. NANCY PELOSI, HARRY REID, and Barack Obama are driving this steamroller of socialism. Socialism never has worked, it never will work. It is not going to work today, and it hasn't worked in the past, as our doctor colleague from Louisiana was just talking about the history, and I agree with that.

The thing that this is going to hurt most, though, are people on limited income. We hear from our friends on the Democratic side that they are for the poor people and for the disadvantaged, but this cap-and-tax policy, or cap-and-trade as it is called, is going to hurt the most the people on limited income, the retirees. It is going to hurt people who are at the bottom end of the social ladder; because, as you said, Mr. SCALISE, it is going to be $3,000 per family that they are going to have to pay, not only for energy costs, but when gas and diesel prices go up, that means it costs more to get food to the grocery store. That means that grocery prices are going to go up. It means that it costs more money to get medicines in to the drug stores, so medication is going to go up. Every single good and service in this Nation will go up because of this cap-and-tax policy that is being proposed by this administration and by the liberals on the Democratic side. It is going to strangle our economy, as I just mentioned, and it is going to hurt the people who can least afford to pay the $3,000.

I am a physician, as the gentleman knows. Many of my patients can't afford to pay an extra $3,000 out of their pocket to pay for this crazy idea of taxing energy at this kind of rate. It is just untenable, it is totally unacceptable, and we have got to stop it. And that is what Republicans are doing here tonight, is talking about this, and we are going to continue to fight to stop this.

In fact, the reason I came down here tonight to join you in this discussion, if you would just take the top chart down and we will look at the top chart as well as the one just below it that you just covered up.

We keep hearing from our Democratic colleagues that all this financial problem is something that they inherited and they are trying to fix it. Well, they didn't inherit it; they have created it themselves. And the chart that you have up top just shows that the budget deficit is going to climb markedly under the proposals that have already been passed by this House. We have just seen bill after bill after bill that has increased the deficit.

We are borrowing too much money from our grandchildren. I don't know a grandparent in this country that will say anything but, I will try to sacrifice for my children and for my grandchildren. That's what parents and grandparents do, we sacrifice for our children and our grandchildren. But the Democrats don't want to do that. They want to take from our children, they want to take from our grandchildren.

Republicans have presented many, many alternatives to the housing bill that this Congress passed that is going to increase the cost of housing loans to everybody, and it is going to actually deny people, particularly just getting in the market that don't have good credit ratings, it is going to deny the poor people from being able to get mortgages in the future.

We saw this awful TARP bill that President Bush and Hank Paulson pushed forward, we have seen how that has been mismanaged. That is borrowing from our grandchildren. We have seen bill after bill, and now this budget on top of that, we are borrowing too much, we are spending too much, we are taxing too much, and it has got to stop.

□ 2130

Republicans have offered many alternatives. But the Democratic leadership are being obstructionist. They won't even hear of our plan, because they are driving this steamroller of socialism down the throats of the American people. I'm beginning to think that there is a very concerted effort to try to change the philosophy of government in America, one, as Mr. JORDAN was just talking about, where we are going to lose our freedom. We have seen that happen historically. We have got to put a stop to it. It is up to the American people. It is up to the American people to put a stop to it by demanding that we not pass this budget that the Democrats in this administration are bringing forward.

We have got to stop bailing out AIG and all these other entities that are just taking us down the road to financial serfdom of the American people. We have got to stop it. It is up to the American people, and it is up to Republicans to stop it. We have got to get the American people to demand that our voice as Republicans is heard so that we can present our alternatives that NANCY PELOSI won't even bring to the floor. She won't allow our proposals to be heard in committee. We can't get a vote.

It is wrong. It is hurting the American people, and it is hurting the people who the Democrats say that they want to represent, and that is the poor people and the disadvantaged people, the people on limited incomes. So we have proposals, Republicans have proposals that will stop the spending, that will stop the taxation, that will look to the free enterprise system, that will get our economy back on the right road so that we can solve this financial crisis that we have and even get the housing market back on the right road. But our proposals need to be heard on this floor.

So the American people need to demand that our proposals are heard, voted upon and let's have a debate. We would want to join with our Democratic colleagues to find some commonsense, market-based solutions that will maintain freedom and stop this steamroller of socialism that is going to take away from not only this current generation, but it is going to put our children and our grandchildren in a position that their standard of living is going to be much lower than ours is today.

It is up to us. And we are going to continue to fight. That is what we are doing here tonight. I congratulate you, Mr. SCALISE, for being down here tonight with these charts to try to show the American people the direction we are headed by this administration, by the leadership in this House and this U.S. Senate. We have got to stop it. We have got to put the brakes on this steamroller of socialism so that the American people can be free and can throw off the shackles of the Federal Government, can run their family, run their businesses and run their lives without all the government intrusion. And that is what we are here fighting for tonight.

I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I yield back.

Mr. SCALISE. Thank you. Reclaiming my time, I appreciate what the gentleman from Georgia talked about, because that is, in fact, the reason that we are here tonight. It is not that we are willing to throw in the towel, take this and just accept this train to run down the track. What we are trying to do is talk about this problem and not just lay out the proposals that are here before us, but the implications of those proposals, to families all across this country. In fact, these proposals fly in the face of the decisions that families across this country are making themselves. As they deal with tough economic times, people are actually acting in a responsible way. They are cutting back their spending. They are setting money aside and paying down debt. But they are sure not going deeper into debt. If you have got a high credit card balance, the last thing you do is go order two more credit cards and then run up the balance on those.

That is what the President's proposal in his budget does. It, in fact, triples the current year level of deficit spending. I want to make this point again as we talk about the history revisionism that is going on as people talk about what they inherited. There was a deficit that President Obama inherited. The problem is that he is tripling that deficit in his first budget out the box. He is tripling that level of spending in a way that is irresponsible. He even acknowledges, as he is doing it, that deficit spending is irresponsible. And anybody is free to go back in time and criticize people in the past who helped create this national debt that we have. I have surely done it. Many others have done it. But when you criticize something, you don't replace the thing that you're criticizing by doing it two or three times even worse.

So, if he is going to stand with us and criticize the deficit spending, then he needs to actually stand with us and start cutting this Federal budget, not tripling, tripling the size of this debt, the national deficit that we are going to be facing next year. And so that is what we are talking about tonight is what we are going to be fighting in the coming months.

One of the people at the forefront of that fight is my friend on the Budget Committee, Mr. JORDAN from Ohio.

Mr. JORDAN of Ohio. I just want to make a quick point and just reiterate what my friend from Louisiana just had mentioned. Think of the contrast of what American families are having to do with their budget in this tough economic situation they find themselves in versus what the Federal Government is going to do. I just want to go back and talk about one fact I had talked about earlier, because when you talk about spending at this rate, the new administration, the Democrats in Congress, are spending approximately $24 billion every day in the first 50 days of this administration. This is unprecedented spending. When you spend that fast, when you spend that much, it is no wonder you make mistakes like this AIG fiasco we had last week.

So again, the contrast could not be more clear with what American families are doing in the tough economic times they face and they have to deal with versus how the Federal Government is reacting. Families are tightening their belt. They are doing what American families have had to do many other times in history when things got tough. But their government is spending at unprecedented levels and at an unprecedented pace, making mistakes as they do it. And we saw that last week.

So again I yield back to my friend and colleague and thank him for his work on this important issue.

Mr. SCALISE. I think when people look to Washington, they are looking for leadership. They are not looking for just more checks thrown around or cash thrown around to States or to people. What they want to see is policies, good sound policies to respond to the things that are happening across the country. I think people are very

concerned. We are finally starting to see people speak up and not just complain at home or sit on their couch. They are literally standing up and going to these tea parties that they are having all across the country now. In fact on April 15, the day that many of us dread, the day that we pay our taxes, that is the day that many of these tea parties are going to be held throughout the country where people are in essence revolting against this record level of spending, this record level of borrowing, deficit spending and taking money that we don't have from our kids and grandkids to run up these massive deficits each year under the President's budget.

They are doing it because they know that this hasn't happened yet. They are proposals by this President. But this is a President like any, and this is a Congress like any, that needs to respond to what people are saying across this country. And so while we are speaking on this floor tonight talking about the dangers of deficit spending and record borrowing and these taxes that are being proposed, and we are trying to stop this from happening, people across the country are doing the same thing.

I think my friend here is going to chime in as well and talk about this.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Thank you. I appreciate the gentleman yielding.

I have just a couple of comments. I was back in my district this weekend and talked to some of our local governments. My background is a physician and a local mayor. And the community that I was mayor in just before I came here is looking at making a 5 percent cut in their budget, worst case scenario. They are looking at what they have to do to balance their budget. I also talked to a town administrator of Morristown, Tennessee, this past week. They were looking at their MTPO funds. They got an extra $720,000 in stimulus money for a bus system. To show you how out of touch the Federal Government is, they had about $600,000 in MTPO funds, that is Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization funds, and they can buy buses with these funds and they can build bus stations. There is just one small problem in that community. Their general fund budget has got a $1.6 million hole in it. They have 16 people they can't hire right now that they normally do. They can't afford to hire the bus drivers.

That is something that gets lost in this place up here is that we spend at these record deficits, and local communities are making these tough decisions. And they are tough decisions. Business leaders are doing exactly what they are doing with their budgets, tightening their belts. What do we do up here? In the omnibus spending bill, which I call the ''ominous spending bill,'' when everybody else is cutting it, what are we doing? Up 8 percent. Now, how can I go back to Tennessee and explain to people that we print money—or borrow it—and then go back and spend at that level while they are having to make these tough decisions? I yield back.

Mr. SCALISE. I thank my friend from Tennessee for talking about the challenges as people look at what is happening up here in Washington and they are dealing with tough economic times back home. And this isn't something that families and States are new to. It seems like budgets are cyclical, sometimes you're up, sometimes you're down. But ultimately, you have to live within your means. And families are doing exactly that. Then they are looking at Washington and they are seeing what's happening up there when in just 2 months of a new administration where people were promised change, where a President stood here on this House floor just a few weeks ago and said, ''We cannot simply spend as we please and defer the consequences.'' And I think we all agree with those statements. But the problem is people then look, and the next day, the very next day after the President made those statements, he files a bill that spends and borrows at record levels, $1.7 trillion in borrowing and $1.4 trillion in new taxes. Many of those new taxes will fall on the backs of middle class families and small businesses.

People are saying, ''Wait a minute, that wasn't the change we were told about.'' If they made less than $250,000, they surely didn't think they were going to see a dime of new taxes. And then they see that bill, the President's cap-and-trade bill, that actually adds roughly $1,300 just in energy costs. The estimates are that it will be more than $3,000 per family—not people making over $250,000, but a middle class family or a family making maybe $20,000 a year will see roughly $3,000 when you count up your higher energy bill, your higher gas bill at the pump and when you go and pay for products that use energy, like food. Any food product you use there is energy, transportation, related to that. So people look at all of this combined and they say, ''this doesn't add up to the things that I was hearing and that I was excited about.'' And so they are speaking up.

What is important is that people are not just going to sit back and let this happen. We are not going to sit back and let this happen.

I'll yield back to my friend.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. We have already had a perfect example of cap-and-trade. It was last year when oil prices went to $147 a barrel. Every American citizen knows that that went straight out of their hip pocket. And like you pointed out, everything you buy at the grocery store, every product that is transported by energy pays for that. And we have already seen that. We know what will happen with cap-and-trade.

Mr. SCALISE. Reclaiming my time.

One other thing that was not brought up yet but a bill that was just filed about a week and a half ago that the President said that he supports is this bill called the Employee Free Choice Act, which has just perplexed the business community throughout this country. Small businesses are literally shaking at the thought that their employee workforce and employees across this country—we have already started hearing from employees who are very angered and disappointed that Democrats in Congress would take away their right to a secret ballot vote when it comes to deciding whether or not they want to form a union. And yet that is now part of the President's agenda, an agenda item that is estimated to cost this economy in our country over 600,000 jobs in the first year in a tough economic time when we need to be creating jobs. The bill that they are filing could actually cost, run jobs out of this country to the tune of about 600,000 a year.

I yield to my friend from Georgia.

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. You brought up a good point there. In fact I was talking to a manufacturer in my district not long ago about this so-called employers free——

Mr. SCALISE. Employees Free Choice Act, which it is not.

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. The reason I have a hard time remembering that is because there is nothing free about it. It is actually a method of trying to force unionization on employers and employees alike. It is going to cost jobs. In fact, what I just was fixing to say was that I was talking to an employer in my district who said to me that if this act passes, he is going to shut the doors, and his business is going to go offshore. And that is going to happen all over this country. It is going to cost thousands and thousands of jobs.

Why is that happening? It is happening as a payback. It is happening as a payback to the Democrats who get all this money and all the support from the labor unions because the labor unions want to make an environment where they can force unionization on small businesses and large businesses all over this country. And what is even more egregious is the forced arbitration that is in that bill that is not free either. It is totally wrong. Again, this is a steamroller of socialism being shoved down the throats of the American people. And we have got to stop it.

□ 2145

But it is going to cost jobs. And what it is going to do is it is going to put us in a bigger financial mess as a Nation. When we have the cap-and-tax placed on all energy, it is going to drive up the cost of all goods and services. Just like Dr. ROE was just talking about up in Tennessee, folks up there already saw what happened. We have already seen in Georgia what happens. People stop utilizing energy. It is going to actually cost the Federal Government money instead of—and it is going to cost jobs.

I am beginning to think that that is the purpose of all this is to try to put everybody on the government dole, try

to create a big socialistic society where everybody gets a check from the Federal Government.

But the thing is, America's hurting. America's hurting terribly. We have got to do something and we have got to do it now. But going down this road towards bigger deficits, borrowing more, spending more, taxing more is not the solution. The solution is stimulating the free enterprise system. Free enterprise is the economic engine that pulls along the train of economic security in America. And we are killing that engine. We are throttling it down, and we are shutting it off.

And we have got to create jobs. We have got to create good-paying jobs. Building a bigger government, borrowing from our children and our grandchildren, is not the solution. And so we have just got to do everything we can to stop it.

And I applaud you, Mr. SCALISE, for bringing all these issues forward because it is just absolutely critical that the American people understand what is going on.

You brought out the quote from the President. The problem is, what he says and what he does are two different things. He said he would never, never sign a bill that has earmarks in it. Well the first bill, that omnibus bill, was nothing but earmarks. It was just a payback to the liberal entities, as well as all of the liberal agenda that they have had stuck in some drawer somewhere. They just dusted them all off and brought them forth. We don't have the money to pay for that. And it markedly increases the size of government.

We saw that with the budget that he has been proposing. And everything we are going to see is, we just see over and over again, the President says one thing and he does another. He says, we cannot simply spend as we please and defer the consequences, but that is exactly what he is doing.

Mr. SCALISE. Well, reclaiming my time, one of the things that you talked about, you know, as you talk about the concern that your business people in Georgia have, I have heard the same thing from not just employers but from employees, workers in South Louisiana, who are very concerned that their ability to, their right to a secret ballot would be taken away. In fact, while it is called the Employee Free Choice Act, myself and others call it the Secret Ballot Elimination Act, because all of us in Congress, the President, even the leadership on the Democratic side, we are all elected by secret ballot. There is a secret ballot right that people have, and part of the reason for that is it protects employees from coercion and intimidation and those kind of threats that have happened throughout our history. And that is the reason that that is in place. And that a bill would be filed as part of the President's agenda that would take away somebody's right to a secret ballot, something that is at the heart of any democracy, I think, is offensive. And it shows people which road they are going down, that while we have got problems with our economy and we need to be focused on creating jobs, they see what this administration is really focused on. Taxing people's energy bills, taxing small businesses for the work that they do, that hurts their ability to go out and create more jobs to hire people in this country. And then passing legislation that would actually take away somebody's secret ballot, it is something that has gotten people's attention. They are seeing what these deficits will do to our future, our children and our grandchildren, and people are starting to speak up. And I am glad somebody else that is going to be speaking up is my friend from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT).

Mr. GOHMERT. I appreciate the gentleman yielding. There have been so many wonderful points made here. I say wonderful as an adjective, when actually it is tough to say wonderful about such a very perplexing and disconcerting issue.

One thing that I haven't heard mentioned yet is about another issue that is contained in the budget, and that is with regard to restrictions on charitable deductions. Has the gentleman mentioned that?

And I appreciate the time you yield.

What struck me this weekend as I thought about President Obama and the Democratic leadership trying to restrict the deductions for charitable donations is, why would you do this? Because we know, worldwide, the best help that goes to people in need, whether they are starving or after an emergency, comes from the charities, the American charities. They can go straight in and start helping those people, whereas, our government, it has to go through the other government, often a third-world government, and sometimes we end up propping up really bad governments, just trying to help the people if we go through the government.

So why would the Democratic leadership and the President be wanting to cut down on charitable donations?

And that is when it hit me this weekend. It is about the GRE, the GRE, the Government Running Everything. That is what it is about. It is about power. That is where this restriction on deductions for charitable contributions is coming from. They want the government controlling everything. They see how philanthropic the American people are, how they want to help out of the generousness of their heart, and they say, gee, these charitable organizations, they are nongovernment organizations, NGOs are doing a great job. That ought to be us. Why don't we control that too?

When the government's job ought to be making sure there is a level playing field; everybody has an equal opportunity, not equal results, but an equal opportunity. And our job is to provide for the common defense against enemies, both foreign and domestic. And if we do, we go after the cheaters. That is our job.

But we have been so busy trying to run everything, we have not been going after the cheaters effectively; not on Wall Street, not in corporate America, not out there in the streets. That is what we have got to get back to.

But I appreciate the gentleman yielding. But I just had to share, that is what hit me this weekend. It is about the GRE, the government running everything. This group running things now wants all power, including the power of charitable organizations.

Thank you. I yield back.

Mr. SCALISE. Well, I thank my friend from Texas. And you know, coming from Louisiana, right after Katrina, with all of the failures of government, from the Federal Government to the State government to the local government, it was our charities, it was our faith-based organizations that were the first ones in and consistently delivered so much relief and, in fact, are still in the New Orleans area today helping people rebuild, helping families get back into homes. It is those charitable organizations that don't get anything from government in most cases. And they just do it out of the goodness of their own heart and the divine providence from the Lord. And the fact that this President's budget takes away people's ability to deduct those charitable donations, clearly threatens a lot of those organizations themselves.

And I know our time is limited. One thing we wanted to touch on as we have talked about the spending and the borrowing and the taxing, where is this money coming from?

We had actually done some research on the President's budget. And in the first 4 years, in President Obama's first 4 years in office, and I am sure that the limits on the elections will dictate if there is going to be another four, but I think as people look at this and they get more concerned, where is this money coming from? Who are we borrowing this from? This isn't money we have.

The first place the President is going in his budget is raiding the Social Security Trust Fund. And senior citizens out there who, justifiably, are dependent on that fixed income from Social Security, and future generations who want to expect something from Social Security, are very alarmed to see that in the first 4 years, the President takes over $900 billion out of the Social Security Trust Fund. And so, record levels, again, of not just borrowing, not just record levels of taxes, but record levels, never before in the history of our country have we seen nearly $1 trillion taken out of the Social Security Trust Fund in just 4 years.

And so, as we see the record levels of spending, and people can even look at this budget and they might find items in the budget, not in the baseline budget, but new levels of spending that they might like and think sound good. But

then as they compare that against where this is coming from, is it worth adding to the Federal budget to take from Social Security, to take from our children and grandchildren, to tax small businesses and to tax every family on their energy bill? These are the questions that Americans are pondering. These are the questions we are fighting.

And I will finish with my friend from Georgia (Mr. BROUN).

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. I thank the gentleman for yielding. One other place that they are proposing taking money from is from our defense, from procurement. They are going to take away from our troops, and that is absolutely the worst thing to do. We live in a dangerous world. And we hear people talk about we have got to support our troops. But they want to take away the procurement that is absolutely critical for us to have a strong national defense. Constitutionally, that is the major function of the Federal Government. And the liberals want to take money away from our troops who are fighting for our freedom, who are giving up and their families are giving up sometimes their lives, their limbs and a whole lot of sacrifices that they are giving. And what we are hearing from the other side is they want to take away from our troops and take away from our defense.

The anti-missile defense system is another area that they are talking about taking money from. Just last week I went and watched a rocket shoot down another rocket, a SCUD missile. It was just a phenomenal test, and they want to cancel that, which is going to make us less secure as a Nation. We can't continue down this same road. We have got to stop it.

Thank you.

Mr. SCALISE. I thank my friend from Georgia. And that is why, we are living in challenging times, but that is why we are proposing alternatives. As we have talked about the problems of this budget, we have good alternatives we will be talking about more throughout the course of this year.

And I thank the Speaker for allowing us this time.

HEALTH CARE REFORM IS NEEDED

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DRIEHAUS). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I thank you. And I thank our side of the aisle for having the opportunity to speak to our colleagues, both Republicans and Democrats tonight, about a very, very important issue. The team that just spoke, Mr. Speaker, on the floor of this House about much of the spending and the plans and the too much spending, too much taxing, too much borrowing theme, which is absolutely what the American public, Mr. Speaker, needs to know about, including the plans and the spending and to have a comprehensive health care reform plan that we would vote on, we literally, Mr. Speaker, would vote on before this body and the other body goes on the traditional August recess. That is what, just barely a little more than 4 months away. And the big question is not do we need health care reform? I think my colleagues, and particularly my colleagues on this side of the aisle, who are doctor Members of this body, who are with me tonight to discuss this, the issue of health care reform, we do not disagree, Mr. Speaker, and my colleagues, that this needs to be done.

Nobody, whether Republican or Democrat, whether majority or minority, would want to see 47 million people in this country to have no health insurance whatsoever, and maybe another 25 million that are underinsured. And, yes, indeed, it could happen to one of my adult children and their young families. They all have decent jobs, but one major illness away from being underinsured and possibly ending up in a bankruptcy court, facing foreclosure on their homes and these kind of crises that we all agree we need to avoid.

So the reform of the health care system is not really a question of whether or not this side of the aisle agrees. We do agree. It is a matter, though, of how we do it and when we do it, and what we can afford to do. And I think that what the President has proposed so far is, just as we hear about his overall budget in a 10-year projection, and the numbers that we received over the weekend from the Congressional nonpartisan budget office, of unsustainable debt, deficits that will lead to possibly doubling of the national debt within 10 years. It is something that really has to be addressed.

Well, Mr. Speaker, tonight, we are here with, I am leading the hour, but I am very pleased that some of my colleagues on the GOP Republican Doctors Caucus have joined with me. And I wanted to set the tone for what we will talk about during this hour, and that is about physician work force; and will we have the manpower, when those 47 million hopefully do have health insurance, and the under-insured are fully insured, where are we going to come up with the doctors, the health care providers, to be able to provide that care?

Having a plastic card, Mr. Speaker, that says you are covered and you have access doesn't guarantee any individual that they are going to be able to have a provider who is going to see them.

□ 2200

And my fear is that they will not be able to have that access, particularly if the majority is successful in their plans to have a government default option to go along with, let's say, Medicare and Medicaid and TRICARE and veterans' health care benefits and the CHIP program. It is just adding one more responsibility of the Federal Government to control all of health care, and that is really what we are going to talk about tonight.

As I walked over here, Mr. Speaker—I was walking in the building, into this great Capitol House Chamber, the people's House—there was an emergency, and I saw physicians from the office of the House physician—paramedics, nurses—sprinting to the ambulance that is parked right outside this building for just such an emergency. I thought to myself, you know, thank God for the health care system that we already have. We definitely can improve upon that, and we will talk about that tonight, but thank God that we have that ability to respond in that manner.

It makes me think, Mr. Speaker, of the tragedy that occurred up in Canada in regard to this famous actress—and I will not mention her name—the tragic death of that actress after what seemed like a fairly routine, snow-skiing fall in which she got up, dusted herself off and said: I am fine. I do not need any medical care. Let me just go back to my resort hotel room. I am fine. Of course, that is what she did, and we all know now that 2 hours later, when she began to get into trouble and, maybe, passed out and a 911 call was made, it was 4 hours later that she was finally seen at a major medical center that could respond to this subdural hematoma that she obviously had developed. By that time, she was brain dead, and a life was lost, not just a life of a famous person and a prominent person but a mother of young children and of a devastated family.

So when we, Mr. Speaker, hear this talk about a single-payor system, of a government-run system not unlike the Canadian system—I am not necessarily picking on Canada. They are our good friends and neighbors to the north, but the same thing could be said, I think, about the system in the U.K. or in Taiwan or in any of the other countries that have a national health insurance, government-run program. If this accident had occurred, I think, out in Colorado in the United States, that young mother and famous actress would be alive today.

So these are some of my thoughts as we begin to discuss. I call on my colleagues, the doctor colleagues, who are with me tonight. I want to ask my colleagues to focus their attention on this first poster. It is titled ''A Second Opinion,'' and then, of course, it is subtitled ''Strengthen the Doctor-Patient Relationship.'' That is what we want to do, and that is what we will talk about.

With this second opinion theme, I think, most people associate a second opinion with a medical opinion, and understand that, when they go to the doctor, sometimes a second opinion is very, very valuable. In fact, I think almost always it is very valuable. So it is important when the other side of the aisle—when the majority party—says or some of their news media, co-conspirators, if you will, who support a

national health insurance program or any major issue that the majority party is promoting says, well, the Republicans, all they are is a party of ''no,'' they do not have another alternative. They are just saying, well, we are going to stand in the way of something that we do not like because the majority party has presented it, and this is all political.

Mr. Speaker, nothing could be further from the truth, and that is certainly true in regard to the health care of this Nation. This second opinion theme could apply to energy; it could apply to what the previous team was talking about in regard to the budget and spending. We do have a plan on the Republican side on all of these issues and, if you will, a second opinion Republican plan on health care.

So, with that sort of setting the theme, I want to go ahead and recognize my colleagues. I am going to first call on the gentleman from Pennsylvania, my classmate who has been with me here in the House—and we are now serving our fourth term—and that is Dr. TIM MURPHY from the great State of Pennsylvania.

Dr. MURPHY, I would like to give you an opportunity to talk about some of the issues that you have been focusing on, not just as part of the Republican Doctors Caucus but since you came to Congress some 6½ years ago. I will yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania. I thank the gentleman from Georgia, not only for your leadership in health care but for your time here.

You know, we have many times discussed the issues involved in health care, and although I hear many people talk about the issue of accessible and affordable quality health care, very often the solution offered in this body by government is more government, and that is health care is expensive, so let's have someone pay for it—the government. Along those lines, Medicare and Medicaid oftentimes list it as, because so much is spent there—and I think Medicaid is $350 billion a year there. Between Medicare, Medicaid and the VA, almost half of the Federal mandatory budget is spent.

The question is: Are they effective? Are they efficient? Does it have quality-based health care?

I want to bring up just a couple issues here and emphasize the importance of that doctor-patient relationship. I am a psychologist. For many years, I have worked for hospitals in the Pittsburgh region in the pediatric, maternity and general medicine settings, but I have always had a strong relationship in working with a wide range of physicians and with other health care specialists, recognizing it is a team and in letting the team do their work that you really end up with some significant savings in quality of care. Let me talk about a couple of ways that that does occur.

A recent report sent out by the New England Health Care Institute noted that the U.S. really spends more on health care than any other nation on Earth, and many times people talk about the negatives of our health care system in terms of higher rates, for example, of infant mortality, but there are concerns about how that data is reached. I will not go into that now.

What I do want to point out, however, is that out of this $2.3 trillion health care system, which is very expensive and gets in the way of a lot of families affording health care, one of the deep concerns, perhaps, is that 30 to 40 percent of those health care dollars are wasted. $600 billion to $700 billion is what is listed in this report. Let me name a couple of things that go into this. If we let the doctor-patient relationship take supremacy over this and let physicians make decisions for what patients need, there are some changes we might see.

First of all, unexplained variations in the intensity of medical and surgical procedures, including but not limited to end-of-life care, the overuse of coronary artery bypass surgery and the overuse of percutaneous coronary procedures has the potential of avoidable costs of $600 billion. The misuse of drugs, overprescribing and underprescribing: some $52 billion. The overuse of non-urgent Emergency Department care: the savings could be $21 billion. The overuse of generic antihypertensives: a potential savings of $3 billion. The list goes on.

Now the question is: Why would these conditions exist?

Well, actually, government, itself, stands in the way in many cases, and sometimes, well, it is the way health insurance is set up, but if the issue were instead that physicians could be the ones who are moving forward in this, I believe a lot of savings could take place. I believe what we should be doing as a legislative body is finding ways to break down those barriers and really helping to improve. One of the points to be made by a number of the doctors here on the floor tonight is about having more physicians involved. Let's take one of those aspects.

Having a health care home is important, and one of the health care homes for people in some areas has to do with having a community health center. Now, community health centers provide great quality of care with a wide range of medical services, as my colleagues note. Yet there is a shortage of physicians, in part, because it is not the best paying position in the world, but many physicians want to help. The strange thing about this is that, in a wide range of health care areas, if you work at a community health center, your medical malpractice insurance is paid. If you volunteer, you are on your own, and so these clinics say, We cannot possibly afford that. There are different kinds of malpractice insurance that is not important to get into at this point. We have tried a number of times to allow it so physicians could actually volunteer—so psychologists could volunteer, so dentists, podiatrists, social workers, and nurse practitioners—but no, the government says, We cannot let you do that.

There are also areas, too, that come up here in terms of how we could let disease management work. Here is one of the strangest things that happens with Medicaid:

You know, one group that has a great deal of problems is that of people with severe diabetes. The severe diabetics, if they have problems with the circulation in their feet, for example, the real tragedy might be that they might have their feet amputated, but isn't it strange that Medicare and Medicaid will not pay for that physician or that nurse to monitor the patients closely—to call them, to work with them, to do more than just give them a pamphlet, but to work closely with them to keep them out of the hospital, to make sure that they are getting their insulin, to make sure they are monitored for their weight, et cetera, but we will not pay for that? We will pay $50,000 for that tragic surgery that could have been avoided, but we will not pay money to help when they manage the care.

Now I might say that there is a recent study that came out that, I believe, is filled with methodological flaws, saying that disease management has some questionable applications. Unfortunately, they focused on those who oftentimes had the most severe illnesses. As I am sure many of the physicians here tonight can attest, the real value is getting to that patient early or when the complications begin to show up rather than to wait until the end. I know, in my career as a psychologist, I had a patient who is now a deeply depressed, suicidal inpatient. When you could have been working with them years before, it makes a big difference in their outcomes.

We have to make sure that the system that we allow here with health insurance and with physicians working with patients really allows for a great deal of predischarge planning, of working closely and individualizing that care and for making sure that it is there.

Let me mention a couple of other things as we proceed forward. Recent legislation under the House set aside nearly $2 billion to help physician practices have health information technology. A good idea. The question is how it is done. If that health information technology is merely paying for keeping hospital records on a computer, that is not going to be enough because that is a passive system that only makes it a little easier to pull up records rather than having to wait for the records to arrive.

What we need is a smart, interactive system that is portable for the patient so that records follow the patient, not so that patients follow the records. We have to make sure it is private, that confidentiality is protected, and we have to make sure it is personal so that the relationship between doctor

and patient is what is paramount here. That physician and information they are obtaining and what they are writing whenever they have a diagnosis is a smart record that also helps provide information to that doctor about best practices, about feedback, about prescriptions, and even about the feedback of whether or not that patient got that prescription and if he is following through. It is all of those things. In today's world, because there is a shortage of physicians and because insurance with Medicare, Medicaid or private insurance oftentimes does not pay for having the physician actually work to follow up with the patient, then that health IT is just one, big, expensive thing on the desk of the physician, and it is not really providing the care they need.

Let me mention one other thing here, and that has to do with point of care lab tests. The system we have designed is one where—and because some physicians have been found when they own the labs—the concern was were they overprescribing lab tests. I would love to hear some input from my physician colleagues on that, too. So what did they say? They said, Let's not allow physicians to do this at all, where sometimes the most valuable thing is if the physician says, I need an x-ray; I need a lab test; I need this information right away. Instead, they have to send that patient out to a lab or send the information out. It could be a couple of weeks before they would get it back.

The best way to improve patient compliance is quicker information. Even to allow, for example, pharmacies and drug stores to provide some of this lab information would be more valuable. All this feeds into the system that part of the way to save the $600 billion or $700 billion worth of loss in the health care system is to put the tools in the hands of those who provide the health care. Make sure there are enough physicians. Make sure they have the tools they need so that as they diagnose, as they prescribe, as they work with other colleagues in the health care field that that information is shared in an effective way that is personal, that is private, that is portable, and actually that is permanent, too. These are not records that are lost as a person moves on to another health care plan or whatever they do in life.

Part of what we are doing here as the GOP Doctors Caucus is operating on the idea that we are all gathered together here to really work on making sure that we are developing patient-centered, patient-driven health care reforms based on quality, access, affordability, portability, and choice. Over the coming months, you will hear from us continually speak about this because we believe we have a health care system that can be based upon those, that can save massive amounts of money and that can save hundreds of thousands of lives. That needs to be our goal, not only to do no harm but to make sure we put health care back in the hands of those making those health care decisions. In so doing, we go at the very thing that people are raising the concerns about, and that is making health care more affordable and more accessible with quality as the underlying point.

With that, I yield back to the gentleman from Georgia.

□ 2215

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. I thank my colleague, my co-chairman of the GOP Doctors Caucus and of all of the important points, Mr. Speaker, that Dr. MURPHY brought to us. That point he made about the doctor-patient relationship being paramount I think is the most important. And that is our concern that if we go to a government-run, totally government-run system, that that will be sacrificed and that will be sacrificed badly.

Before I yield to my colleague, Dr. FLEMING from Louisiana, Mr. Speaker, I wanted to draw my colleagues' attention to this next slide in regard to the supply/demand crisis.

Even if nothing changed under the current system, we already have a shortage. And it will only get worse as we approach the year 2025. There are a lot of reasons that. Growth in an aging population. There is an immense physician shortage on the horizon. It is expected by 2025 to be a shortage by 125,000 physicians, and the demand for care by that time will increase by 26 percent.

Now, the bulk of the shortage—and these are statistics from the Association of the American Medical College; this was a center for workforce studies back in 2008, so just a year ago—but the bulk of that shortage, in fact, 37 percent of the projected shortage, is in primary care physicians. And I don't disagree with President Obama and the majority party in regard to the need to get more primary care physicians, to have these medical homes that we talk about, to stress wellness. And that is so important.

So it couldn't be more timely for me to call on Dr. FLEMING, who—he specializes in family practice, and has for a number of years, in south Louisiana.

And it is indeed a pleasure to yield time now to Dr. JOHN FLEMING.

Mr. FLEMING. I thank the gentleman for yielding. And also I want to thank Doctors MURPHY and GINGREY in your leadership on this subject and your years in Congress.

I want to say first of all, Mr. Speaker, that health care in the United States is among the best in the world, but the financing of it is a basket case. We have 47 million uninsured Americans and they are not who you think they are. They are not the poor; they have Medicaid. They are not the elderly; they have Medicare. They are not workers for large corporations or the government, such as us tonight. They are owners of small businesses and their employees. They have tremendous difficulty acquiring affordable insurance. And I see this every day.

I, myself, am a small business owner apart from being a family physician with still an active practice. And what is, in fact, going on in this situation is this: the risk pool for a small business is very small, and all it takes is one heart transplant or certainly renal dialysis and it can blow the whole plan up; everybody in the company can find themselves without insurance.

Well, I think that we, on the GOP side, we Republicans, and certainly we Republican physicians, agree with the other side and also with our President that we do need comprehensive health care. We need access to health care and coverage for all Americans.

And in fact, when you think about it with the entitled laws in the 1980s, every American today is entitled to health care regardless of his ability to pay. And if you don't believe me, go to an emergency room demanding care, and you will receive that care without anyone asking about your ability to pay. And that is certainly an honorable and laudable value that we have.

The problem is that that same individual probably has an illness such as diabetes or hypertension, which, if they had received care early in the disease or maybe in a stage of prevention, would not only not be in the emergency room, but the outcome would be much better and the cost would be much lower.

So, you see, when someone goes to the emergency room or staggers into an emergency room perhaps on their death bed and we providers have to pull them out, somebody gets a bill for that. And that bill is going to be many times higher than what it would have been otherwise. This, of course, creates bankruptcies. Many families end up filing bankruptcy after going through a major thing like this. So who absorbs that cost? The cost is absorbed by those who pay insurance premiums and taxpayers.

So it is not free medicine. So since we're already providing the resources, why not front-load that into preventative and early diagnostic care?

I am a strong believer in health care reform, and I will just tick through several of them that I think need to be implemented with all dispatch.

First, we need to have portability. Dr. MURPHY mentioned that before. We do need to go to electronic health records in a way that is going to make practices more efficient. We need to do away with archaic insurance laws which cause these small risk pools. We need to create large risk pools and make ''pre-existing illness'' a term that is no longer in the American lexicon.

We need to make sure that everyone gets basic private health care insurance, and I think that family physicians should be the linchpin in health care because it has been proven time and time again that family physicians, the primary care providers, create a much more efficient form of health care, but they also work very closely

with their colleagues to ensure that they get uploaded or downloaded or whatever is necessary in order to get the best.

But let me comment on one more thing before I yield. And that is that we're right now in a crossroads of decision making. We all agree that we need comprehensive health care reform. The question is will it be a single-payer governmental system such as what we have today with Medicare or Medicaid, or will it be a private health care system?

Now if we expand Medicare to include everyone, as some have suggested in this body, what is going to absorb that overflow and cost?

You see today, Medicare is somewhat successful in that the fraud, abuse, and the waste is being absorbed by the taxpayer and also those who pay private subscription rates. When we go to an entire system that is a single payer Medicare system, there will be nobody to pick up the tab at that point. So what are we left with?

Well, number one, we know that when you have a government-type system, a micromanaged system from the top, you end up with spot shortages, which we already have today; and I am sure that Dr. GINGREY will discuss that further. But also you have a situation beyond the spot shortages that is how do you control costs? And government can control costs only one way, and that is rationing. That means that somebody is told ''no'' when there is in fact something that can be done.

On the other hand, you take a private system, even if it's funded by government entities, either partially or in whole, if it's administered privately, it is far more efficient. And I will just give you a quick example.

Today, we talk about fraud and abuse and waste. And how can we find this fraud and abuse and what do we do about it? Well, we have to go after it legally to prosecute it. It is very expensive. You only find the tip of the iceberg. In a private plan, everyone works to build efficiency in the system, and if someone is just a little bit off the graph, you reeducate, you help them, or if they don't respond. You terminate them. You don't have to worry about finding someone who is manufacturing health claims or any of that kind of nonsense. It just doesn't happen.

So the bottom line is we need to get physicians, all providers, on board with working towards a much more efficient system, and we need to get the patients involved as well.

For many years, as my colleagues here, I know, have experienced, you couldn't talk patients into accepting generic drugs. Today with the tiered payment systems, the incentives are in favor of generic drugs, and now you can't beg patients not to take generic medications because they are much cheaper.

So there is a lot of work that we need to do, Mr. Speaker, and these are just some of the suggestions.

But finally, I would just like to say that we need to do a lot more to improve the availability, particularly of primary care providers, and we're going to have to do that by increasing the reimbursement rates because what we're really getting is a paradoxical effect. The more we clamp down reimbursement rates for family physicians and others, the more they have to do other things to make up the difference, which echoes costs throughout the system.

So thank you.

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. I thank the gentleman from Louisiana, the good doctor.

And, you know, again, stressing this theme of going forward, the shortage of manpower, it has a lot to do with physician satisfaction in their chosen profession. And I think that is basically what we want to make sure, Mr. Speaker, that everybody, all of our colleagues understand on both sides of the aisle, that as Dr. FLEMING was saying, if you have access to an affordable health insurance policy, as we all hope and pray for those 47 million, if it's a system that is run by the government and we crowd out the private market completely—and that is one of my big fears and I think that of my colleagues—then these young men and women that normally would—our best and brightest who would normally want to go to medical school and maybe become a family practitioner and provide this care, they are not going to do it. They are going to choose another profession. They are going to maybe become lawyers, but not doctors. And I think that is a big concern.

And I don't think anybody knows more about this than the next person that I will yield to, Dr. PHIL ROE, a fellow OB–GYN physician, who has provided women's care and delivered lots of babies in the Tri-City area of Tennessee—Kingsport, Bristol, Johnson City—and he knows of what he speaks. And I think he's going to talk to us a little bit about what probably everybody in this Chamber is aware of, and that is something called TIN care in Tennessee, and I am happy to yield to my colleague, a freshman representative doing a wonderful job, Dr. PHIL ROE.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. A couple of things to historically go back over, and I might mention that if the public out there that is watching this tonight thinks that the government's management of AIG is good, then they are going to be thrilled to death with the government management of health care, I can tell you that.

I am going to go through a couple of historical things.

You and I went through the managed care in all of the 1990s and all of the promises that were going to occur, the cost savings and so forth, that didn't show up; and one of the things that concerned me about health care going forward is accessibility, not just in physicians but in other health care providers.

For instance, our nursing staff. By 2016—that is 7 years from now—we're going to need one million more registered nurses in this country. And in the next 8–10 years, more physicians will be retiring and dying than we're producing in this country.

And let me go back a few years to read this to us just briefly. It is a 1994 report to both Congress and the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the National Council on Graduate Medical Education noted, ''In a managed care dominated health care system, the Bureau of Health Professions Commissions projects a year 2000 shortage of 35,000 generalist physicians and a surplus of 115,000 specialist physicians'' and recommended that the ''nation 'produce 25 percent fewer physicians annually.' '' That was just 13 years ago.

''In 1995, the PEW Commission recommended medical schools 'by 2005 reduce the size of entering medical school class in the U.S. by 20–25 percent,' arguing further that this reduction should come from the closure of existing medical schools.''

Have you ever heard of anything as ridiculous as that? And think of what a catastrophe that would have been had we followed this.

The Institute of Medicine committee ''recommended 'no new schools of allopathic or osteopathic medicine be opened, that class sizes in existing schools not be increased, and that public funds not be made available to open new schools or expand class sizes.' ''

Now, to give you an example just to reiterate what you said, if physicians don't retire—and there are over a quarter of a million physicians over the age of 55; that is a third of the practicing doctors in America—do retire in the next 10 years, which they most certainly will, this number—and the reason that is so important for the folks listening is is the access to care. What happens will be that patients won't have access to their physicians, and I have seen that.

I have practiced and trained in Memphis, inner-city Memphis and a rural area where I am now, and you all know inner-cities and the rural areas are the two most underserved areas in America now.

□ 2230

Patients in those areas are now not only having a difficult time paying for care, just finding someone to give them the care. So this particular recommendation that was made, if it had been followed, would have been an utter disaster for the American health care system.

We need to encourage more and more young people. The community where I live has a Quillen College of Medicine, has 26 students. It hasn't increased the class size in 20 years. Why? They don't have funding to do it, and we have a tremendous shortage of primary care physicians.

At the end of my practice last year when I was still in the operating room, one of the most difficult things I had to do was find a primary care provider for a post-surgical patient. It is difficult to do now, and it is going to get much, much, much worse.

I will mention a couple of things about our TennCare system, and it was a system that was started with noble objectives, to provide care for all Tennesseans. It was rapidly put together, and I heard you say at the beginning of this, we don't need to do this fast; we need do this right. It's to important.

The health care that we provide affects every citizen in this country. Every one of us is going to have to abide by this system, and who should be in control of that system are the patients and the physicians. That's who should be making these health care decisions.

Now, in a survey that was done in the current budget crisis in the State, the State was about $1 billion short before the stimulus package came along. And what the stimulus package does is simply put off these hard decisions for about 2 years in our State. But that survey showed that nearly half the physicians in the State of Tennessee would end their participation or consider ending their participation in one or both of the MCOs in the State—that's the medical care organizations—if those cuts were enacted to ease the State budget crisis, and another 31 percent said they would reduce the number of TennCare patients they're seeing. That's 80 percent either would stop or reduce the number that they're currently seeing.

I spoke to one of our large hospital administrators this past weekend, and right now, we have TennCare covering 60 percent of hospital costs. Medicare covers about 90 percent of hospital costs. The uninsured obviously cover none of the costs, and the private payers have to make up that difference to keep the hospital open.

You hear that your medical benefits are tax deductible and so forth. Well, I would argue they're not. If you go ahead, that's a hidden tax right there that a person who has private health insurance has to pay when they pay it. Now I know this year because in the past year, I bought my own policy. I've a health savings account, and to buy this health savings account, I was fortunate to be able to do that. It is about $1,000 a month, but I had to earn about $18,000 to pay that after taxes. So, for a person with a health savings account or a small business or whatever, they're on your own, you're in real trouble in this country now.

And I think the health care plan in this country should have about four principles. One is a basic health plan for all Americans, and we can define that a lot of ways, but I think one of the ways you could define it is the least expensive government plan.

And number two, illness should not bankrupt you. If you get sick, if you develop multiple myeloma or a malignancy or something or at no cause of your own, you should not be bankrupted by that illness.

And number three, it should be portable. You should be able to move. If your lose your job, as many people have done during this current recession, you should be able to carry your health benefits along and not have COBRA payments that people with expensive, who let's say Bill Gates would have a hard time paying.

So I look forward to continuing this discussion in the future.

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. Well, I thank the gentleman from Tennessee and the words of the wisdom that he brought us to.

Before I yield to my colleague from Georgia, I want to just make a few comments, Mr. Speaker, about some of the statistics in regard to physician workforce shortage. Any my State, my home State of Georgia, it's ranked 40th in the Nation with respect to active physicians per 100,000 people. In Georgia, there are 204 per 100,000. National average is 250.

Georgia also has the dubious ranking of 44th in the Nation with respect to active primary care physicians. You just heard that from Dr. FLEMING, and you will hear it in just a minute from Dr. PAUL BROUN, a family practitioner in Georgia.

Seventy-three primary care physicians per 100,000 in Georgia; the national average, 88.1. Eighty-nine percent of job seekers graduating from Georgia medical residency programs received and accepted job offers in 2004 but only 54 percent of them stayed in my great State of Georgia.

So just kind of bringing home some of the statistics from where we live and represent.

At this time, I'm proud to yield to Dr. PAUL BROUN, the gentleman who represents my hometown of Augusta, Georgia, and Athens, Georgia, the home of the University of Georgia, the great bulldog nation and many, many wonderful counties in between.

I yield to the gentleman from Georgia, Dr. PAUL BROUN.

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. Thank you, Dr. GINGREY. I appreciate you bringing these very important points to the floor tonight.

I want to talk about the issue that you just brought up about the lack of primary care physicians in our home State of Georgia, but before I do that, I wanted to remark about something Dr. MURPHY brought up tonight, and that's the cost of regulatory burden on the health care system, particularly as it deals with lab and X-ray and those types of things.

I want to give an example. Back a number of years ago, I was practicing medicine in rural south Georgia, and Congress passed a bill called the Clinical Laboratory Improvement Act. It was signed into law. It's called CLIA. I had a small lab in my office, totally quality controlled, wanted to make sure that the tests that I did there were accurate so that I could give the best quality care to my patients that I possibly was trained to do.

And CLIA shut down that lab. Well, why? Well, the reason that CLIA shut down the lab was that the people here in Congress decided that it was a conflict of interest for doctors to own labs and that they may be an overutilization. But the thing is, what this has done is it's markedly driven up the cost of health care for all of us, the cost of insurance, and it made insurance less affordable.

Now, to show you how that works is that in my lab, if a patient came to see me with a red, sore throat, maybe had little white patches on their throat, running a fever, coughing, aching all over, runny nose, this could be a strep throat, need a penicillin shot or some antibiotics. It could be a viral infection. They look exactly the same. I would do a test in my office called the complete blood count, or CBC. It took 5 minutes to do the test. I charged $12 for the test. I made 50 cents on it, if any at all.

Well, CLIA shut down my lab. I couldn't do those tests any longer. If patients came in with those same symptoms, I had to decide whether just to go ahead and give them antibiotics and expose them to the overutilization of antibiotics that, not only the exposure to them which could create superinfections, also increases the cost, because the overutilization of antibiotics markedly drives up the costs for all of us. Or I would do the test, and to do so, I would have to send them over to the hospital to get that done. It would take 2 to 3 hours to do a test I could do in 5 minutes, and it cost $75 whereas the test in my office cost $12.

You can see what that one test, the cost across the whole health care system has been for that one test for patients that come in with sore threats which is a very common illness that primary care physicians, like I, see.

So the regulatory burden on the system markedly increases the cost and makes it less affordable. So if we could get the regulatory burden off of the health care system, it would literally lower the cost of insurance and would make it more affordable.

We actually hear of about 47 million people in this country not having health care. Well, everybody has health care. As Dr. FLEMING was talking about, entitlement laws made it so that people could go to the emergency room and get health care. So everybody has access to health care. Everybody can get health care. The question is where do they get it, at what cost, and who pays for it.

Well, if we go to a socialized medicine system—and the code word for socialized medicine in this body here is comprehensive health care reform—if we go to socialized health care, it's going to make it less affordable and be harder for people to get health care, provided to them.

But in Georgia, we have a tremendous lack of primary care doctors. In fact, in more than one-third of the counties—we have 159 counties in the State of Georgia. Fifty-eight of those counties, over a third, are officially designated as primary health professional shortage areas. This means on average that there is less than one doctor per 3,500 people in those counties. About 1.5 million people in the State of Georgia alone are affected by the shortage of doctors.

We need in Georgia 259 more doctors to serve those underserved areas, just to fill that official estimate of shortage, and ideally, in fact, the experts say that there should be one doctor per 2,000 people. To attain that goal, we would need another 421 doctors, primary care providers, to face that shortage.

Now, the Medical College of Georgia, my school that I graduated from, is just expanding and developing new campuses. There's one that's going to start accepting their new class in Athens, and they're going to have other communities around the State of Georgia to try to train physicians. But we've got to give doctors the freedom to practice medicine, not put constraints on them, not to shackle them. We've got to get the regulatory burden off of their practices so they can practice medicine without all this government intrusion so they can give the care that they're trained to give.

And going down this road of socialized medicine that this administration and that the liberal leadership here in Congress is pushing us towards is going to hurt the health care system. It's going to create a larger doctor shortage, and it's going to mean that people have less access to care, particularly good, quality care.

So we need to have a patient-focused health care reform and not a government-focused health care reform, which is what we and the Doctors Caucus, what the Republican party is bringing forth as the solution to the health care crisis, which is actually a health care financing crisis, not a health care crisis in itself.

So I thank the gentleman for bringing this up tonight. I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I look forward to working with our colleagues so that we can actually find some commonsense, market-based solutions that we propose and, hopefully, the American people will demand it from their Member of Congress so that we can continue to give good, quality health care here in America.

I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. I thank my colleague, Dr. BROUN, for joining with us in this hour, talking about the issue of strengthening the doctor-patient relationship and not destroying it.

And as Dr. BROUN pointed out in some of his statistics, those shortages that he was talking about in the State of Georgia—and this is applicable to 49 other States as well—we're talking about under the current system. But once we cover the 47 million uninsured, and these numbers just get that much more difficult, and actually the shortage increases by 4 percent, and these statistics are frightening.

And before I introduce the next speaker, my colleague from Texas, my fellow OB/GYN colleague, I wanted my colleagues to see this next slide. And part of the reason of this physician shortage—and as I say, it will only get worse in the future—is declining reimbursement ranked as the number one impediment to the delivery of patient care.

Sixty-five percent of physicians surveyed said that Medicaid pays less than the cost of providing that care, and 35 percent of the physicians surveyed said Medicare pays less than cost of providing that care. Nobody in this House of Representatives has worked harder than my classmate, the good OB/GYN doctor from Plano, Dallas-Fort Worth. He has worked so hard to try to provide a reimbursement based on a reasonable formula and not this current sustainable growth rate.

Nobody can really understand how that's ever figured, but doctors know that every year it's figured in a cut in their reimbursement, and that indeed, Mr. Speaker, is not sustainable.

And with that, I yield to my colleague from Texas, Dr. BURGESS.

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Mr. BURGESS. I want to thank my friend for yielding. I should mention, of course, you know we passed out of our committee, the Committee on Energy and Commerce, just 2 weeks ago, H.R. 914, which would have, for the first time, increased the number of primary care residencies available. It was a self-replenishing loan program. Oftentimes, the biggest barrier to entry for a hospital that doesn't currently offer a residency program, the biggest barrier for entry is the cost for getting into that residency program. This will provide an ongoing self-replenishing series of loans.

We have been held up a little bit by the Office of Management and Budget. It is one of the weird things that happens to you here in Washington. Last year's Congressional Budget Office said this bill was not a problem financially. Last year's Congressional Budget Office is this year's Office of Management and Budget. And this year's Office of Management and Budget says, Wait a minute. If you make more primary care doctors, they're going to see more folks and they're going to send in more bills. It's going to cost more money. So we can't have that.

We've kind of reached a little bit of an impasse there. I hope to get past that. It just underscores sometimes the futility of working in this environment in which we find ourselves.

Now, just a few weeks ago I was fortunate enough to be asked down to the White House to participate in the health care summit, and President Obama, to his credit, as he was wrapping things up said, Look, I just want to figure out what works.

Well, I'm here to help him. I'm so glad to hear him say that. He says, The cake was not already baked. We would work through this in our congressional committees. He'll provide guideposts and guidelines. At the end of the day, it's going to be a congressional decision.

I applaud him if that's the case. I still have some reservations deep down inside that this bill has already been written in the Speaker's office. But I will take the President at his word because, after all, we are charged in the practice of medicine for following evidence-based practice. We are told to practice evidence-based medicine. We as policymakers should also practice evidence-based policy as well.

The reform discussion has centered primarily on the number of Americans who lack insurance. That's understandable. It's a good reason. The number is astonishingly high—and growing.

But, honestly, we do have to look beyond just the single knee-jerk, silver bullet response to, We want to fix the number of uninsured. Because that may not solve our problem.

We have a grand national experiment going on in the State of Massachusetts right now. A great increase in coverage because of an individual mandate. But we have a problem. We don't quite have the number of primary care physicians required to render the care to all those folks who now have that coverage.

So, across the Nation issues with the medical workforce are going to continue to loom large and, like my colleague from Tennessee, I can remember sitting in those medical meetings 15 years ago and hearing the stories about how we were over providered. I didn't even know that was a verb, quite honestly. We were over providered in health care in this country, and we needed to scale back the number of doctors we were producing.

Now, 15 years later, that sounds like nonsense. When you consider the length of time that it takes to make one of us, those of us who are on the House floor late tonight. I don't know. Certainly, 12 years after college and my professional education, it is not at all an uncommon story. It takes a long time to make one of us.

So changes in that pipeline really can have a dramatic effect down the road. It's so important for us to get the policy right.

Another point on our Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health. Last fall, we heard from a woman who's a pediatrician in rural Alabama. It sticks in my mind because she went into practice the same year that I did—1981. She has worked her heart out there taking care of poor kids in rural Alabama.

Her practice currently has reached a point where it's 70 to 80 percent Medicaid. And she can't keep her doors open. She's having to borrow from her

retirement plan in order to pay the overhead for her office to keep the clinic doors open.

Well, I learned that lesson a long time ago with managed care back in the 1990s. If you're losing a little bit on every patient, it gets harder to make it up in volume. The harder you work, the more behind you get.

That was exactly the situation that she had found herself in. It's because we require such a significant amount of cross-subsidization. The private sector has to cross-subsidize the public sector—Medicare or Medicaid—or doctors cannot afford to keep their doors open. Precisely the information you have up on your slide.

Government-administered health care misleads Americans into thinking that they have coverage. But the reality is they're denied care at the out end because there simply is not the doctors offices there to provide it.

Well, you have been very generous with your time. I'm going to yield back so we can hear from some of our other great colleagues who are on the floor with us tonight. I thank you for bringing this hour together.

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. I thank my colleague on the Energy and Commerce Committee, Dr. BURGESS.

I want to yield to another of my physician colleagues from Georgia, Dr. TOM PRICE, an orthopedic surgeon who represents the district adjacent to mine, the Sixth District of Georgia.

Dr. PRICE is going to tell us a little bit about these 47 million uninsured, many of whom are employed and simply cannot afford what is offered by their employer, their portion of the premium, and many of them of course work for very small employers that can't afford to offer coverage at all.

At this point, I am proud to yield to my colleague, the chairman of the Republican Study Committee, Dr. TOM PRICE.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. I thank my friend from Georgia, Dr. GINGREY, for yielding and for his leadership in this area and for organizing this hour this evening.

Mr. Speaker, you have heard a lot of conversation tonight about health care and about access and affordability and quality and primary care physicians. I think it's important to talk about the thing that all of those affect, and that is patients. Patients are what this is all about.

I'm pleased to join my physician colleagues on the Republican side of the aisle tonight to talk about patients and the effect of health care and national health care policy on patients.

If I think about the eight physicians who are here on the floor tonight, we probably have seen a half million patients in our professional life and get a sense about what it means to take care of people and make certain that they get well, depending on the malady that befalls them.

We all have our different principles about health care. Mine are five—the usual three: Access and affordability and quality. Then I add innovation and responsiveness. I think it's imperative we have a system that has the greatest amount of access, the greatest amount of affordability, the highest quality, and the most responsive and most innovative system.

I would suggest, as I know my friend would agree from Georgia, and my other physician colleagues here, that governmental intervention and increasing involvement doesn't improve any of those things. It doesn't improve access, it doesn't improve affordability, it certainly doesn't improve quality, doesn't improve innovation or responsiveness.

So what's the solution? What's the solution for the patients across this Nation who are maybe watching this evening, Mr. Speaker, and saying: What are you going to do?

Well, the solution, I believe, as I know my colleagues do, is to make certain that patients have ownership of the system. The only way to get the system to move in the direction that patients want it to move is to have a patient-centered system so that patients own and control their own health insurance policy.

Everybody's got to have health insurance. You can get to that system in a way that most of us support, which is through the Tax Code. Making certain that it makes financial sense for all patients to have health insurance. But, once they do, how do you make the system move in the direction it ought to move, and that is the direction that patients want it to move. It's to allow for patients to own and control their health insurance policy, regardless of who's paying the cost.

That's important because that changes the relationship between the insurance company and the patient. Right now, when the patient calls the insurance company and says, You're not doing what I need to have done, or my doctor recommends, the insurance company, by and large, says, Call somebody who cares. Because you aren't controlling the system.

When patients own and control the system, then the system moves in the direction that patients want it to move.

We are working diligently to come up with a product that will allow the American people to look to Washington and say, Hey, those guys are doing what we think ought to be done in our health care system.

I'm so pleased to be able to join you tonight and talk about positive solutions for our health care system that puts patients in control.

I yield back.

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. Dr. PRICE, thank you so much.

Mr. Speaker, I realize that we are running very close to that witching hour. Maybe I saved the best until last. He probably thinks that I'm shorting him on time because his LSU Tigers whipped up pretty badly on my Georgia Tech Yellow Jackets in the Bowl game. That's is not the case at all.

I'm proud to yield to the internist and gastroenterologist from Baton Rouge, Dr. Patrick.

Mr. CASSIDY. You're so bitter about that loss, you call me Patrick instead of CASSIDY.

I actually teach residents. I'm still on faculty with LSU Med School. It's not accidental that we end up having too few specialists.

For example, just to put the issue into focus, only about 2 percent of medical school grads in 2007 planned to go into a primary care career. That's 2 percent.

Now, it's not accidental why this is. As it turns out, the Federal Government gives more money to train specialists. It gives less to train a generalist and more to train a specialist.

When you're out, reimbursement is less for visits, but more for procedures. So the primary care physician that we don't have enough of gets paid less for the amount of effort he or she puts into their job.

So I say this to say that it's Federal policies that have gotten us here, and there are wise Federal policies that can get us out. But I want to just give a little bit of humility to the people who want to remake our system, assuming that a top-down approach will benefit.

I echo what Dr. PRICE said—it's better to have that patient in charge of the system. When it's top down, we end up with systems which end up skewing us towards more specialists and fewer generalists. I think if we take history as a guide, we will say that we will be much better if the patient have the power as opposed to CMS or another Federal bureaucracy having the power.

With that, I yield back.

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I thank Dr. Patrick. And I thank all of my colleagues. You can see the level of interest of the GOP Doctors Caucus. But we want to work with the physicians, the medical providers, the nurses on the other side of the aisle, and work in a bipartisan way.

In this area of a second opinion, we will continue to bring other issues forward as we continue in the 111th Congress.

Mr. Speaker, with that I yield back.

OMISSION FROM THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD OF THURSDAY, MARCH 19, 2009 AT PAGE H3701

BILLS PRESENTED TO THE PRESIDENT

Lorraine C. Miller, Clerk of the House reports that on March 18, 2009 she presented to the President of the United States, for his approval, the following bill.

H.R. 1127. To extend certain immigration programs.

Lorraine C. Miller, Clerk of the House reports that on March 19, 2009 she presented to the President of the

United States, for his approval, the following bill.

H.R. 1541. To provide for an additional temporary extension of programs under the Small Business Act and the Small Business Investment Act of 1958, and for other purposes

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. ELLISON (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for today.

Mr. GARY G. MILLER of California (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today and the balance of the week on account of medical reasons.

Mr. WESTMORELAND (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today on account of illness.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Ms. EDWARDS of Maryland) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. WOOLSEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. LEE of California, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. WATERS, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DEFAZIO, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. SHERMAN, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. INGLIS, for 5 minutes, today and March 30.

Mr. POE of Texas, for 5 minutes, March 30.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana, for 5 minutes, today, March 24, 25 and 26.

Mr. JONES, for 5 minutes, March 30.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, for 5 minutes, March 25.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. ROGERS of Michigan, for 5 minutes, March 25.

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida, for 5 minutes, today.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

Lorraine C. Miller, Clerk of the House, reported and found truly enrolled a bill of the House of the following title, which was thereupon signed by the Speaker:

H.R. 1512. An act to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend the funding and expenditure authority of the Airport and Airway Trust Fund, to amend title 49, United States Code, to extend authorizations for the airport improvement program, and for other purposes.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 56 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Tuesday, March 24, 2009, at 10:30 a.m., for morning-hour debate.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 8 of rule XII, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

986. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Health Affairs, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's report on the study of adverse health events of exposure to depleted uranium munitions on both soldiers and children of uranium-exposed soldiers who were born after the soldiers were exposed to depleted uranium, pursuant to Section 716 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007; to the Committee on Armed Services.

987. A letter from the Associate General Counsel for Legislation & Regulations on behalf of Board, Board of Directors of the HOPE for Homeowners Program, transmitting the Board's final rule — Rules Regarding Access to Information Under the Freedom of Information Act [Docket No.: B-2009-F04] (RIN: 2580-AA02) received March 11, 2009, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

988. A letter from the Vice Chair and First Vice President, Export-Import Bank, transmitting a report on transactions involving U.S. exports to Mexico pursuant to Section 2(b)(3) of the Export-Import Bank Act of 1945, as amended; to the Committee on Financial Services.

989. A letter from the Vice Chair and First Vice President, Export-Import Bank, transmitting a report on transactions involving U.S. exports to Japan pursuant to Section 2(b)(3) of the Export-Import Bank Act of 1945, as amended; to the Committee on Financial Services.

990. A letter from the Vice Chair and First Vice President, Export-Import Bank, transmitting a report on transactions involving U.S. exports to Mexico pursuant to Section 2(b)(3) of the Export-Import Bank Act of 1945, as amended; to the Committee on Financial Services.

991. A letter from the Director, Export-Import Bank, transmitting a report on transactions involving U.S. exports to Japan pursuant to Section 2(b)(3) of the Export-Import Bank Act of 1945, as amended; to the Committee on Financial Services.

992. A letter from the Vice Chair and First Vice President, Export-Import Bank, transmitting a report on transactions involving U.S. exports to Turkey pursuant to Section 2(b)(3) of the Export-Import Bank Act of 1945, as amended; to the Committee on Financial Services.

993. A letter from the Director, Office of Legal Affairs, Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, transmitting the Corporation's final rule — Risk Based Assessments (RIN: 3064-AD35) received March 11, 2009, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

994. A letter from the Secretary, Federal Trade Commission, transmitting the Commission's thirty-first annual report summarizing actions the Commission took during 2008 with respect to the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, 15 U.S.C. 1692-1692o; to the Committee on Financial Services.

995. A letter from the Deputy Assistant Secretary, Department of Labor, transmitting notification of a grant award for the San Mateo County Community College District in response to the Solicitation for Grant Applications (SGA), SGA/DFA PY 08-02, as part of the Department's competitive Community-Based Job Training Initiative; to the Committee on Education and Labor.

996. A letter from the Acting Director, Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, transmitting the Corporation's final rule — Benefits Payable in Terminated Single-Employer Plans; Interest Assumptions for Valuing and Paying Benefits — received March 3, 2009, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Education and Labor.

997. A letter from the Director, Regulations Policy and Mgmt. Staff, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's final rule — Institutional Review Boards; Registration Requirements [Docket No.: FDA-2004-N-0117] (formerly Docket No.: 2004N-0242) (RIN: 0910-AB88) received March 3, 2009, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

998. A letter from the Acting Chief Financial Officer, Department of the Treasury, transmitting the Department's annual Alternative Fuel Vehicle Report for Fiscal Year 2008, pursuant to Section 8 of the Energy Conservation Reauthorization Act of 1998; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

999. A letter from the Chief of Staff, Media Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — In the Matter of Amendment of Section 73.622(i), Final DTV Table of Allotments, Television Broadcast Stations. (Scranton, Pennsylvania) [MB Docket No.: 08-125 RM-11457] received March 11, 2009, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

1000. A letter from the Acting Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting certification of a proposed technical assistance agreement for the export of technical data, defense services, and defense articles to India (Transmittal No. DDTC 018-09), pursuant to 22 U.S.C. 39, 36(c); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

1001. A letter from the Vice Admiral, USN Director, Defense Security Cooperation Agency, transmitting reports submitted in accordance with Sections 36(a) and 26(b) of the Arms Export Control Act, the 24 March 1979 Report by the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and the Seventh Report by the Committee on Government Operations for the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2009, 1 October 2008 — 31 December 2008; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

1002. A letter from the Acting Director, Defense Security Cooperation Agency, transmitting notification concerning the Department of the Army's proposed Letter(s) of Offer and Acceptance (LOA) to Mexico for defense articles and services (Transmittal No. 09-18), pursuant to Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

1003. A letter from the Vice Admiral, USN Director, Defense Security Cooperation Agency, transmitting the Agency's report in accordance with Section 36(a) of the Arms Export Control Act; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

1004. A letter from the Secretary General, Inter-Parliamentary Union, transmitting a letter enlisting support for the new democracy project that addresses the representation of minorities and indigenous peoples in national parliaments; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

1005. A letter from the Director, Department of Making Pregnancy Safer, World Health Organization, transmitting notification of a three-day meeting to share experiences between policy-makers and planners, and to increase advocacy to boost investments and significantly improve progress on

maternal and newborn health and survival; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

1006. A letter from the Senior Procurement Executive and Director, Office of Acquisition Management, Department of Commerce, transmitting the Department's report on Fiscal Year 2008 Commercial Services Management efforts, pursuant to Public Law 108-199, section 647(b); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

1007. A letter from the Acting Assoc. Gen. Counsel for General Law, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting a report pursuant to the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

1008. A letter from the Senior Vice President and Chief Financial Officer, Export-Import Bank, transmitting the Bank's annual report for fiscal year 2008, pursuant to the Chief Financial Officers Act of 1990; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

1009. A letter from the Director, National Science Foundation, transmitting the Foundation's report on its competitive sourcing efforts for Fiscal Year 2008, pursuant to Public Law 108-199, section 647(b); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

1010. A letter from the Chairman, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting the Commission's Annual Report on the Administration of the Government in the Sunshine Act for Calendar Year 2008, pursuant to Public Law 94-409 and Public Law 104-66; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

1011. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Personnel Management, transmitting the Office's final rule — Prevailing Rate Systems; Abolishment of Santa Clara, California, as a Nonappropriated Fund Federal Wage System Wage Area (RIN: 3206-AL74) received March 13, 2009, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

1012. A letter from the Associate Legal Counsel, U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, transmitting a report pursuant to the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

1013. A letter from the Acting Administrator, U.S. Small Business Administration, transmitting a report pursuant to the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

1014. A letter from the Co-Chief Privacy Officer, Federal Election Commission, transmitting the Commission's Privacy Act Report for fiscal year 2008, pursuant to Section 522 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act for 2005; to the Committee on House Administration.

1015. A letter from the Chief, Branch of Listing, Department of the Interior, transmitting the Department's final rule — Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Listing Phyllostegia hispida (No Common Name) as Endangered Throughout Its Range [FWS-R1-ES-2008-0016; MO 9221050083-B2] (RIN: 1018-AV00) received March 11, 2009, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

1016. A letter from the Chief, Branch of Listing, Department of the Interior, transmitting the Department's final rule — Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Designation of Critical Habitat for the Louisiana Black Bear (Ursus americanus luteolus)[FWS-R4-ES-2008-0047 92210-1117-0000-B4] (RIN: 1018-AV52) received March 11, 2009, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

1017. A letter from the Acting Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's 2008 Report on the Disclosure of Financial Interest and Recusal Requirements for Regional Fishery Management Councils and Scientific and Statistical Committees, pursuant to Section 302(j) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

1018. A letter from the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Taking of Marine Mammals Incidental to Commercial Fishing Operations; Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan [Docket No.: 090213177-9179-01] (RIN: 0648-XN40) received March 11, 2009, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

1019. A letter from the Deputy Assistant Administrator For Regulatory Programs, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands; Final 2009 and 2010 Harvest Specifications for Groundfish [Docket No.: 0810141351-9087-02] (RIN: 0648-XL28) received March 9, 2009, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

1020. A letter from the Staff Director, United States Commission on Civil Rights, transmitting notification that the Commission recently appointed members to the Oklahoma Advisory Committee; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

1021. A letter from the Staff Director, United States Commission on Civil Rights, transmitting notification that the Commission recently appointed members to the Mississippi Advisory Committee; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

1022. A letter from the Chief, Trade and Commercial Regulations Branch, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — EXTENSION OF IMPORT RESTRICTIONS IMPOSED ON ARCHAEOLOGICAL MATERIAL FROM HONDURAS [CBP Dec. 09-05] (RIN: 1505-AC11) received March 5, 2009, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

1023. A letter from the Deputy Director, Office of Regulations, Social Security Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Representative Payment Under Titles II, VIII and XVI of the Social Security Act [Docket No.: SSA 2008-0007] (RIN: 0960-AG70) received March 11, 2009, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

1024. A letter from the Deputy Director, Office of Regulations, Social Security Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Expiration Date Extension for Musculoskeletal Body System Listings [Docket No.: SSA-2008-0070] (RIN: 0960-AG93) received March 11, 2009, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES OF PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows:

Mr. CONYERS: Committee on the Judiciary. H.R. 1107. A bill to enact certain laws relating to public contracts as title 41, United States Code, ''Public Contracts'' (Rept. 111–42). Referred to the House Calendar.

Mr. WAXMAN: Committee on Energy and Commerce. H.R. 479. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide a means for continued improvement in emergency medical services for children; with an amendment (Rept. 111–43). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union.

Mr. WAXMAN: Committee on Energy and Commerce. H.R. 1246. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act regarding early detection, diagnosis, and treatment of hearing loss (Rept. 111–44). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union.

Mr. WAXMAN: Committee on Energy and Commerce. H.R. 307. A bill to enhance and further research into paralysis and to improve rehabilitation and the quality of life for persons living with paralysis and other physical disabilities, and for other purposes (Rept. 111–45). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union.

Mr. WAXMAN: Committee on Energy and Commerce. H.R. 577. A bill to establish a grant program to provide vision care to children, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 111–46). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union.

Mr. WAXMAN: Committee on Energy and Commerce. H.R. 756. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act with respect to pain care (Rept. 111–47). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union.

Mr. WAXMAN: Committee on Energy and Commerce. H.R. 20. A bill to provide for research on, and services for individuals with, postpartum depression and psychosis; with an amendment (Rept. 111–48). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions of the following titles were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mrs. MALONEY (for herself and Mr. HONDA):

H.R. 1659. A bill to amend the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act to require the Presidential designee responsible for carrying out Federal functions under the Act to have experience in election administration and be approved by the Senate, to establish the Overseas Voting Advisory Board to oversee the administration of the Act so that American citizens who live overseas or serve in the military can participate in elections for public office, and for other purposes; to the Committee on House Administration, and in addition to the Committee on Rules, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. MCHUGH (for himself, Mr. ARCURI, Mr. NUNES, and Mr. BISHOP of Utah):

H.R. 1660. A bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to provide a special rule for the period of admission of H-2A nonimmigrants employed as dairy workers and sheepherders, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committee on Education and Labor, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. BARROW:

H.R. 1661. A bill to establish a health registry to ensure that certain individuals who may have been exposed to formaldehyde in a

travel trailer have an opportunity to register for such registry and receive medical treatment for such exposure, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. BARROW:

H.R. 1662. A bill to amend the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 to require child care providers to provide to parents information regarding whether such providers carry current liability insurance; to the Committee on Education and Labor.

By Mr. DENT (for himself, Mr. LANCE, Mr. PAULSEN, Mr. BILBRAY, Mr. MARCHANT, Mr. WALDEN, Mr. COBLE, Mr. MARSHALL, Mrs. MYRICK, Mr. PLATTS, Mr. LOBIONDO, Mr. SESSIONS, Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida, Mr. POE of Texas, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. SHULER, Mr. CARNEY, Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania, Mr. KIRK, Mr. ROYCE, and Mrs. MILLER of Michigan):

H.R. 1663. A bill to require State and local law enforcement agencies to determine the immigration status of all individuals arrested by such agencies for a felony, to require such agencies to report to the Secretary of Homeland Security when they have arrested for a felony an alien unlawfully present in the United States, to require mandatory Federal detention of such individuals pending removal in cases where they are not otherwise detained, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. GRAYSON (for himself, Mr. HIMES, Ms. LEE of California, Mr. WELCH, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. ORTIZ, Mr. PERRIELLO, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, and Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia):

H.R. 1664. A bill to amend the executive compensation provisions of the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008 to prohibit unreasonable and excessive compensation and compensation not based on performance standards; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. CUMMINGS (for himself, Mr. OBERSTAR, Mr. MICA, and Mr. LOBIONDO):

H.R. 1665. A bill to structure Coast Guard acquisition processes and policies, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. DOGGETT (for himself, Mr. COOPER, Mr. SHULER, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. STARK, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Ms. BERKLEY, Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California, Mr. YARMUTH, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mr. COHEN, Mr. FATTAH, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. ROTHMAN of New Jersey, Mr. SIRES, Mr. NADLER of New York, Mr. FARR, Mr. CUMMINGS, Ms. CLARKE, Mr. ACKERMAN, and Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas):

H.R. 1666. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to establish an auction and revenue collection mechanism for a carbon market that ensures price stability with environmental integrity; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. ABERCROMBIE:

H.R. 1667. A bill to prohibit profiteering and fraud relating to military action, relief, and reconstruction efforts, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida:

H.R. 1668. A bill to debar or suspend contractors from Federal contracting for unlawful employment of aliens, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security, and in addition to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia:

H.R. 1669. A bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to establish a market for municipal securities, to require cooperation between the Secretary and the Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System in addressing the municipal securities market situation including through the establishment of municipal securities funding facilities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. DAVIS of Illinois (for himself, Mr. PAYNE, Mrs. CHRISTENSEN, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Ms. LEE of California, Mr. MEEKS of New York, Mr. CARNEY, Mr. DOYLE, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Mr. MOORE of Kansas, Mr. HINCHEY, Mr. KUCINICH, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. COHEN, Mr. FATTAH, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. ISRAEL, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. KIND, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. OLVER, Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California, Ms. SCHWARTZ, Mr. SESTAK, and Ms. VELÁZQUEZ):

H.R. 1670. A bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to provide individuals with disabilities and older Americans with equal access to community-based attendant services and supports, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. LARSEN of Washington (for himself, Mr. SULLIVAN, Ms. WATERS, Mr. WU, Mr. GUTHRIE, Ms. BORDALLO, Mr. SIMPSON, and Mr. SPACE):

H.R. 1671. A bill to understand and comprehensively address the oral health problems associated with methamphetamine use; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. LARSEN of Washington (for himself, Mr. INSLEE, and Mr. DICKS):

H.R. 1672. A bill to reauthorize the Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative Act to promote the protection of the resources of the Northwest Straits, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California:

H.R. 1673. A bill to amend the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008 with respect to bonus payments; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mrs. MALONEY:

H.R. 1674. A bill to amend the National Consumer Cooperative Bank Act to allow for the treatment of the nonprofit corporation affiliate of the Bank as a community development financial institution for purposes of the Community Development Banking and Financial Institutions Act of 1994; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut (for himself, Mrs. BIGGERT, Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts, Ms. WATERS, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. SIRES, and Mr. FILNER):

H.R. 1675. A bill to amend section 811 of the Cranston-Gonzalez National Affordable Housing Act to improve the program under such section for supportive housing for persons with disabilities; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. WEINER:

H.R. 1676. A bill to prevent tobacco smuggling, to ensure the collection of all tobacco taxes, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. WOOLSEY:

H. Con. Res. 77. Concurrent resolution recognizing and honoring the signing by President Abraham Lincoln of the legislation authorizing the establishment of collegiate programs at Gallaudet University; to the Committee on Education and Labor.

By Ms. CASTOR of Florida (for herself and Mr. REICHERT):

H. Res. 274. A resolution expressing support for designation of March as National Nutrition Month; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut:

H. Res. 275. A resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that all public elementary schools and public secondary schools should display a copy of the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights; to the Committee on Education and Labor.

By Mr. NUNES:

H. Res. 276. A resolution to provide earmark reform in the House of Representatives; to the Committee on Rules, and in addition to the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions as follows:

H.R. 22: Mr. SALAZAR, Mr. FORTENBERRY, Mr. SERRANO, Mr. BROWN of South Carolina, Ms. KILPATRICK of Michigan, Ms. NORTON, Mr. ELLSWORTH, and Mr. CHILDERS.

H.R. 23: Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. CHANDLER, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. CARNEY, Mr. ROSKAM, Mr. HODES, Ms. WOOLSEY, Ms. MCCOLLUM, and Mr. OBERSTAR.

H.R. 31: Ms. SLAUGHTER.

H.R. 49: Mr. TURNER, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. RADANOVICH, Mr. SULLIVAN, and Mr. JORDAN of Ohio.

H.R. 147: Mrs. DAVIS of California, Ms. TITUS, and Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania.

H.R. 153: Mr. BURTON of Indiana.

H.R. 154: Ms. KILPATRICK of Michigan.

H.R. 155: Mr. WOLF.

H.R. 179: Mr. MEEKS of New York.

H.R. 181: Mr. LEE of New York and Mr. SESTAK.

H.R. 182: Mr. SABLAN.

H.R. 186: Mr. GORDON of Tennessee.

H.R. 197: Mrs. MILLER of Michigan, Mr. BURTON of Indiana, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mr. HELLER, Mr. ROGERS of Alabama, Mr. GORDON of Tennessee, Mr. BROWN of South Carolina, Mr. KAGEN, Mr. GINGREY of Georgia, Mr. ROSS, and Mr. SKELTON.

H.R. 208: Mr. BOREN.

H.R. 211: Mr. ENGEL, Mr. WILSON of Ohio, Mr. LANGEVIN, and Mr. THOMPSON of California.

H.R. 233: Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas.

H.R. 270: Mr. BOCCIERI and Mr. COURTNEY.

H.R. 272: Mr. PITTS, Mr. MCMAHON, Mr. SHUSTER, and Mr. MCHENRY.

H.R. 275: Ms. BERKLEY and Mr. BRALEY of Iowa.

H.R. 302: Mr. BROUN of Georgia, Mr. PETERS, and Mr. SCOTT of Georgia.

H.R. 403: Mr. SESTAK, Mr. GUTIERREZ, Mr. RODRIGUEZ, Ms. SUTTON, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts, Ms. BORDALLO, Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut, Mr. ELLISON, Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida, and Mr. WEXLER.

H.R. 426: Mr. GERLACH and Mr. CUELLAR.

H.R. 463: Mr. MAFFEI, Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, Ms. TITUS, and Mr. DINGELL.

H.R. 498: Mr. CONAWAY.
H.R. 503: Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Ms. HARMAN, Mr. WAXMAN, Mr. MAFFEI, and Ms. BEAN.
H.R. 600: Ms. SCHAKOWSKY and Mr. SCOTT of Virginia.
H.R. 610: Mr. PIERLUISI.
H.R. 627: Mr. JACKSON of Illinois, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. MILLER of North Carolina, Mr. TAYLOR, and Mr. BRALEY of Iowa.
H.R. 669: Mr. PALLONE and Mr. HOLT.
H.R. 673: Mr. COURTNEY.
H.R. 690: Mr. GOODLATTE and Mr. REHBERG.
H.R. 716: Ms. SLAUGHTER.
H.R. 730: Mr. LUJÁN.
H.R. 816: Mr. CARNEY, Ms. TITUS, and Mr. MILLER of Florida.
H.R. 826: Mr. WELCH.
H.R. 848: Mr. GUTIERREZ.
H.R. 877: Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky, Mr. RADANOVICH, and Mr. WITTMAN.
H.R. 881: Mr. KING of Iowa and Mr. SHUSTER.
H.R. 903: Mr. FATTAH.
H.R. 914: Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, Mr. WAMP, Mr. WITTMAN, and Mr. LATOURETTE.
H.R. 930: Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania and Mr. ROE of Tennessee.
H.R. 948: Mr. SERRANO, Mrs. BIGGERT, Mr. MCCAUL, Mr. WAMP, and Mr. PASCRELL.
H.R. 949: Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania.
H.R. 950: Mr. HOLT.
H.R. 985: Mr. BRADY of Texas, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. KIND, Mr. OBERSTAR, Mr. LEE of New York, Mr. ROONEY, and Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas.
H.R. 1016: Mr. ALTMIRE and Ms. TITUS.
H.R. 1050: Mr. RADANOVICH and Mr. TIAHRT.
H.R. 1054: Mr. SHUSTER.
H.R. 1067: Mr. ROSS, Mr. GRIJALVA, and Mr. KLEIN of Florida.
H.R. 1083: Mr. FRANKS of Arizona.
H.R. 1085: Mr. LEWIS of Georgia.
H.R. 1098: Mr. COURTNEY.
H.R. 1136: Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, and Mr. MILLER of North Carolina.
H.R. 1150: Mr. SESTAK.
H.R. 1158: Mr. LEWIS of Georgia.
H.R. 1174: Ms. BORDALLO, Mr. TAYLOR, Mr. CAO, Ms. MARKEY of Colorado, Mr. SCHAUER, Mr. MCMAHON, Mr. FILNER, Mr. PETERSON, Mrs. MYRICK, Mr. COHEN, Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida, Mr. COSTELLO, Mr. BOSWELL, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, Mr. RAHALL, Mr. DINGELL, Mr. CLYBURN, Mr. JACKSON of Illinois, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Mr. CARNAHAN, Mr. POE of Texas, and Mr. MELANCON.
H.R. 1189: Ms. MCCOLLUM and Mrs. SCHMIDT.
H.R. 1196: Mr. SESTAK.
H.R. 1203: Ms. WOOLSEY, Mr. MASSA, Mr. TONKO, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. RAHALL, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. COSTELLO, Mr. MORAN of Kansas, Mr. CHANDLER, Mr. LANCE, and Mr. EDWARDS of Texas.
H.R. 1204: Mr. ISRAEL, Mr. KLEIN of Florida, and Mr. MCINTYRE.
H.R. 1207: Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. DEAL of Georgia, and Mr. FRANKS of Arizona.
H.R. 1209: Mr. WESTMORELand, Mr. ROONEY, Mrs. LUMMIS, Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida, Mr. BACHUS, Mrs. EMERSON, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Mr. FLAKE, Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida, Mr. EHLERS, Mr. SMITH of Texas, Mr. LAMBORN, Mr. TURNER, Mr. SPRATT, and Mr. SPACE.
H.R. 1210: Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Mr. SPACE, and Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania.
H.R. 1211: Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Ms. TITUS, Mr. OBERSTAR, Mr. WEXLER, and Mr. HOLT.
H.R. 1215: Mr. FILNER, Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin, Mr. FARR, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. HOLT, and Ms. NORTON.
H.R. 1220: Mr. PAUL.
H.R. 1228: Mr. LEE of New York and Mr. LINDER.
H.R. 1231: Mr. CARSON of Indiana.
H.R. 1238: Mr. CHAFFETZ.
H.R. 1240: Mr. PETRI.
H.R. 1256: Mr. PETERS, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, Mr. KLEIN of Florida, and Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin.
H.R. 1261: Mr. PENCE, Mr. SMITH of Texas, Mr. WAMP, Mr. BURTON of Indiana, and Mr. SESSIONS.
H.R. 1270: Mr. SIRES and Mr. LEWIS of Georgia.
H.R. 1283: Mr. MASSA and Mr. MILLER of North Carolina.
H.R. 1285: Mr. CASTLE.
H.R. 1325: Mr. CONYERS.
H.R. 1327: Mr. ADLER of New Jersey and Mr. PAULSEN.
H.R. 1346: Mrs. DAHLKEMPER.
H.R. 1362: Mr. SERRANO, Mr. WITTMAN, Mr. ROTHMAN of New Jersey, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. BUCHANAN, Mr. TERRY, Mr. CULBERSON, Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, Mr. MORAN of Kansas, Mr. BACHUS, Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California, and Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California.
H.R. 1377: Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida.
H.R. 1399: Mr. WELCH.
H.R. 1408: Mr. KILDEE.
H.R. 1409: Mr. KLEIN of Florida.
H.R. 1410: Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California and Ms. BALDWIN.
H.R. 1413: Mr. WOLF.
H.R. 1414: Mr. LEE of New York.
H.R. 1420: Mr. LAMBORN.
H.R. 1426: Mr. MORAN of Kansas, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. LATTA, and Mr. KING of Iowa.
H.R. 1428: Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA, Mr. PETERSON, and Mr. WALZ.
H.R. 1447: Mr. SOUDER and Mr. COURTNEY.
H.R. 1454: Mr. CRENSHAW, Ms. HIRONO, and Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky.
H.R. 1456: Ms. SCHAKOWSKY.
H.R. 1466: Ms. EDWARDS of Maryland and Mr. LEWIS of Georgia.
H.R. 1470: Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida and Mr. GRAVES.
H.R. 1499: Mr. ALTMIRE, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Mrs. BIGGERT, and Mr. WAMP.
H.R. 1505: Mr. RANGEL, Mr. PETERSON, Mr. WOLF, and Mr. FRANKS of Arizona.
H.R. 1509: Mrs. BLACKBURN and Mr. MCCARTHY of California.
H.R. 1521: Mr. BILBRAY, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. ISRAEL, and Mr. PITTS.
H.R. 1547: Mr. MORAN of Kansas, Mr. CAPUANO, Mr. CARDOZA, Mrs. BLACKBURN, and Mr. SPACE.
H.R. 1550: Ms. KILPATRICK of Michigan, Mr. DINGELL, Mr. PETERS, Mr. UPTON, Mr. COURTNEY, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. LOEBSACK, and Mr. HARE.
H.R. 1551: Mr. SMITH of Washington, Ms. CLARKE, Mr. SHERMAN, Mr. MEEKS of New York, Mr. JACKSON of Illinois, and Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California.
H.R. 1571: Mr. WESTMORELAND.
H.R. 1585: Mr. FILNER, Ms. NORTON, Mr. ABERCROMBIE, Mr. MEEKS of New York, Ms. BERKLEY, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. HARE, Mr. HINOJOSA, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, Mr. GORDON of Tennessee, Mr. SIRES, and Mr. CAPUANO.
H.R. 1597: Mr. ADLER of New Jersey, Mr. BARROW, Mr. TEAGUE, Mr. DEFAZIO, Mr. MASSA, and Mr. ALTMIRE.
H.R. 1603: Mr. MASSA and Mr. LARSON of Connecticut.
H.R. 1640: Mr. TIERNEY and Mr. MASSA.
H.R. 1645: Mr. POLIS.
H.R. 1646: Mr. GRIJALVA and Mrs. BACHMANN.
H. Con. Res. 34: Mr. TIAHRT.
H. Con. Res. 36: Mr. MILLER of North Carolina.
H. Con. Res. 55: Mr. WESTMORELAND and Ms. FALLIN.
H. Con. Res. 60: Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. BROWN of South Carolina, Mr. HARPER, Mrs. MYRICK, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. MORAN of Virginia, Mr. GERLACH, Mr. SHIMKUS, Mr. MCDERMOTT, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Mr. WALDEN, Mr. BOUCHER, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. MEEKS of New York, Mr. MELANCON, Mr. BARTLETT, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. ISRAEL, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. OBERSTAR, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Mr. YOUNG of Florida, Mrs. CAPPS, Mr. GALLEGLY, Mr. RADANOVICH, Mr. UPTON, and Mr. ROE of Tennessee.
H. Con. Res. 74: Mr. BURTON of Indiana.
H. Res. 81: Mr. DAVIS of Alabama.
H. Res. 178: Mr. DONNELLY of Indiana and Mr. HEINRICH.
H. Res. 185: Ms. FUDGE, Mr. SCHIFF, and Mr. SESTAK.
H. Res. 199: Mr. BROUN of Georgia, Mr. PITTS, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. MARCHANT, Mr. DUNCAN, Mr. BURGESS, Mr. CHAFFETZ, and Ms. JENKINS.
H. Res. 209: Mr. JONES.
H. Res. 215: Mr. SNYDER.
H. Res. 234: Mr. CARDOZA, Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts, Mr. TEAGUE, Mr. MORAN of Kansas, Ms. HIRONO, and Mr. DONNELLY of Indiana.
H. Res. 244: Mr. PITTS, Mr. BOOZMAN, and Mr. JORDAN of Ohio.
H. Res. 247: Mr. CLAY, Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, Mr. BLUNT, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. CARNAHAN, Mr. MARKEY of Massachusetts, Mr. FARR, Mr. MORAN of Virginia, and Mr. SNYDER.
H. Res. 249: Mr. CALVERT.
H. Res. 254: Mr. ROONEY.
H. Res. 268: Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Ms. BORDALLO, Mr. EHLERS, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, and Mr. LEWIS of Georgia.
H. Res. 270: Mr. SKELTON.
H. Res. 271: Ms. WATSON.
H. Res. 273: Mr. LANGEVIN.

CONGRESSIONAL EARMARKS, LIMITED TAX BENEFITS, OR LIMITED TARIFF BENEFITS

Under clause 9 of rule XXI, lists or statements on congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits were submitted as follows:

OFFERED BY MR. SPRATT

The provisions that warranted a referral to the Committee on the Budget in H.R. 1404, the Federal Land Assistance, Management and Enhancement Act, do not include any congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in clause 9(d), 9(e), or 9(f) of Rule XXI.

DELETIONS OF SPONSORS FROM PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were deleted from public bills and resolutions as follows:

H. Res. 252: Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina.

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Senate

The Senate met at 2 p.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JIM WEBB, a Senator from the Commonwealth of Virginia.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

O God, our Father, who in the ancient days led people to Your truth, draw us to the paths that lead to life. Lord, strengthen our lawmakers for today's work. May they place what is good for our Nation above partisan concerns and party loyalty. Give them the faith and courage to seek to build a world that fosters unity and cooperation and eliminates suspicion and distrust. Take from them distracting worries, as You infuse them with greater trust in You. Make them satisfied to serve You with faithfulness, seeking to please You in all that they say and do.

We pray in the Redeemer's name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable JIM WEBB led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, March 23, 2009.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, section 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable JIM WEBB, a Senator from the Commonwealth of Virginia, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mr. WEBB thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, we expect to extend morning business until 4 o'clock. We only have consent now to do it until 3 o'clock. We will return later for that.

During the time of morning business, we will have 10-minute speeches by Senators. Following morning business, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to H.R. 1388, a bill to reauthorize and reform national service laws. At 6 p.m. this evening we will vote on a motion to invoke cloture on a filibuster preventing us from proceeding to H.R. 1388.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—H.R. 1586 and S. 651

Mr. REID. Mr. President, it is my understanding that two bills are at the desk and due for a second reading.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will read the titles of the bills for the second time.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 1586) to impose an additional tax on bonuses received from certain TARP recipients.

A bill (S. 651) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to impose an excise tax on excessive bonuses paid by, and received from, companies receiving emergency economic assistance, to limit the amount of nonqualified deferred compensation that employees of such companies may defer from taxation, and for other purposes.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I object to any further proceedings with respect to these bills en bloc.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection is heard.

The bills will be placed on the calendar.

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, at 4 p.m. today we are going to proceed to the national service legislation. I ask unanimous consent that the period for morning business be extended until 4 p.m., under the condition of the previous order; that the Senate resume consideration of the motion to proceed to H.R. 1388 at 4 p.m., with the time until 6 p.m. equally divided and controlled between Senators MIKULSKI and ENZI, the managers of the bill, or their designees; that the 10 minutes immediately prior to the 6 p.m. vote be controlled equally between the leaders or their designees; that at 6 p.m., the Senate proceed to vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed; further, that if cloture is invoked, then postcloture time continue to run during any period of morning business, recess, or adjournment of the Senate; further, that the remaining provisions of the previous order continue to be in effect.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

SERVE AMERICA ACT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, this afternoon we are going to begin work on the national service legislation. My message to the Senate today is that we are going to finish this legislation this week. We have to. We must start on the budget next week. This is bipartisan legislation. Senators HATCH, KENNEDY, and others have worked very hard on this legislation. There is no

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

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reason we should not finish this very quickly. But we will see.

There has been a lot of work done to get us to this point. We are going to move forward. If it is necessary that we work on Friday and Saturday or even Sunday, it is important that we do that so we can start the budget on Monday. Everybody should be warned about that as far as weekend travel. It all depends on what the minority does regarding this bill. Again, everyone should know it is bipartisan, and we need to complete it before we do the budget.

Last week I spoke to a group of young men and women from around the country who are being honored for their commitment to public service. In recent years, vast numbers of young people have sought private sector fields such as finance and banking. There is nothing wrong with their trying to do well, but in this hour of economic crisis for our country, it was encouraging to meet with a group of young people who have made the choice not to do well but to do good.

Americans may find themselves with less time and money to donate to their causes than in previous years, to charities, but we remain a generous country. It is fitting that the Congress now move to the consideration of the Serve America Act, bipartisan legislation cosponsored by 35 Senators, championed by Senators KENNEDY and HATCH and led this week by Senators MIKULSKI and ENZI.

The Serve America Act will provide better opportunities for Americans of all ages, from all regions and walks of life, to answer the call to service.

This legislation builds on the success of the AmeriCorps program with the goal of increasing the number of volunteers from 75,000 up to 250,000.

This bill also creates several new volunteer corps with specific missions in areas of national need: An education corps to help increase student achievement and graduation rates; a healthy future corps to improve access to health care; a clean energy corps to encourage energy efficiency and conservation measures; a veterans corps to assist our Nation's veterans; and an opportunity corps to assist the economically disadvantaged.

The Serve America Act finally increases the education award for full-time volunteers and links it to increases in the maximum Pell grants.

I urge my colleagues to honor the selfless commitment to a better country that Americans are making in their communities every day by passing this outstanding legislation.

Mr. President, we will also continue meeting to negotiate over President Obama's budget this week. The President's framework sets the right priorities for the country, and Chairman CONRAD continues to work with Democrats and Republicans to strengthen the budget.

We must remember that as deep as our immediate problems may be, the worst mistake we could make is to stop investing in the future. We need a budget that lays the groundwork for an economy that doesn't just recover in the short term but prospers in the long term.

That is why we must invest in education, health care, and renewable energy. These are not optional projects worth saving for better times; we are saving for better times. They are requirements for job creation and long-term economic recovery.

This budget must provide tax relief for working Americans who are struggling under the weight of rising prices and decreasing household incomes.

As we work our way through the budget process, Democrats and Republicans will not agree on everything. But I think we can all agree it is long past time that we get a budget that puts the American people first.

Finally, last week, I followed action from the House of Representatives by offering by unanimous consent legislation that would recoup the outrageous bonuses paid by AIG to its executives. Unfortunately, despite joining Democrats and the American people in their calls for action, there was a Republican objection to my request.

Despite last week's Republican objection to passing the AIG bonus bill, we will continue to work to right this egregious misuse of taxpayer dollars. Republicans have asked for more time to study the legislation, and they are entitled to that. With Republican cooperation, we can quickly and responsibly return these funds to the American people.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to a period of morning business until 4 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The Senator from Nebraska is recognized.

THE BUDGET

Mr. JOHANNS. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the President's budget outline.

For too long, Washington has promised way too much, without a plan to pay for it. The result is that we face a financial crisis unlike any other generation.

The lesson is that we must not overpromise and, therefore, we must not overspend. Americans are making very tough decisions in their daily lives that members of their Government still refuse to make.

Unfortunately, the President's budget outline is an example of this continued pattern. The President's budget fails to chart our country on a path toward prosperity. It exercises far too little restraint and does not even attempt to tackle the massive fiscal imbalance facing future generations.

The budget we have before us, regretfully, is a spending frenzy, a taxing spree, and a borrowing nightmare as big as any that our country has ever seen. The President's first budget can, most definitely, be characterized as unprecedented and historic on many levels. However, a budget that breaks the record for spending the most, taxing the most, and borrowing the most of any budget in history is not the kind of record the American people can afford to see broken.

Let's take a look at the massive tax increase. With a pricetag of $1.9 trillion, it winds up being the largest tax increase in history. Incredulously, though, not a single penny goes toward deficit reduction.

Now, one might ask, how is it possible that the budget contains the largest tax increase in history, yet not one cent of that increased revenue goes to pay off our Nation's obligations?

I will tell you why—because the budget gobbles up that tax revenue for more spending. When that revenue isn't enough to fund all of the Government expansion, the President's budget just keeps on spending.

There is so much bloated spending that the CBO released an estimate Friday projecting a deficit of nearly $1 trillion every year for the next 10 years. Our country is faced with an unprecedented deficit. So can anyone answer whether it is sound fiscal policy to tax more just to spend more?

At a time when we must do something to pay off our debt and reduce deficits, the budget simply ignores these problems. It taxes and it spends, inching this great Nation ever closer to bankruptcy.

One of the specific tax increases found in the President's budget is a proposal to enact a cap-and-trade regime. Estimates predict that by enacting this policy, each household will see an increase of $3,100 a year in higher energy costs. But not to worry, the President said he is using the money raised from a cap-and-trade program to make the work opportunity tax credit permanent. That credit would provide families with $800 more a year.

The math is straightforward. Let's do the math: a tax increase of $3,100 offset by $800. This is still a net tax increase of $2,300. Just think, it would take a family of four who makes $50,000 a year 2½ weeks to earn enough to pay for the new tax. That same family with a $100,000 mortgage could make about 3 months of mortgage payments or buy 8 months of groceries with that $2,300.

Beyond the consumer, the cap-and-trade program will have a devastating impact on the farmers in my State. One study found that enacting cap and trade would raise the cost of producing an acre of corn by anywhere from $40

to $80 per acre. Folks in Nebraska produce about 9 million acres of corn each year. So we are looking at $3 billion to $7 billion more a year in higher input costs for that producer. This would be devastating.

The President's budget also contains harmful tax increases on small businesses—the job engine of our economy. According to the latest figures, small businesses create over 74 percent of all new private sector jobs, employ over half the labor force, and contribute about half of the Nation's output. The last thing our country needs when unemployment is projected to be as high as 10 percent is a tax on the very segment of our economy that creates the majority of the new jobs. It goes against all logic to encourage output productivity and job creation in one breath and then penalize that same success with tax increases in the next.

The small businesses located in towns across Nebraska cannot afford another penny in extra taxes. When I talk with folks back home, I hear how they are juggling the electric bill, the health care costs, working to make payroll, while trying not to lay people off. Why would they believe that their Government wants them to succeed if Congress turns around and slaps a crippling tax increase on them during their most trying time?

Beyond the staggering tax increases contained in the budget, the spending is also the most we have ever seen in history. The pricetag is $3.6 trillion for 2010. Let me repeat, $3.6 trillion. To further illustrate the massive spending and subsequent borrowing we would have to undertake, I have a chart regarding public debt that I wish to put up and share.

Last year, the debt held by the public as a percent of gross domestic product was about 40 percent. As my chart depicts, by 2019, this will rise to 82 percent. If you do the math, that is a 100-percent increase. Let's look at the pure dollar amount. The President's budget outline would double the debt held by the public in 5 years and nearly triple it in 10. It goes from $5.8 trillion in 2009 to $17.3 trillion in 2019.

Let's imagine for a second if the average citizen behaved as Government is being suggested it should—to sign up for credit card after credit card after credit card, max them all out without making a single payment on the principal, never once scaling back on their spending, and then send an IOU to the company saying: I will pay you some day.

Even our creditors have come forward with doubts regarding our spending behavior. China within the last few weeks has expressed concern. The chief China economist for JPMorgan, Frank Gong, put it this way:

> Inside China, there has been a lot of debate about whether they should continue to buy treasuries.

China is already the No. 1 foreign holder of United States debt. If they stop financing our spending, what then? Who will be Uncle Sam's banker when the IOUs catch up with us?

I am extremely worried by the result this runaway spending will create—lower standard of living, inflation spiraling out of control, less economic opportunity for future generations. What if future generations do not have the ability to get a home loan for that first house or student loans to go to college? Isn't it our goal to provide a better life for our grandchildren and children?

In conclusion, let me say that none of us has a crystal ball. I realize the President has a difficult job, but I do know that trying to lead the country out of this mess with bigger Government, runaway spending, massive debt, and tax increases is not the way to go. Future generations deserve better. Making tough decisions has to start somewhere, and I am disappointed that this budget outline passes the buck to another day.

I will wrap up with this. I look forward to working with my colleagues as we debate our Nation's budget next week. I sincerely hope there is a genuine commitment to tackling some of the concerns that I have outlined today.

Mr. President, I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

AIG BONUSES

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, I wish to speak briefly to the issue that has been very much on the minds of the American public over the last several days, and that is the bonuses paid to folks who work with AIG, the insurance company that has been the recipient of taxpayer money under the so-called TARP legislation.

A lot of times when Congress acts in haste, it makes mistakes, and one of the concerns I have about the bill we will be taking up is the question of whether we have adequately thought through the exact remedy we want to impose here in order to get the bonus money back. The House of Representatives acted very quickly and passed a very onerous tax bill that would claw this money back. The Senate has a bill that has been written by the chairman and ranking member of the Finance Committee that would be even broader in the sense that it would both tax the company itself as well as the individuals who receive the bonuses. There are a lot of concerns that have been raised over the weekend about both of these approaches. I have urged a little bit of caution here so we don't do the wrong thing again.

One of the reasons we are in the position we are in is because Congress acted in haste. In fact, when the bill was passed that allowed these bonuses, I don't think very many—if any—of our colleagues knew it was in the legislation. After the fact, we learned that the authorization for the bonuses was in the legislation. But when we act quickly and we don't really know what we are doing, we can make mistakes.

I have suggested there be a hearing in the Senate to answer a lot of the questions the public has been asking. Now, the first question is, Exactly who are these bonuses paid to and why? Is it necessary that these people receive the bonuses in order for the Government to protect its interests in the company it now owns a substantial part of—AIG? Has some of the money been given back? Will more of the money be given back? Is it fair to impose a tax retroactively? In other words, after people have earned the money based upon an expectation that the money will be taxed at regular rates, is there now going to be an extra tax imposed on top of that simply because we don't like what was done? Will it withstand constitutional muster? And perhaps most importantly, how about the Secretary of the Treasury engaging in the authority, which I understand he possesses under the stimulus bill that we passed earlier, to act in the public interest to claw that money back? In other words, is it even necessary for Congress to amend the IRS Code in order for the Secretary of the Treasury to be able to get that money back?

Clearly, this could have all been avoided had the Government asked AIG to renegotiate the contracts when it gave AIG about $30 billion 3 weeks ago. The Government was in a position to say: One of the conditions for receiving this so-called TARP money is that you will renegotiate the contracts that provide bonuses for your employees. We could have done that at that time. But it wasn't done, so now we have to figure out the right way to deal with this.

The other reason I am urging caution was expressed by the President in a ''60 Minutes'' interview that was on television last night. Here is how he answered a question about the constitutionality of this proposed tax law. I am now quoting the President:

> Well, I think that as a general proposition you don't want to be passing laws that are just targeting a handful of individuals. You want to pass laws that have some broad applicability. And as a general proposition, I think you certainly don't want to use the Tax Code to punish people.

I think the President is right about exactly what he said there, and that is one of the reasons there is some doubt about whether this law's constitutionality would be upheld and another reason I think we would be wise to hold hearings. But there is yet another reason, and that has to do with whether the private businesses that have been helped by the so-called TARP legislation will want to continue to receive this money or continue to participate in the public-private partnerships that

have been established by the Government if there is a possibility there is going to be retroactive punitive legislation imposed upon them or their employees.

So one of the things I would like to do is to make sure that in expressing our outrage—and every one of us is outraged about this—we do it in a way that is constructive and not destructive to the very program the President has created to try to help these struggling companies get back on their feet so that they can lend credit to everybody else who needs credit in our country.

There is a significant view that if the folks participating in this program come to believe that the Government—Congress—can at any time come in and impose a new tax on them, they are going to want to get out of these programs rather than participate in them. In fact, there have been strongly expressed views that these banks will try to repay the TARP funds quickly—prematurely, in effect—in order to get out from underneath the Government's potential further involvement in their businesses. Of course, by paying the money back, they reduce their ability to loan money to the rest of us. Obviously, the whole point in giving them the TARP funds in the first place was to give them more liquidity so that they would have the money to lend to businesses, to families, and others throughout America.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD following my remarks a couple of statements that make this point very clearly. One is an editorial that was in the Washington Post on Friday, March 20, and the other is a very interesting article by Ian Bremmer and Sean West that was printed in the Friday Wall Street Journal.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(See exhibits 1 and 2.)

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, the ''Washington Gone Wild'' editorial in the Washington Post makes the argument I just made. They use the words ''shortsighted,'' ''opportunistic,'' and ''irresponsible,'' and liken this to the actions of a mob to get even with people rather than stopping to think about what it is going to do to the President's TARP program. And that is what I wish to talk about.

I voted for both the first and second TARP. There were only six Republicans in the Senate who supported that second program, and I did it because I believed it was important for the President and the Secretary of the Treasury to have the necessary funding to help these institutions. We are going to destroy that program if the participants in the program come to believe that, out of spite, Congress, reacting to an angry electorate, will simply come down and pass new tax obligations on the employees of these companies in the future. They are going to be very weary of participating.

As the Washington Post editorial notes:

> Elected officials have a responsibility to lead, not just to pander; to weigh what makes sense for the country, not just what feels good.

The point is, we now own a big share of this company and parts of some of these other companies, and we want to do what is in their best interest for our best interest and not simply punish them because we are angry that some folks got bonuses.

So I am going to urge my colleagues to take a deep breath here and talk to the administration, to hold a hearing and answer the questions that have been asked here and see whether there isn't a better way to achieve the same result. I just happen to believe that if the Secretary of the Treasury called these folks down to his office and said: You know, for the good of the country, you ought to give half or two-thirds of whatever it is back, and if we can save your company, you will be able to make that money back in no time with a healthy company, and if we don't, it is going to be bad for America—I would appeal to their patriotism. He could also talk to the executives at AIG and ask them to sit down with the same people to renegotiate the contracts. There are other ways, in other words, to accomplish the same result without doing violence to our Tax Code, to the concept of contracts, and that do not raise the question about the constitutionality of this action.

Mr. President, I urge my colleagues to hold a hearing on the bill. Do not bring this bill up before the Senate for a vote this week but discuss it with the administration and see if we can come up with a better solution and resolve this problem in a sensible way that will be good for America.

EXHIBIT 1

[From the Washington Post, Mar. 20, 2009]

WASHINGTON GONE WILD

''Shortsighted,'' ''opportunistic'' and ''irresponsible'' aptly describe the actions of those who fueled the debacle on Wall Street. They are also apt descriptors for lawmakers more focused on currying favor with a public outraged at the bonuses handed out by bailed-out companies than on fixing the fundamental and still potentially disastrous cracks in the financial system. By changing the terms of a deal months after it was entered into, Congress will show the government to be an unreliable partner, further draining confidence from the financial system and endangering long-term recovery.

Yesterday, the House had the feel of a mob scene, with lawmaker after furious lawmaker vying for floor time to rail against the $165 million in taxpayer-funded bonuses lavished on employees of American International Group's disgraced Financial Products division. House members rushed through a bill to impose an effective tax rate of 90 percent on bonuses paid to AIG employees and employees of other firms that accepted at least $5 billion from the Troubled Assets Relief Program—though when then-Treasury Secretary Henry M. Paulson Jr. pressed many of those firms to take the funds last fall, government interference in their compensation systems was not part of the deal. The legislation, approved by a vote of 328 to 93, would affect employees who received bonuses on or after Jan. 1 and whose household incomes exceed $250,000. Late yesterday afternoon, lawmakers on the Senate Finance Committee introduced their own, broader version of the bonus clawback that would affect firms that accepted as little as $100 million of government funds.

We understand that legislators are hearing from furious constituents, and we understand why those voters are angry. It is unquestionably galling that some of the employees who crafted and pushed risky derivatives that wreaked financial havoc worldwide should line their pockets with some of the $173 billion in public funds meant to prop up the too-big-to-fail insurance behemoth and its global business partners. The bonus anger resonates, too, because of a larger sense many voters have that the people who helped trigger this whole economic mess are not the people paying the greatest price.

But elected officials have a responsibility to lead, not just to pander; to weigh what makes sense for the country, not just what feels good. The effective confiscation of legally earned and contractually promised payments may well be unconstitutional. It is almost certain to be unhelpful. The bonuses paid at AIG represent less than one-tenth of 1 percent of the bailout provided so far; recouping those funds will have no discernible fiscal effect. But it will help drive away the best talent at the firm, and despite all the glib messages of ''good riddance,'' that is a strange action for an owner—and the American public now owns AIG—to take. But the real damage goes well beyond any effect on AIG. The economy continues to suffer from a shortage of credit. The government needs financial institutions—including relatively healthy ones—to take public funds that will then be lent to responsible businesses and consumers. The Obama administration reportedly intends in the next week or two to announce the details of a ''private-public partnership'' to buy troubled assets from ailing banks. The participation of private hedge funds, investment banks and other firms will be key to the plan's success. But what executive in his right mind will enter into a deal if he or she believes the rules can be changed six months or one year down the road purely on the basis of polls and politicians' fears?

Rather than bringing reason to the debate, President Obama has stoked the anger, and last night, the White House commented favorably on the House action. Perhaps Mr. Obama believes that only by lining up with an angry public now can he persuade it, and Congress, to approve the hundreds of billions more he will need to right the credit system. But he might have expressed his sympathy with public anger over irresponsible behavior in the financial sector while also steering the government in a more constructive direction. The absence of backbone on either end of Pennsylvania Avenue this week could carry a steep price.

EXHIBIT 2

[From the Wall Street Journal, Mar. 20, 2009]

AIG AND ''POLITICAL RISK''

(By Ian Bremmer and Sean West)

After quietly tolerating $170 billion in bailout money for AIG, why have the public, Congress and the administration suddenly blown up about a tiny fraction of that amount that is being paid out in retention payments and bonuses? After all, the AIG bailout channels U.S. taxpayer dollars to foreign banks and even potentially covers hedge-fund profits.

The reason is one of political expediency: The bonuses represent greed in the face of dire circumstances, which resonates with Joe the TARP-funder. The public now has an

Enron-like target on which to unload its collective frustration about the financial meltdown. While public outrage is understandable, pandering to it jeopardizes the administration's credentials in a sloppy attempt to score populist points. This raises the political risk for all investors in the U.S. (both domestic and foreign) significantly.

The financial-sector rescue necessitates unpopular actions that will only be politically worth it if the administration actually solves the crisis. Until recently, the Obama administration had taken pragmatic is slow actions that it deemed necessary to fend off disaster, as opposed to pursuing an ideological agenda in how it implements the bailout.

But this week, under pressure to show a strong hand and positive results, the administration latched onto the AIG bonus flap as an angle for curring populist favor. When it became clear that the bonuses were going to be big news, President Obama led the anti-AIG charge with instructions to ''pursue every legal avenue'' to get the money back. Never mind that the administration was responsible for the TARP provision that (sensibly, from a legal standpoint) exempted preexisting legal agreements from the bill's limits on compensation. Mr. Obama now says he'd like to create a new ''resolution authority'' to deal with ''contracts that may be inappropriate.'' Meanwhile, Congress seems poised to undo the bonuses through special taxes—a move that in other circumstances would clearly be labeled retroactive and unfair.

It was not long ago that Mr. Obama assailed the Bush administration for its dangerous expansion of executive power during a complex crisis. The Obama administration's antics around the AIG bonuses suggest a similar effort to use political power to contort the law. But rather than doing so for reasons of national security, this administration is doing so to pander to an angry public. When the Obama administration and Congress flex this kind of muscle, they attach a new political-risk component to all contracts negotiated in the shadow of the bailout.

That risk may scare potential investors away from bailout recipients because they cannot trust our government's will in the face of public outrage. It destroys our moral high ground the next time Mr. Obama wants to criticize a foreign country for ignoring the rule of law by nationalizing private assets or repudiating international debt. It will certainly make Mr. Obama's task much more difficult when he tries to sell the public on his administration's ability to manage the rest of the bailout, and when he tries to sell private firms on the public-private partnership that will be needed to make the recovery work.

The administration could have let Congress have its week of grandstanding over bonuses, while issuing a public statement acknowledging the bonuses as deplorable, but not important enough to detract from the real work that lies ahead. The tragedy here is the extraordinary amount of time that is being wasted on this issue when the Treasury Department remains understaffed, a detailed toxic-asset plan remains perpetually forthcoming, and the economy continues to shed jobs.

It's predictable that the administration and Congress would rather abuse an easy target over something every voter can get mad about than actually confront the hard issues of managing the financial crisis, including progress on the ''stress test'' of banks and the restoration of normal credit operations, establishing genuine oversight of the use of bailout funds, and coordinating international efforts on global economic stimulus and changes to financial-industry regulations. That type of governing is far more troublesome, as it involves making difficult decisions on complex topics and communicating unpopular news to constituents.

This is a hallmark moment for the administration. Congressional anger over AIG's bonuses foreshadows the battle looming if and when the administration asks for more financial-sector rescue funds. The administration may rightly sense that failing to join hands with Congress and the public in outrage over the bonuses would complicate release of those funds. But Mr. Obama does not need to show solidarity by diminishing confidence in the rule of law. That bit of populism will cost the president far more in future credibility than he stands to gain in present popularity.

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

HONORING GALLAUDET UNIVERSITY

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, on July 4, 1861, President Lincoln celebrated our Nation's 85th year of independence by declaring to Congress:

> The principal aim of the U.S. Government should be to elevate the condition of men—to lift artificial weights from all shoulders—to clear the paths of laudable pursuit for all—to afford all, an unfettered start, and a fair chance in the race of life.

Just a few months prior to enunciating the aim of his Government, President Lincoln signed into Federal law the authorization to confer collegiate degrees to the deaf and the hard of hearing in a campus in Washington, DC, not far from here. For the first time in our Nation's history, and still to this day, Gallaudet University is the only liberal arts university in the world dedicated to pursuit of access to higher education for deaf and hard of hearing students.

Mr. President, 2009 marks the bicentennial, as we know, of President Lincoln's birth. All around our Nation, parents and children, students and teachers are reconnecting the history of Lincoln's life to our world today.

Mr. President, 2009 also marks the 145th anniversary of Gallaudet University's charter, signed by Abraham Lincoln himself. As our country struggles through economic calamity and armed conflict overseas, let us mark the significance of these events by honoring the principal aim that President Lincoln and thousands of Gallaudet students have embarked upon: That every American has an unfettered start and fair chance at the American dream, that it be free of prejudice and ignorance and, instead, full of opportunity and access.

Today, Gallaudet annually enrolls more than 1,600 undergraduate and graduate students who take courses in more than 40 majors. Today, more than 15,000 Gallaudet alumni are leaders in their fields and in their communities, sprinkled all over the United States of America.

Serving on the board of trustees of Gallaudet is one of the great honors of my life. My mother, an English teacher, put such a premium on education. Education has anchored my life as a child in Mansfield, OH, and now as a Senator representing Ohio in Washington. I am reminded each day of this country's rich history, the tapestry of America's diversity—of our language, of our families, of our communities. The tapestry of America's diversity teaches us that wisdom and goodness persist in each of us, despite efforts to marginalize and discriminate by a few of us.

One hundred and forty years ago, the four members of Gallaudet's first graduating class—four people—received degrees signed by President Ulysses S. Grant. To this day, the tradition continues. Every graduate of Gallaudet is conferred a degree signed by the sitting President of the United States. This simple act by a President—President Obama will continue that tradition this year—confers to the students the faith in this country's capacity to elevate the condition of each of us.

I congratulate the students and the faculty, the alumni and the supporters of Gallaudet for teaching all of us the meaning of the values President Lincoln laid before us—that we educate ourselves as part of a community that, full of opportunity and free, as President Lincoln said, free of artificial weight, we educate ourselves as part of a community that works toward the good of our society.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. I ask to speak for 10 minutes as in morning business.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, today I am here to talk about health care reform. I would mention, first, that I was just with DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, the Congresswoman who last year battled with breast cancer and today was there, healthy, to introduce a bill. I am proud to be the Senate sponsor, to focus on increasing awareness among younger women about the risks of breast cancer.

But we are here today to talk about something else and that is how to bring costs down in health care. As we look at how to expand health care, as we look at how to improve the quality of health care, there must be work done to contain the costs. I believe, based on what I have seen in my State, you can actually reduce costs and improve quality.

A few weeks ago, President Obama convened a health care summit to bring together industry leaders, providers, and advocacy groups to discuss our opportunity to move forward with serious health care reform. That reform should begin with the Medicare system. Medicare is one of the most valued social welfare programs our country has produced in the last half century. Yet it is also a program in dire need of reform if it is to survive on sound financial footing and continue to provide the fine medical care our seniors have come to expect from it.

Change is needed now. By 2011, the first baby boomers will enter the Medicare system and by 2016 the number of Medicare beneficiaries will increase by almost 5 percent.

This past winter, I convened a health forum in Minnesota to discuss the various challenges affecting the Medicare system. The message is clear: without action, costs will continue to rise and waste will proliferate.

Medicare is the single largest purchaser of health care and its policies directly affect nearly every health care provider. Medicare's payment system, coding, quality reporting, and recordkeeping are the industry standard. Spending for the Medicare Program is projected to increase 114 percent in the next 10 years. Twenty percent of Medicare beneficiaries suffer from one of five chronic diseases. Medicare spends 66 percent of its annual budget to treat this group. Two-thirds of Medicare spending only helps one-fifth of Medicare beneficiaries. If we are going to sustain Medicare as a healthy, high-quality program Americans deserve, we must do something to address these challenges. In short, we need to reform Medicare so it addresses efficient, high-quality care.

As it happens, doctors and hospitals in many regions of the country, including my State of Minnesota, practice exactly this kind of high-quality, low-cost medicine and they should be rewarded for it. But Medicare does not reward them. Instead, it punishes them. In fact, at the health summit last week, President Obama actually asked the gathered group, ''Why should we punish Minnesota because other States are less efficient?''

The problem is, despite periodic efforts at reform, Medicare pays for quantity, not quality. More tests and more surgeries mean more money, even if the extra tests and operations do nothing to improve a patient's condition. States that have historically delivered excessive procedures are still rewarded for the wasteful practices of the past, while efficient States, such as Minnesota, are punished.

If you look at this chart, you will see that the areas in dark blue are the ones that receive the lion's share of Medicare payments. The light blue area States, such as Minnesota, Montana, Iowa—I see Maine is looking good, as I see the Senator from Maine across the way—but a number of States, you can see, are in areas where Medicare spending is low but quality of care is high. It is as if there were a huge transfusion that basically takes taxpayer money from one region, one area of the country, and puts it in another.

It is not to say people are not sick in other parts of the country—they do deserve that help—but looking at the limited resources, we have to figure out what is working and how come areas of the country that tend to have the lowest health care costs also have the highest quality health care?

It is not what you would think. You would think: Well, the highest cost must have the highest quality. That tends to happen sometimes, in clothing and other things. That is not what is going on in this country right now. Regions with more specialists and more hospital beds tend to provide more services and get more of the money.

According to the Dartmouth Institute for Health Policy and Clinical Practice, high-cost regions in Medicare boast 32 percent more hospital beds, 31 percent more doctors, and 66 percent more medical specialists. In other words, supply is driving demand. The result is that Medicare pays much more in some parts of the country than it does in others for medical care that is no better.

Medicare's own report shows that quality of care is higher in many of these low-cost States. In fact, Medicare spends more in places such as Florida and New Jersey than it spends in States such as Minnesota and Oregon. Let me give you one example:

In Miami, FL, Medicare spent roughly $15,000 per patient per year in the year 2005. In Minneapolis, a Medicare patient received about $7,000 worth of care that year. To put it another way, Medicare will spend $50,000 more on a 65-year-old patient in Miami over the course of his or her lifetime than on a comparable patient in Minneapolis. Now, $50,000, that is a lot of money.

At $2.4 trillion per year, health care spending represents close to 17 percent of the American economy, and it will exceed 20 percent by 2018 if the current trends continue. If you look at this internationally, you can see the United States spends far more than any other nation, without getting better care. We can and we must do better. A number of models are out there to provide direction for the future. The Mayo Clinic, based in my home State of Minnesota, is renowned for the effective care it provides at a reasonable cost. Now, think about this. There was a Dartmouth study that came out. It showed this: If the rest of the hospitals in the country used the same kind of high quality, with very high quality efficiency ratings from families, and high efficiency care as the Mayo Clinic now does, in the last 4 years of a patient's life, the country—the taxpayers of this country—would save $50 billion over 5 years. That is $50 billion over 5 years by simply following the protocol of having a more organized, efficient delivery system with one primary doctor, with experts who work together, without duplicate tests.

That is $50 billion every 4 years by following a set protocol with some of the highest quality ratings in the country. The Congressional Budget Office has also studied the problem and found the potential for huge savings. This chart reflects that Medicare spending would fall by 29 percent if spending in medium- and high-spending regions were the same as that in low-spending regions. That is the CBO.

So how do we change the Medicare system in a way that will reduce these disparities and reward our doctors for doing what is right? Real reform will start when the system starts paying for quality. Here are the three priorities I plan to start working on immediately. First, we need to enhance Medicare incentives that reward quality care. For many illnesses and conditions, the medical profession has widely accepted practice guidelines that result in better health care outcomes, such as when to give aspirin to heart patients, and how often to perform cancer screening, but they are not always followed. A recent RAND Corporation study found that adults received recommended care only 55 percent of the time. Medicare needs to reward doctors and hospitals for doing the right thing and achieving improvement in care. These quality guidelines can be the basis for Medicare payments to providers.

Second, we need to rethink the Medicare payment system. Right now, Medicare pays for tests, visits, and other procedures one by one, giving providers an incentive to order more and more services. We need to have better coordination of care, and less incentive to bill Medicare purely by volume. Increasing the bundling of services in Medicare's payment system has the potential to deliver savings and start rewarding value and not volume.

Third, we need to address the shortage of the number of primary care physicians who are currently practicing across our country. Today, effective primary care is severely undervalued in our health care system. Yet, research suggests that improving access to primary care and reducing reliance on speciality care can improve the efficiency and the quality of health care delivery. To accommodate the needs of an aging population, we need to promote primary care and transition away from our specialty-intensive health care workforce.

The health care system we have now needs major improvement. That means

transforming the system to pay doctors for the quality of care they provide and to turn the current disconnected, reactive health care system into one that is integrated and concentrates on delivering the best care for patients.

Again, I want to stress this, when we talk about saving costs, when we look at these studies, those States that are most efficient, those areas that are more efficient, have high quality care.

I leave you with this figure: The Mayo Clinic, in the last 4 years of a patient's life, if those protocols were followed across the country, we would save $50 billion every 5 years in taxpayer money. That is an independent study, $50 billion.

I know we can do better. At the same time as we reduce the cost, we can improve the quality of care that our Nation's seniors deserve. Working together, we can give them the system they deserve.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. HAGAN.) The Senator from Maine is recognized.

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that I be permitted to proceed for 15 minutes as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(The remarks of Ms. COLLINS pertaining to the introduction of S. 664 are printed in today's RECORD under ''Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.'')

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota.

THE BUDGET

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, this next week we will be taking up the budget for fiscal year 2010. Anyone who previously had not been concerned about that debate and what it means for the country and its future probably should be concerned, based upon the most recent CBO report that came out on Friday of last week. It was sobering. It reinforces the point that we have been making about the outline we have seen of the President's budget; that is, this budget spends too much, taxes too much, and borrows too much.

We have spoken extensively about the new spending in the budget. We have talked at great length as well about some of the new taxes in the budget and how it will drive up taxes on small businesses, the largest job creator in the economy, the economic engine that creates two-thirds of the jobs in our economy.

We also want to talk about the fact that it borrows too much. The CBO report punctuates that point. I couldn't have put it more clearly than what they came out with last week, which suggests the initial estimates about the President's budget outline, which we received earlier, were dramatically understated and, in fact, it is going to add significantly more to the deficit than what we initially anticipated. In fact, in fiscal year 2009, which is the year in which we find ourselves right now, the CBO has revised its deficit estimate to where it is going to go over $1.8 trillion for fiscal year 2009, which represents 13.1 percent—13.1 percent—of our gross domestic product, which dwarfs anything we have seen at any time in history.

So as we enter this debate next week, I think it really is important for all of us in this Chamber to take a good look at this analysis and to try to digest it and, hopefully, for the American people to be able to take a good look at what these numbers mean as well. It is sometimes difficult to even put it into terms people can understand. When I think about $1 trillion, it is a staggering amount of money. We are throwing around numbers in trillions and trillions and trillions today in the abstract. When you try to put it in terms that everyday Americans can understand, it is almost daunting to try to accomplish that.

So when this new report came out, I think many of us found it even more sobering than what we already knew was going to be a very difficult economic and fiscal climate for the next several years. In fact, the President's budget outline that had been analyzed up to this point suggested the debt was going to double in 5 years and triple in 10 years. That is still the case.

If you can believe this, the publicly held debt, in 2019, is going to be $17.3 trillion under the CBO's new estimate. It is about $5.8 trillion today. It literally does, in a 5-year period, double the debt and in a 10-year period triples the debt. It takes the publicly held debt, as a percentage of gross domestic product, from where it is today—a historical average of about, if you look back, 20, 30, 40 percent, but let's say today we are looking at 40 percent, and that is a very high number relative to anything we have seen in history—it takes it up to over 80 percent by the end of that period. So you are looking at public debt and public deficits that are unparalleled and are unprecedented in American history. I think that is the whole point behind the argument we have made throughout the last several weeks in the lead-up to this budget discussion we are going to have next week: This budget spends too much, taxes too much, and borrows too much.

The taxing component is something many of my colleagues have spoken to already. But if you look at, again, the overall tax increases—which many are imposed. And they talk about that it just applies to high-income taxpayers. But you are talking about small businesses, many of which file or organize as subchapter S's or LLCs. So the income they get from their small business flows to their individual income tax statement, which means when these rates go up—and they are going to go up—the effective rates, to 40 and 42 percent, when today those same businesses would be paying 33 or 35 percent, they will be significant increases in the tax burden we are imposing. That is not to mention the new climate change initiative which is also contemplated in the President's budget, which imposes an entirely new energy tax on the American people, on the American consumers, creating all kinds of new costs for energy, whether it is electricity or fuels. There have been studies that have been done, very credible studies by researchers at MIT, that have suggested it is going to cost the average family in this country over 3,000 additional dollars per year in energy costs by the year 2015.

These are some pretty daunting numbers. But they come on the heels of a stimulus bill that was passed a few weeks back that was about $800 billion. When you add interest in it, it was about $1.2 trillion. That was a huge amount of money. When we try to put that in perspective relative to anytime in our Nation's history, it eclipsed anything we had seen previously. Then we had the Omnibus appropriations bill, which increased spending over the previous year by twice the rate of inflation—about 8.3 percent. Then you add the continuing resolution that was passed last year, which funded Government programs last year through March 6 of this year because that was a stopgap appropriations measure that was put in place because the appropriations bills had not been passed last year. Then we had the stimulus bill, which was, as I said, with interest, $1 trillion. Then we had the Omnibus appropriations bill, and with that a twice-the-rate-of-inflation increase. You add all those numbers together, and we have increased the size of Government this year by 49 percent—49 percent—from fiscal year 2008. I think that points to the fact, again, as to the amount of spending we are doing. It adds up because a lot of that, as I said before, is borrowed money, and it is contributing to these deficit numbers the CBO had just released.

So it would be my hope—and I know others are on the floor who are going to speak to this issue a little bit more in detail. I know the Budget Committee has analyzed the new CBO report. We are awaiting the markup of the budget this week in the Senate. We suspect it is probably going to follow somewhat closely the President's outline, his proposal, although my guess is there will be some differences. But if you take the overall trajectory it creates, it creates a trajectory over the next 10 years that calls for an average deficit—this is the average over the 10-year period—of almost $1 trillion. It is $929 billion, according to the Congressional Budget Office. That is the average.

This year, it is $1.8 trillion. Next year, it is $1.4 trillion. It drops down to $670 or $650 billion, I think, for 1 year. But then it starts spiking and trending back up again, to where, over the course of the 10-year window—the budget analysis and planning that is

done here is done in a 10-year window. If you look at that 10-year window, the average deficit is $929 billion a year.

As I said, these are numbers that are staggering and unlike anything we have ever seen. It is hard to put into perspective what we are talking about relative to anytime in American history.

The other thing I will mention with regard to the stimulus bill as well—because I think there was an assumption that all this borrowing and all this spending would somehow lead to job creation and hopefully getting the economy expanding and growing again—what the CBO found in their analysis, again, was that in the long term the impact would be negligible or negative from the spending that was created in the stimulus bill. So not only were we getting no additive benefit in terms of job creation from the stimulus spending—or in the long term, at least—we are going to see negative, they think, or at least negligible, zero, economic growth as a result of it. We are adding $1 trillion to the amount we have borrowed from future generations, and we are asking our children and grandchildren to have to pay it back, not to mention what I am sure are going to be other types of economic consequences associated with that: higher interest rates, higher inflation. There is already a lot of discussion about that as we continue to borrow more and more money, whether there will be people out there who will want to buy our debt.

I believe those are all legitimate concerns and questions we need to raise in this debate, coupled with the fact that there is nothing done in this budget that would in any way significantly reduce the long-term costs associated with the entitlement programs and what is really driving, in the outyears, these deficits: Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. There has been a lot of discussion in the new administration about a willingness to sit down and talk about how to reform and make these programs strong and better and more efficient for the future, but there is nothing in this budget that does that.

In fact, the only serious savings we can point to in the President's budget that they try to achieve come out of defense, come out of the military, come out of our national security, which I would argue: If we do not get national security right, the rest is conversation. But they are assuming savings as a result of drawing down troops in Iraq and places such as that, which I think they are overstating what they are going to be able to achieve in savings.

I would argue some of the other assumptions in the President's outline are optimistic with regard to revenues—and I think the CBO study bears that out—to the point now that even the Washington Post, yesterday, came out with an editorial that I think illustrates exactly how serious this fiscal situation is for our country, and drawing into question the fact that there is very little done in this budget that addresses those long-term fiscal problems I just mentioned in the entitlement programs.

There is nothing to reduce the cost of Government in the outyears, only things that are going to pile on additional costs and add and multiply over a long period of time. The incredible amount of borrowing we are already doing is going to be multiplied many times over into the future.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the editorial from the Washington Post be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Washington Post, Mar. 22, 2009]

RED INK RED ALERT

A CONGRESSIONAL REPORT SHOULD GIVE THE PRESIDENT PAUSE

The new estimates by the Congressional Budget Office showing a federal deficit of 13.1 percent of gross domestic product for the current budget year, which began Oct. 1, are neither surprising nor particularly alarming, though it's larger than the 12.3 percent foreseen by the White House. Both are stunning numbers—far and away the largest deficit ratio since World War II. But spending rises in recessions and tax revenue falls, and we're in a big recession. It would be counterproductive to balance the budget in this historic downturn. The huge deficit includes $700 billion for a necessary rescue of the financial sector. Nor is it shocking that the CBO forecasts a deficit of 9.6 percent of GDP in fiscal 2010 if Congress enacts President Obama's $3.6 trillion budget plan—a deficit also much larger than what the president predicted. The difference largely reflects the CBO's economic forecast, which is more up-to-date and, hence, gloomier than the one Mr. Obama relied on.

What is scary, though, is the CBO's depiction of the remaining years of the president's term, and the half-decade after that—'if his budget is enacted. In none of those years would the federal deficit fall below 4.1 percent of GDP—and it would be stuck at 5.7 percent of GDP in 2019. This is in stark contrast to the president's projection: that his plan would get the deficit down to about 3 percent or so of GDP by that time. It's true, as Peter R. Orszag, director of the Office of Management and Budget, told us, that the CBO's forecasts are subject to large margins of error, especially in the out years. And Mr. Orszag is correct to point out that, even under the CBO's scenario, the deficit as a share of GDP would decline by half under Mr. Obama.

Still, it's less significant to meet that target than to keep the deficits within sustainable bounds, and few experts believe that years of deficits above 4 percent of GDP are consistent with long-term economic vitality.

If the CBO's numbers are subject to revision on account of changing circumstances, then so are the administration's; and those were based on very rosy economic assumptions to begin with. Very little of the claimed deficit reduction in the Obama plan comes from policy changes; it results more or less automatically from the assumed end of the recession, as well as by claiming savings in reducing operations in Iraq and Afghanistan from unrealistically high forecasts. Yet both the White House and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said that the CBO report is no reason to revise the president's ambitious tax and spending blueprint.

Mr. Obama should treat the CBO report as an incentive to fulfill his repeated promises, during and after the campaign, to make hard choices on the budget. Until now he has offered a host of new spending—on health care, middle-class tax cuts, education and alternative energy—without calling for much sacrifice from anyone except the top 5 percent of the income scale. Though his emphasis on controlling health-care costs is welcome, it's not a substitute for reforming the entitlement programs that are the drivers of long-term fiscal crisis, Medicare and Social Security. Yet the president has offered no plan for either and no road map even for achieving a plan. Several members of his own party in the Senate have been expressing doubts about his strategy, and the CBO report will lend credibility to their concerns. He should heed them.

Mr. THUNE. As to the stimulus bill, in and of itself, we are told, if the spending that is included there is not terminated at the end of the 2-year period—when we assume the short-term stimulus spending would terminate—if those programs are continued, the estimate of what they would cost goes from about $1 trillion to over $3 trillion over that 10-year period.

So there will be mountains and mountains and mountains of debt as far as the eye can see, complicated by an unwillingness by the new administration to take on any of the serious decisions that have to be made with regard to entitlement programs and mandatory spending in this budget, with lots of new programs created, as I said, new energy taxes under the guise of climate change, a new health care program that is estimated to cost around $600 billion but which many independent analysts are now saying is going to cost up to $1.5 trillion.

These are all costs that are adding up and continuing to lead to more and more borrowing, higher and higher deficits, to the point that this year 13.1 percent of GDP is the percentage and over $1.8 trillion is the actual number of the deficit. And that goes on now for years and years, and an average of $1 trillion a year just in deficits, to where the public debt, at the end of that 10-year period, will be $17.3 trillion. That is an incredible problem for our country and for future generations.

So it is high time we got it under control. It is why this budget is so wrong for America and for our future.

Madam President, I yield the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam President, I thank Senator THUNE for his excellent remarks. I will just say that sums it up pretty well. I would like to go into a little more detail about the budget—just some of the matters in it—so we confront honestly the situation with which we are dealing.

This is the budget, which I hold up in my hand. This is the budget the President sent up. It is from the Executive Office of the White House, Office of Management and Budget. The big print on it says, ''A New Era of Responsibility.'' The small print says, ''Renewing America's Promise.'' Well, I am not sure what ''Renewing America's Promise'' means, I guess, but I am pretty sure that ''A New Era of Responsibility'' is not what this budget is. I would like to talk about it because it is breathtaking, really.

Now, some would think: Oh, here we go. This is just another political dustup, just another fight between the Republicans and Democrats, just another partisan spasm. That is what it is all about. They talk about these numbers, and I don't know what these numbers mean: a billion, a trillion, a million. What does all that mean? Well, sometimes numbers do mean something. Sometimes numbers are quite different from one another. Sometimes situations have changed, and sometimes they have not changed much. Sometimes the changes are dramatic, significant, directional in nature, historic in nature. That is what I think we are dealing with today.

I believe the discussion over this budget—I am a member of the Budget Committee—is historic. I believe the decisions we make around this budget will affect the very nature of the economy, the nature of the Government that we have, whether we will continue to have a government of limited powers, and where we are heading. Are we moving toward a ''Francification'' of America, a socialization of America? That was a big issue in the campaign. It turned out to be where, in the last few weeks, you remember Joe the Plumber and the quote ''We are going to spread the wealth around.'' People said: Oh, no, President Obama does not really mean that. Yes, he is going to do some new things and make some changes, but he is not heading toward a European-type of economy for America.

So let's talk about the budget. What does his budget say? What does it mean? A budget is a President's plan for the future. It tells where he will get the money he wants to spend. It tells where he will spend it. It tells how much money he will spend and how much spending will occur, and will there be a surplus or will there be a deficit?

Now, some people think: Well, he can't help it. That is just the way things are. These are things that a President does not have power over.

Not so. These represent Presidential priorities. Most States in this country have a balanced budget constitutional amendment. They have had shortages bigger than we are having, and those States are getting by. They are having to make some reductions in their expenditures. I have had a bunch of cities and counties in to visit with me the last 2 weeks, and all of them are making some kind of reduction in their spending. They are not disappearing from the face of the Earth.

So here we go. This is not a secret document, fundamentally. The numbers I am talking about that he proposes as his budget for the country are here.

Normally, since I have been in the Senate—12 years—and on the Budget Committee most of that time, budgets pass on a party-line vote. There have been some tough, close votes. I remember the budget that had the tax cuts in it was a close vote. Several Democrats voted with the Republicans, and it passed. But this budget is different because we have a very large Democratic majority in the Senate. I think it is a three-vote Democratic majority on the Budget Committee. Under our rules, a budget does not have to be subject to a 60-vote point of order, and it is not subject to filibuster or any kind of 60-vote threshold; it passes on a simple majority. So the Democratic majority—a very large majority now—has the power to pass this budget. That is just the way it is. They have the power. I hope, therefore, they will feel the awesome responsibility they have in discussing this budget because it is so unusual, it is so large, and it is so game-changing, to a degree which I have never seen before, and I don't think any of us have.

One of the things that disturbed me in this whole process is the spectacle of our Secretary of Treasury going to Europe to meet with European leaders and chastising them—and they have had some pretty big stimulus packages—for not having bigger stimulus packages, not spending more money, and not going into more debt. This is so odd because we as Americans have normally been the ones who have criticized the Europeans for their tax and spend and entitlement, socialistic welfare system. So here we are doing that.

Prime Minister Merkel in Germany said it is extraordinarily dangerous that transatlantic conflict is being fanned, and, ''I am grateful to the American President that he has told me this is an artificial debate,'' she told lawmakers on April 2 at the Group of 20 nations. She said:

> The Group of 20 nations need to send ''a positive psychological signal, not a competition over stimulus packages that can't be implemented.''

The European Central Bank president, Mr. Trichet, said this:

> If the additional deficits are costing you both a strong increase of the cost of your own refinancing and a loss of confidence of your people, you are not better off!

He goes on to say:

> If your people have the sentiment that they will not be better off in an endless spiraling of deficits, they will not spend any money that you give them today!

So the Europeans are pushing back. They are warning us that we are going too far.

So let's look at some of the numbers to which Senator THUNE made reference. The first is the title of the budget, the President's budget, which came right out of this book—these numbers the President has submitted to us—what he plans to occur in America over the next 10 years under his budget.

In 2008, last September 30, we had a $455 billion deficit. Since World War II, that is the largest deficit the country has ever had—$455 billion. Do you know what it was the year before? It was $161 billion. Why did it jump that much? Well, 150 billion of the dollars that jumped was the checks that got sent out. President Bush sent out the checks. He was going to stop the recession. He sent everybody a check last spring. It didn't work. I voted against it. It wasn't easy to vote against constituents getting a check, but I didn't think it worked then, and everybody agrees now that it didn't, but that helped jump the deficit to this record amount—$455 billion.

What about this year? Including the stimulus package—or a part of it that we just passed—and the $700 billion Wall Street bailout and the bailout of Fannie and Freddie, scored at about $200 billion according to CBO, it comes out this year, September 30, the deficit will be $1,752 billion, more than three times the highest deficit we have had since the Republic—well, at least since World War II, when we were in a life-and-death struggle with millions of people in arms all over the world, turning out airplanes and ships by the thousands.

Is this just one time? Is it just a one-time expenditure? No, it is not. In 2010, the President's own numbers show the deficit will be $1,171 billion, or about $1.2 trillion.

According to the numbers in the President's budget, which were gimmicked, in my view, we will already be under a recovery in 2010. We will not be in negative growth; we will have I think 1.6 percent economic growth, GDP growth. We are still going to have $1.2 trillion in deficits. It drops down to $912 billion, $581 billion, $533 billion, and then starts growing again, and in the 10th year of his budget, he is projecting a deficit of $712 billion.

Now, within those projections are some rosy scenarios, such as if the economy is growing and unemployment is not too high, then you have more money to spend than if the economy is still slow-sinking and unemployment is high. So the budget assumes an unemployment rate of 8.1 percent, the highest—that is as high as it would ever get during this entire 10-year period. It assumes that next year or later this year, we will have 8.1 percent unemployment. Well, we are at 8.1 percent unemployment now. That is the current figure. The blue chip group, the top economists and the ones most people look at, project unemployment to be over 9 percent. CBO projects 9 percent will be the maximum unemployment rate. If it goes that high, then we are going to have bigger deficits. So there

are some other rosy scenarios in there that the objective economists do not believe will occur.

When you score this budget without using those gimmicks or rosy scenarios, as the Congressional Budget Office is required to do—they are required to make an independent analysis of the President's budget, and they have done so.

Let me just say that we are proud of the independence of the Congressional Budget Office. They are a talented group. They work for us here. The new Director was chosen in a bipartisan way but clearly with the final power in the hands of the substantial Democratic majority in the Senate. They control the ultimate choice of the Congressional Budget Office.

They come out not with a $712 billion deficit for that year—not $912 billion but $1.2 trillion, $500 billion higher when they use numbers they believe are fair and honest and accurate, coming out with $1.2 trillion in deficit, not $700 billion in deficit. There will not be, in this entire 10-year period, taking President Obama's own numbers, and certainly not the Congressional Budget Office's numbers, a single year that is close to as low as the $455 billion deficit of President Bush's last year. Most of them are twice that or will average twice that.

So what I wish to say to my colleagues is that this is not sustainable.

The President had a great meeting with the Republicans one day at lunch in the room right over here. He was very personable, open, and responded to any questions asked. I thought he was very sincere when he said: Look, we are going to have to spend a lot of money now, but when this economy comes back we are all going to have to work together to reduce the systemic threat of out-of-control deficits. He said that more than once. I thought he meant that. But when you propose a budget that has deficits increasing every year over the next 5 years and reaching, in his own numbers, $712 billion in deficit—and according to CBO, $1.2 trillion—then I can't take that very seriously. There is not one act in this budget plan of any significant evaluation of the out-of-control entitlement programs we have or how to bring those under control.

So that is not politics; that is reality. It is not acceptable. We have to say no to this budget. I know my Democratic colleagues are uneasy about those numbers. They tell me they are uneasy about them. They want to support their President. They want to pass this budget. But at some point, I think my colleagues are going to have to say no. I hope they will. Certainly, the Republicans can't say no; we don't have enough votes.

Now, Senator THUNE made reference to this number.

Madam President, what is our timeframe?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business expires at 4 o'clock p.m., in several minutes.

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam President, I would just point out these numbers. The public debt, which I think is probably the clearest definition of what our debt situation is—you can argue about that, but the public debt, I believe, is correct—is now $5.8 trillion. In 5 years, it will be $11.5 trillion, a doubling of the debt; and in 10 years, another 5 years, it will be $15.3 trillion, tripling—that is the debt since the founding of the Republic—$5 trillion right here. In 10 years, we are going to triple the total debt. That is not acceptable. And they are projecting not a recession in the next 10 years after we get out of this one, they are projecting growth, no wars, and it is still like this. The truth is, those of us who observed budgeting before don't stay to the budget totals; we usually go over them through some sort of gimmick or maneuver.

How about another number that is disturbing to me—very disturbing. The White House estimate on interest payments in the budget is $148 billion for 2009. According to CBO, they estimate it higher at $170 billion.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to have 2 additional minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SESSIONS. It shows the interest rate or payments on this tripling debt reaching $694 billion, according to the White House's own estimate, in 2019, to the people who buy our debt—the largest foreign recipient of which is China.

CBO says that is underestimated. They calculate it to be $806 billion. The entire general fund of the State of Alabama, an average-size State, is about $7 billion for the counties, schools, teachers, and roads. The highway budget for the entire United States of America is $40 billion a year, including interstate, all the money we send to the States, and all of the pork money we put on top of it. This is $806 billion in interest alone on a debt that we have run up in previous years. That is why people are worried about it.

I will conclude with that and say, again, I know we all get caught up in politics, that is true. But this year, this budget is not a normal budget. It is not a bigger budget or a lot bigger. It is a gargantuan budget, the likes of which we have not seen before. It results in debt increases that are not sustainable. It has no projection of any containment of spending. It does nothing to deal with the entitlement difficulties that are driving much of the debt, and it cannot be passed in this fashion.

I urge my Democratic colleagues to say: No, Mr. President, you have to go back and look at this some more. We cannot pass this budget and not just take a few hundred billion dollars off, or something like that. We need to have a serious discussion of the financial condition of our country. I think the Republicans will be there trying to work with you on it. But without some leadership from the other side, this budget will go into effect.

I yield the floor.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

NATIONAL SERVICE REAUTHORIZATION ACT—MOTION TO PROCEED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to H.R. 1388, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to consideration of the bill (H.R. 1388) to reauthorize and reform the national service laws.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland is recognized.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the previously scheduled 6 p.m. cloture vote now occur at 5:45 p.m., and that 10 minutes immediately prior to 5:45 p.m. be divided as previously ordered, and that all other provisions of the previous order remain in effect.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I thank the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. REID. Madam President, for the information of Members, a number of Senators wanted us to start the vote earlier tonight, and we are happy to do that. For those who aren't going to arrive until 6 o'clock, we will drag the vote out so they will not miss it.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland is recognized.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, I am proud today to bring the legislation to the floor entitled Serve America Act. This bill is the result of extensive bipartisan work by Senators KENNEDY and HATCH who have worked more than a year on this legislation but who have devoted their lives to this bill. I know in a short time I will be joined by the distinguished Senator from Utah, Mr. HATCH, who was one of the prime sponsors of the bill. Senator ENZI of Wyoming, the ranking member of the Health, Education Committee, was also going to be here. He is in a snowstorm in Wyoming. Senator ENZI will bring his remarks to the floor tomorrow.

Let me just say that I want to, first of all, salute Senators KENNEDY and HATCH for designing this legislation because it expands the opportunity to serve this country. At the same time, Senator ENZI and Senator DODD worked assiduously to strengthen the bill.

Senator ENZI brought very key legislative analysis to the bill, and his background as an accountant gave us

very much needed reforms in the area of greater accountability and stewardship. I want to, on behalf of our side of the aisle, thank him for his insight and know-how. We have adopted every single one of the Enzi stewardship recommendations.

Our colleague, Senator DODD of Connecticut, himself a former Peace Corps volunteer, has also brought additional thinking to the bill to make sure that volunteers are rewarded by making sure we could expand the summer of service and the semester of service.

Madam President, I have been no stranger to this bill, and one of the things I have done was be the appropriator for appropriations from the time of its inception, from 1993 to 2004, when the VA–HUD and Independent Agencies Committee was dissolved by Mr. Delay of Texas in the House, and the Senate followed suit. That is a chatty way of saying that Senator KIT BOND, who chaired that subcommittee as my ranking member, was able to keep national service functioning and also very much needed reforms.

In 2004, Senators HARKIN and SPECTER got the appropriations portfolio for national service, and they have done an outstanding job. I say all this to say that when we bring up this bill, it is not a Democratic bill; it is a bipartisan bill and an American bill. Ever since the framework for the underlying legislation was created more than a decade ago, we have worked on both sides of the aisle, with Presidents of both parties, to give our young people an opportunity to serve.

This has been an outstanding effort. Today, the legislation I bring to the Senate floor on their behalf is the result of considerable experience, lots of lessons learned, and also the recognition and knowledge that there is a new invigorated spirit in the United States of America. Some are calling it the ''Obama effect'' because there are so many people who want to give back to the United States of America, to use their own sweat equity to be involved in our communities to make them a better place to be, for our schools to be able to be more effective, for there to be structured afterschool activities for children, and volunteer efforts to add to more housing for Habitat for Humanity—item after item, we could go on. There is this fantastic spirit, and we want to be able to make use of that energy, that passion, those good intentions, and be able to help them truly to serve America.

Senator KENNEDY and I have worked on this legislation for some time. Way back in 1990, Senator KENNEDY and I introduced the National Community Service Act with then-Senator Nunn, and also with the help of Senator MCCAIN, to establish a corporation for national and community service, and also to create a demonstration project that would then become the AmeriCorps.

When President Bill Clinton came in, we worked to create the National Community Service Act. In 1993, we passed the AmeriCorps legislation. Since then, it has been a profound success. We took that landmark legislation and, working with President Clinton, created a framework for today's national service programs.

Let me be clear, Madam President. We were not in the business of creating another new social program. What we were in the business of was creating a new social invention. What do I mean by that? In our country, we are known for our technological prowess, the great technological inventions. From the rocket ship to the microchip, America has been in the forefront of technology and science.

But also often overlooked, and sometimes undervalued, is our social inventions—those things that the genius of America invents to create an opportunity ladder for our country, to create empowerment opportunities for our constituents.

Let me give a couple of examples, and you can see the American philosophy at work in AmeriCorps. In terms of our social inventions, what are some? Well, you know we are the country that invented night school. At the turn of the old century, with so many immigrants coming from Europe, with Lady Liberty raising her hand saying: Give me your tired, your poor, your yearning to be free—and they also wanted to learn to read English, write English, and learn citizenship. But they were working night and day to be able to do that.

Out of the great settlement houses—primarily the great settlement houses out of New York and Chicago—they said: If you work during the day, we are going to give you an opportunity to learn at night. Out of that settlement house movement came a new social invention called night school. It was never done anywhere else in the world. Look how night school changed the face of America.

Then, while our GIs went overseas and then came back home, we had another social invention that said: We want to thank you not only with words but with deeds. So another empowerment legislation was called the GI bill, which created one great, gigantic opportunity ladder for generations of men who would have never had the opportunity for either education or home ownership to be able to move ahead.

Along the way, they knew they could not go off to 4 years of college. They were adults. They had seen war and they had liberated death camps. They could not come back and go ''bula bula''; they had to go to work. So we invented something else, too, called the junior college, or the community college, which in and of itself was a social invention.

So you see, every generation comes up with a new idea to build and add to that important opportunity ladder where you can do something for yourself and your country. But government is on your side.

What is it we wanted to do? A social invention for the nineties? What did we face? We saw two things: No. 1, students had incredible debt—and they still do. Their first ''mortgage'' was not a home but what they owed in terms of their college debt. Also, we saw a new trend coming to America called the ''me'' generation. Articles and books were being written about it. There were those on both sides of the aisle who wanted to change the ''me'' generation to the ''we'' generation. We also wanted to say: How can we help with student debt? That is when we thought about national community service, where you could give back to your country, learn the habits of the heart that de Tocqueville talked about—neighbor helping neighbor, the signature of America, from barn raising to Habitat for Humanity, and habits of the heart and Habitat for Humanity.

We created national service as a form. We didn't want it to be service only for idealistic, affluent kids who could afford to take 2 years off to find themselves. We wanted them to find opportunity to be of service and also to make an important contribution.

That is how we created the original national service legislation. We wanted to strike a balance between precollege and postcollege to help pay for college, get ready for college or to learn a trade. We also wanted to provide the opportunity for retired people to be of service and also, while being of service, to earn a modest voucher to pay down student debt.

We wanted to make sure we could do this in a way that was sensible, affordable, and also would involve the flexibility and creativity of the local community.

We allow not only full-time volunteers but the opportunity for part-time volunteers. Actually, the part-time volunteer was my idea. Putting on my social work hat again, what I saw in our communities was not everybody can go away and not everybody wants to go away. It could be someone disabled, where their whole support system is in that community. And although they have a physical challenge, they can still give. How about that single mother who graduated from a community college and wants to reduce her debt as she is moving on with her career? This would give her a chance to do that.

There were important lessons learned, and for more than a decade we worked on it. But not all was rosy, not all was smooth. What we then saw in 2003, when I was the ranking member on the appropriations subcommittee funding national service, is they created a debacle. God, did they get sloppy. One of their most colossal errors was that they enrolled over 20,000 volunteers and could not afford to pay for it. That is how sloppy they were in their accounting.

I took to the floor and called them the ''Enron of nonprofits.'' I called for

a new board, a new CEO, and new rules of engagement. President Bush responded, and he gave us the right people to right the ship of national service.

I must say, in those 6 years since then, they have worked to do so. They have righted the ship, they have good financial accounting, and people continue to volunteer.

But all that is history. What about the 21st century now? Wow, people want to volunteer like never before. Do you know that last year 35,000 college seniors applied for Teach America? There were only 4,000 slots. There were 35,000 young people who wanted to do it. The Peace Corps got 13,000 applicants last year for 4,000 slots. People want to serve.

While we saw this new flourishment of desire and passion to serve, Senators KENNEDY and HATCH put their abilities and key minds and passion for this issue together and have come up with the Kennedy-Hatch Serve America Act. It is a great bill. Let me tell you about it.

First of all, it improves the number of national volunteers. Over a 7-year period, it would take the volunteers from 75,000 slots to 250,000 slots. But this bill is more about creating opportunities and for people to serve. It is about meeting compelling human needs.

We are going to also expand this bill with lessons learned on focusing some of our AmeriCorps activity into specialized corps. These are what we found: One, an education corps; another, a health futures corps; another, a veterans corps; and another called opportunity corps. These are not outside of AmeriCorps. They will be subsets because we find this is where compelling human need is and at the same time offers great opportunity for volunteers to do it.

What does the education corps do? It improves student engagement. It works with young people in schools in supplemental services, such as tutoring, field trips, and particularly in these structured school activities. We have found that where they have focused on education, they have improved student academic achievement and graduation rates.

Also, we have something called the clean energy service corps. This is going to work to weatherize more low-income households to be more energy efficient.

We have a health futures corps that will work to increase access to health care among low-income and underserved populations but at the same time work on health promotion and wellness, primarily in schools, to teach our young people the kind of cool, new, edgy ways of doing those healthy habits that will change their lives for a lifetime.

We also are working on a veterans corps to help create housing units for deployed soldiers and to help also with voluntarism to assist military families when a military family is deployed.

I heard of a very innovative approach in Hawaii called Grannies for the Troops. That is grandmothers in the area who want to volunteer to help women whose husbands are deployed with some time off for themselves to go shopping, get other family business done, whatever. You need a volunteer coordinator to make that happen. That is the kind of innovation we are going to have.

We also have in this program help for retirees. We keep all our senior programs and we provide something called an encore fellowship for an older generation to serve. We also provide the opportunity for professionals called volunteers for prosperity to serve overseas. Those two ideas from Senator HATCH were very helpful.

This bill takes AmeriCorps and focuses it in a way that we think offers greater efficiency and provides some other new opportunities to serve, such as the summer of service and the semester of service. It also concentrates on improving the capacity of our nonprofit organizations in some other very innovative ways.

This is just a brief summary of the history that brought us to today and the framework that will take us to tomorrow.

In the last Congress, there was a lot of talk about bridges to nowhere. National Service is a bridge to somewhere. I wish to note in the health corps programs, we already have one that will continue to function under this health umbrella in AmeriCorps. Not only do we help people get connected to the services for which they are eligible, but 85 percent of the young people who work in the National Community Health Corps Program go on themselves to health care jobs. Some decide on a career in medicine. Some think: Wow, although I already have my degree, I think I will go into an accelerated program and go into nursing, where they have the accelerated program for people with degrees. Others are looking at careers in public health or in x-ray technology. They get turned on.

For people who go into education, they say: You know, I was going to do this for a stint. I want it to be my life's work. They then will go into the field of education as teachers and getting extra degrees and doing a good job. They are the reformers of the next generation. What we do in national service serves the community immediately today, but the impact on the volunteers continues for the rest of their lives.

I think this is a great social investment, and it is a public investment in our young people to help our communities that I think will pay dividends long beyond anything we can imagine.

I hope this bill is adopted by late tomorrow. I hope we can keep amendments to a minimum. I do believe we have had excellent help on both sides of the aisle. We talk about changing direction in this country. I think people do want a new direction. They want to rekindle the habits of the heart. There are a lot of people out there, as we talked about bonuses, who might be talking about ''me,'' but there are a lot of young people who want to be part of the ''we'' generation.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the time during the quorum call be charged equally, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, last May, then-Senator Barack Obama gave a commencement address at Wesleyan University. Senator TED KENNEDY of Massachusetts had been originally scheduled to speak to the graduates, but Senator KENNEDY had taken ill and Senator Obama spoke in his place.

In a tribute to TED KENNEDY's lifetime of service to America, Senator Obama spoke to the graduates about the importance of national service. It was a remarkable speech. In fact, what he told the graduates was his life story, about how Barack Obama, after graduating from an Ivy League college, could have gone to law school or Wall Street with many of his classmates. But, instead, he took a job as a community organizer on the south side of Chicago.

Many people know this story because they have heard Barack tell it. They may have read about it when the President published his autobiography, ''Dreams From My Father,'' of how he ended up with a broken down little car, taking a job that didn't pay very much as a community organizer in a section of Chicago that had been wracked by the closing of steel mills and all the unemployment and hardship that followed. It wasn't easy work for him. He went church to church trying to organize people in the neighborhoods. The pay wasn't very good, but he knew he was making a difference. He made friends and connections. He learned a lot about life, and he learned a lot about himself. He found direction in his life from those moments that he spent volunteering and giving back to his community.

President Obama—then Senator Obama—called on the graduates at

Wesleyan to find their own direction through service to the country. Here is what he said:

> There's no community service requirement in the real world; no one forcing you to care. You can take your diploma, walk off this stage, and chase only after the big house and the nice suits and all the other things that our money culture says you should buy. You can choose to narrow your concerns and live your life in a way that tries to keep your story separate from America's. But I hope you don't. Because thinking only about yourself, fulfilling your immediate wants and needs, betrays a poverty of ambition. Because it's only when you hitch your wagon to something larger than yourself that you realize your true potential and discover the role you will play in writing the next great chapter in America's story.

President Obama repeated this call to service throughout his campaign and now into his Presidency. He has called on all Americans to find a way to serve their neighbors and their community to make this Nation a better place.

Over the last few months, we have heard too many stories about the so-called successful people who have followed their ambitions, and sometimes their greed, and the economy and country have suffered. But there are so many other stories to be told—community organizations across this Nation that are reporting record numbers of volunteers coming through their doors as we face this troubling economy. Many of these new volunteers have recently lost their jobs, but they still want to answer the President's call and give back to their communities.

That is the spirit that truly makes America great. Even in the most troubling times, Americans think of those who are suffering, those who have lost their homes or can't put food on the table, and they want to help. There isn't a community in America where you can't find that spirit, and you can find it on the street corners, in church basements, in afternoon and weekend efforts of people just wanting to give a little bit back and to help those less fortunate.

In my State of Illinois, each year 2.7 million volunteers dedicate over 300 million hours of service. The estimated economic contribution of those hours is $5.9 billion annually. More than 66,000 of these volunteers participate in national service programs through 144 different projects. In Chicago, the City Year program is one of my favorites. It places young volunteers to work full time in some of Chicago's neediest schools. There they serve as tutors, mentors, and role models for Chicago's students.

They usually call me in once a year to meet the new class—and I love them. They are just so bristling with energy and determination and commitment. Many of them are doing something in a communal sense that they have never done in their lives. Some of them are in Chicago for the first time, dazzled by the city but dazzled as well by the people they are working with.

We know we need them. A student drops out of school every 26 seconds in this country. City Year volunteers are helping to keep Chicago students in school and on the road to success.

When asked to share the impact of the City Year corps members on their classroom, teachers recently said:

> All of my students who are being tutored are more interested in reading. They are more confident in themselves as striving learners.

It works and it works in both directions. The students are better off; so are the volunteers.

This week we are considering a bill that will dramatically expand national service programs, giving more Americans the chance to serve their country. I thank Senator MIKULSKI for leading us in this effort, bringing this to the floor. The original cosponsors of the bill, of course, were Senator TED KENNEDY and Senator ORRIN HATCH. I joined a long list of Democrats and Republicans as cosponsors as well. Both Senators KENNEDY and HATCH have a long personal commitment to service, and this bill is a testament to their public legacy. Senator MIKULSKI is bringing this to the floor in Senator KENNEDY's absence. I know she will handle this bill well. She always does.

The Serve America Act will triple the number of national service participants to 250,000 participants within 8 years. Along with this dramatic expansion, the bill will also create new corps within AmeriCorps, focused on areas of national need that include education, the environment, health care, economic opportunity, and helping our veterans.

We are expanding opportunities to serve for Americans in every stage in life. Middle and high school students will be encouraged to participate in service projects during the summer and after school. By serving their communities early in life, these students will be put on a path to a lifetime habit of service.

For working Americans who cannot commit to full-time service, the bill provides funding to community organizations for recruiting and managing part-time volunteers; retirees will be given new opportunities to serve through the Senior Corps, as it exists, and through new initiatives. The bill also increases the education award for the first time since its creation. A lot of the people in the AmeriCorps projects, for example, at the end of their service, earn credits they can use to go on to pursue higher education.

The education award in this bill will be raised to the Pell grant level, which will make it easier for college students with significant student loan debt to consider national service—and the award will be transferable, so that older volunteers can actually transfer the education award to their children or grandchildren. What a great gift to give to your family.

There is a story Senator KENNEDY often tells about national service. On the fifth anniversary of the Peace Corps so many years ago, TED KENNEDY asked a young volunteer why he decided to sign up, and the answer was simple. He said: ''It was the first time someone asked me to do something for my country.''

With the Serve America Act we are asking again. We are asking Americans of all ages to give back to their communities and to America. Each American has the power to make a small difference in the success of a child or the health of the environment or the lives of hungry neighbors. All those small differences, repeated over and over, can add up to something truly powerful.

Passage of this bill is a priority of our new President and should be a priority for every Member of the Senate. I encourage my colleagues to support this bill and I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. SHAHEEN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DURBIN. I ask consent the time remaining under the quorum call be equally divided between both sides.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DURBIN. I suggest absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. HATCH. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. HATCH. Madam President, today the Senate begins consideration of the Serve America Act, which is the title of what will be the Senate substitute for H.R. 1388. It is my hope this legislation will help strengthen a culture of service, citizenship, and responsibility in America, and I am proud to join a bipartisan group of Senators in support of this bill as it comes to the Senate floor.

I am sure it goes without saying that Senator TED KENNEDY's absence is deeply felt by all of us as we work on this particular piece of legislation. I, personally, continue to pray for his full and speedy recovery.

To begin, I would like to discuss the context in which this legislation has moved forward to give us some perspective as to what is about to happen. After months of discussion, negotiation, debate, and flatout argument, Senator KENNEDY and I introduced the original version of the Serve America Act last September in the middle of what was often a hotly contested campaign season. Despite the overly partisan atmosphere at the time, a bipartisan group of Senators offered their

support for this bill. Even though the differences between the two Presidential candidates were played out on news shows every night, both of them were willing to put their debates aside and become original cosponsors. That pleased me.

I would like, once again, to thank Senator MCCAIN for his continued support, not only for this particular piece of legislation but for volunteer service in general. He has truly been a leader on this issue throughout his life and has rightly won the admiration of those on both sides of the aisle.

In addition to the Kennedy-Hatch legislation, the Serve America Act, the Senate bill also includes legislation that will reauthorize the Corporation of National and Community Service. The reauthorization effort has been led on the Republican side by the distinguished ranking member of the HELP Committee, Senator ENZI, who has worked tirelessly with both Senator KENNEDY and Senator MIKULSKI to reach a bipartisan accord on these much-needed provisions.

In addition to Senators KENNEDY and MCCAIN, I have to extend my thanks, my deep-felt thanks to Senators ENZI and MIKULSKI for their outstanding work on the legislation before us today. Both of them are outstanding legislators. They are both beloved people in this body. I, personally, feel that way toward each of them.

At the same time all this work has been going on in the Senate, we have been working with both Democrats and Republicans in the House of Representatives to ensure that both Chambers reach similar conclusions with their national service legislation. This has all been accomplished during a time when, for the most part, partisan hostilities have done anything but subside. Since the beginning of the new Congress, we have seen debates on legislation such as the SCHIP bill, the stimulus package and the Omnibus appropriations bill that, in many ways, have deepened the divisions between the two parties. Here in a few weeks, as we begin debate on the budget, we are sure to see even greater clashes between the principled beliefs and ideologies between those on both sides of the aisle.

However, the bill we have before us today is the result of a bipartisan and bicameral effort. In our opinion, this is nothing short of remarkable, given the current political climate.

Once again, the Senate effort has been spearheaded by myself, Senator KENNEDY, Senator ENZI, and Senator MIKULSKI. I doubt any other piece of legislation we consider this year will be the product of such a diversity of views. Senator MIKULSKI has carried this matter on behalf of Senator KENNEDY. I have nothing but tremendous respect for her.

I will not be foolish enough to claim the credit for all this good will, but I am certainly grateful to be a beneficiary.

Service has been one of the golden threads of our Democracy, and the roots of our tradition run deep. Ronald Reagan put this powerful tradition of volunteer service in its appropriate context when he said, speaking of the Mayflower Compact:

> The single act—the voluntary binding together of free people to live under the law—set the pattern for what was to come.
>
> A century and a half later, the descendants of those people pledged their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor to found this nation. Some forfeited their fortunes and their lives; none sacrificed honor. Four score and seven years later, Abraham Lincoln called upon the people of all America to renew their dedication and their commitment to a government of, for and by the people. Isn't it once again time to renew our compact of freedom; to pledge to each other all that is best in our lives; all that gives meaning to them—for the sake of this, our beloved and blessed land?
>
> Together, let us make this a new beginning. Let us make a commitment to care for the needy; to teach our children the values and the virtues handed down to us by our families; to have the courage to defend those values and the willingness to sacrifice for them.
>
> Let us pledge to restore, in our time, the American spirit of voluntary service, of cooperation, of private and community initiative; a spirit that flows like a deep and mighty river through the history of our nation.

President Reagan had a very good way of putting things.

President Reagan was not alone in his call for service. Presidents down the generations, Republicans and Democrats alike—Teddy and Franklin Roosevelt; Eisenhower and Kennedy; Johnson and Nixon; Carter and George Herbert Walker Bush; and Clinton and George W. Bush—have all worked to awaken the national consciousness to their duties and responsibilities as citizens, to light in every individual that spark of voluntary service, the seed of compassion that makes us serve causes larger than ourselves.

They have done so particularly in times of crisis: during the Great Depression, during our world wars, and after 9/11. Times of trial have always summoned the greatness of our people, and we are right now in a time of challenge today.

Service can take many forms in a free country, and we all have choices, not only as to whether we will serve but how we will serve. There is no greater example of service than those who put on the military uniform and go into battle for our country. Many men and women who choose military service make the ultimate sacrifice. They put their lives on the line for our country. Millions have lost their lives so we might be free.

There are more than 26 million Americans alive today who have served in our armed services. They epitomize American values, the values of duty, honor, and country. They also inspire new generations to ask what they can do for their country.

Other Americans may decide to go into public or Government service. This is a choice that is made by State and municipal workers, by teachers and police officers, and, yes, even by Senators and their staffs—to serve the public interest through their public institutions. I have to admit, I left my own law practice, where we had just started it a few years before. I had left Pittsburgh, moved to Utah, formed a law firm. We were going like gangbusters. My partner is worth a lot of money today. I am not. But I made this choice to come and work for our country. It is made by all these good people, to serve the public interests through our public institutions.

Service to country can take other forms. Many Americans want to serve for a full year or part of a year of national service. Others may want to volunteer to serve in countries abroad for short-term or long-term assignments. We had two people come back last night from a mission over in Africa. He served his whole working life as a chaplain in the military. She is a beautiful woman who has been married to him for all these years. They, at their own expense, volunteered and went to Africa to work in Kenya and Nairobi with unfortunate people and to build esteem in the hearts of people over there.

They came back last night and spoke in our church. I was so proud of both of them—terrific people.

Others may want to volunteer to serve in countries abroad for short-term or long-term assignments. Still others, in fact the vast majority of Americans, will perform services as traditional episodic volunteers working in schools, houses of worship, workplaces, nonprofit institutions, and neighborhoods.

America is a generous nation and Americans are compassionate people, and our volunteer spirit knows no bounds. In all these cases, everything is a choice. Service in our military is voluntary as is service in our soup kitchens. Public service is not only a voluntary activity, but for many of us subject to regular elections where the citizens get to exercise their own choice of whether a particular candidate for office will exercise the privilege of serving them.

Consistent with our All-Volunteer Army and volunteer opportunities and individuals' choice in communities, nothing in this legislation is mandatory. This bill simply provides more Americans more choices and opportunities to give back to their neighborhoods and their country all through the means which they freely choose.

With a backdrop of this rich history of citizen service in America, Senator KENNEDY and I began discussions more than a year ago about what we might do together to build on the tradition of service in America. I know part of this is because both of us love his sister, Eunice Kennedy Shriver. We have watched this woman year after year after year give service to this country and to children all over the world; not just through the Special Olympics—but especially through the Special Olympics—but in so many other ways. I admire her about as much as any woman

in our society today for what she has been able to do with her life. She is a 90-pound dynamo who just keeps going. I think—well, I will not say it because I know it can be embarrassing to her. But the fact is, she is a terrific human being.

I have chatted with all kinds of other people who are giving tremendous service to their fellow human beings, men and women, children, throughout our society. You know, Senator KENNEDY and I and others drew on ideas from Republicans such as my friend Senator JOHN MCCAIN, who introduced his own bill almost a decade ago and, as I mentioned, endorsed the Serve America Act in the midst of his Presidential campaign.

We drew on ideas from Democrats, such as the godmother of national and community service, that is Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI. We hear of godfathers; she is the godmother, a great woman who has a great heart, and who worked as a social worker for many years, and for whom I have deep affection, no question about it.

From the outset, Senator KENNEDY and I talked about marrying two formerly competing visions of service: first, by supporting traditional volunteering, in the tradition of President Reagan's Private Sector Initiative; George H. W. Bush's Points of Light; and George W. Bush's USA Freedom Corps; and, second, by supporting full-time national and international service in the tradition of Presidents Kennedy, Nixon, for senior service, Clinton and again George W. Bush for both domestic and international service.

We have the attention of our new President. He has talked to me about this. I know he has talked to Senator KENNEDY about this. He completely supports this. He knows how important it is. I have respect for him for jumping right in and helping us with this.

We decided we wanted to create more opportunities for Americans to serve over their lifetimes, so schoolchildren can learn the importance of giving back at a young age, for tapping into the talents of the longest living, healthiest, best educated, and most highly skilled generations of older Americans in our history.

We wanted to tap the ingenuity of our people working through schools, faith-based institutions, workplaces, and communities in America and across the world to tackle challenges large and small.

So today I am very pleased to be here as this legislation makes it over what I hope will be the final few obstacles before becoming law. With this bill, our efforts to expand service will begin early in our schools all across America, and where we can marry learning in classrooms with service in our communities, for those who choose such service learning.

We have a high school dropout epidemic in America, with almost one-third of all students, and nearly 50 percent of African Americans, Hispanic, and Native Americans, failing to graduate with their class. For each of these kids a decision to drop out is a million dollar mistake, since they will earn that much less over a lifetime than their college graduate friends.

For our country, this is a multibillion dollar mistake in increased welfare, prison, and health care costs, and lost revenues from the lack of productive workers. Service learning has been shown to keep students engaged in school, and to boost student academic achievement. So we will offer competitive grants to local and State partnerships to carry out these efforts in our schools.

Again, all of this will be voluntary activity, and it holds the promise of keeping so many of our young people engaged in school. In addition to elementary and secondary schools, colleges and universities can play a critical role in the culture of service, so we will authorize the Corporation for National Community Service to recognize and provide additional funding to ''campuses of service'' that do an outstanding job in engaging their students in important community work.

The U.S. Census Bureau tells us that nearly 61 million Americans volunteered through or for an organization last year. Most Americans did so through religious organizations, followed by nonprofits, related to education and youth. While many charities believe volunteers are essential to meeting their missions, only a small percentage of them actually invest in recruiting, training, and utilizing volunteers to meet those missions.

There are always waiting lists of volunteers who want to use their time and talents, but too often they are turned away or they do not come back after a bad experience. So we will invest in a new volunteer generation fund, which will include matching funds by the private sector to increase the capacity of organizations to use volunteers to meet local needs, especially among the poor and disadvantaged.

America is known for its innovation in business and the power of its markets. This bill will fuel the spirit of entrepreneurship in America's nonprofit sector by creating a social innovations fund to foster and support the next generation of great ideas in the social marketplace, such as Teach for America, City Year, Habitat for Humanity, and the U.S. Dream Academy, which are some of the many innovative ideas of our day.

Having mentioned the U.S. Dream Academy, that was started by a wonderful African-American man named Wintley Phipps. Wintley is a Seventh Day Adventist minister. But he decided there were too many of our young African-American kids and others who were children of prisoners, children of people who had been sent to prison, and that a high percentage of them would wind up in prison themselves unless we did something about it. So he has brought computers into the inner cities. He has brought wonderful teachers and others who could be making themselves wealthy outside of this program, who are teaching these kids how to live in a modern world. He has had an amazing transformational change in so many children.

These are the types of things we have to encourage. The idea behind service clearly has always been about transforming the person who serves. I saw how it changed my own life when I served a 2-year mission for my church in the Great Lakes mission. That was Ohio, Indiana, and Michigan. A lot of our young missionaries serve all over the world, such as the young couple I mentioned last night. They came back from Kenya and Nairobi, where they served I think about a year and a half. Their main job was humanitarian, to help people to be able to know there is a better way; to find water for people, to help them with food, to help them with so many of their problems, to help them to know there is a future. They did that voluntarily, at their own expense. Think about it, at their own expense.

I did my voluntary 2-year service at my own expense. I actually presided over congregations, and I helped out thousands and thousands of people who had problems, and in the process, the one who was helped the most was myself. It was a great blessing in my life. I would not change it for being a Senator, as a matter of fact. It was 2 years out of my life, but the most important 2 years, outside of marriage to Elaine and raising a family with 6 kids, now 23 grandchildren, and 3 great-grandchildren. That was an important time in my life. My folks were poor. They were not wealthy. They helped me and assisted me on my mission. We paid for it all ourselves, and I gave 2 solid years every day, 18 hours a day. I was very dedicated.

But service is also about solving problems in our Nation, and bringing real hope and impact on the ground in our communities with real accountability for results. Some people have written off this bill as promoting ''paid volunteerism.'' This mistaken view is as a result of a fundamental misunderstanding about these programs. National service programs give Americans opportunities for us to serve for a full year or more to tackle tough problems, and that they, in turn, can leverage Federal investment in them to mobilize more traditional volunteers to help.

When you look at the numbers, you can see it is a very smart return on investment. Let me illustrate how this works. Today about 75,000 people participate in national Federal service programs every year. I am not counting the State programs at this point, although I know some of these work in the States as well. But on AmericaCorps and programs such as this, Peace Corps, et cetera, the currently existing programs, there are about 75,000 volunteers who participate

in national service programs every year.

Now, as a result of their efforts, 2.2 million traditional persons every year come out to work on the same projects without pay. That is nearly 30 volunteers who get nothing from Government, for every 1 participant in a national service program, who receive a below-poverty stipend and a small education award to defray the cost of higher education.

Let's do the math. If we assume that as we expand national service, as this bill does, the same ratio of participants to leveraged volunteers holds, we will eventually be seeing roughly 7.5 million new unpaid volunteers every year serving throughout our great Nation.

My gosh, that is something worthwhile doing. Personally, I think it would be more than that. Because with the bill we are also improving the efficiency and the accountability of these programs. Far from promoting paid volunteerism, this bill is all about encouraging traditional volunteerism. We find that people, once they get into this, will love it and want to continue.

We will be targeting national service opportunities to build upon this multiplying effect in order to tap the power of our Nation's greatest asset, our people, to take on some of these large challenges.

Now, some have argued that the priorities outlined in this bill are specifically designed to advance the President's domestic agenda or his priorities with the recent stimulus bill. Well, quite honestly, these people must ascribe to Senator KENNEDY and me abilities that neither of us would claim to have, including psychic powers and precognition. It was more than 2 years ago that I began a dialogue with former officials from the George Herbert Walker Bush and George W. Bush administrations and other leaders of the national and community service field regarding this proposal.

At that time, we agreed we wanted to harness the power of our citizens to solve urgent national problems. It was then, 2 years ago, that we identified five specific areas in which citizens could make a significant difference in addressing needs. We looked at education, and particularly the high school dropout crisis, in the aftermath of the 2006 report, ''The Silent Epidemic.''

We identified clean energy, opportunity, health and disaster response as key areas in which citizens could make a significant difference and we discussed specific indicators of progress that would bring new accountability for results.

These five areas were identified long before there was even discussion of an economic stimulus and well before the Presidential campaign got in full swing. Since that time, we have added veterans assistance as a key area of national need for the bill. But that is hardly an issue on which President Obama has cornered the market. I hope this clarifies the record on this point.

Having said all that, I am pleased that President Obama sees the value of this bill and wants to support it and will support it and has supported it. It has been a matter of great uplift to me.

So it is with these particular challenges in mind that we drafted the Serve America Act. Gone are the days when national service participants will be able to go about their work without direction or accountability. Under our bill, their efforts will be directed at these specific areas of national need. In all of these efforts, State and local organizations will lead the way. Volunteers will be leveraged and urgent needs will be met not by distant Government bureaucracies or Government programs but by people working on the front lines of our communities and neighborhoods.

Americans can also spread American compassion around the world. There have been good efforts over the last 7 years and good bills in the Congress to fulfill the promise of President Kennedy's Peace Corps and expand its numbers. It has been a bipartisan effort. Two former Republican Presidents, Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush, grew the Peace Corps during their 8 years in office. As a complement to the growth in the Peace Corps, the Serve America Act will authorize and fund Volunteers for Prosperity, which last year alone mobilized 43,000 doctors, nurses, engineers, and other skilled Americans to meet urgent needs abroad, such as HIV/AIDS and malaria, such as medical procedures to help children who have cleft palates or helping kids to see again.

I could go on and on about what is being done by volunteers all over the world. This cost-effective program puts skilled Americans in the field for flexible term assignments often ranging from a few months to more than 1 year and at extremely low cost to the Federal Government.

President Kennedy said that his Peace Corps would be truly serious when 100,000 Americans were working abroad every year. Well, Volunteers for Prosperity, working together with the Peace Corps, could help fulfill that dream and would show the world the compassion of our people and lead to a more informed foreign policy.

Having mentioned the Peace Corps, why don't I mention Eunice Shriver's great husband. Sargent Shriver, when he fought for the Peace Corps, it wasn't an easy job. By gosh, he had to take on his own administration and everybody else. But he did. What a wonderful, decent, honorable leader and human being that man really is. If you want to read a great biography, read his, how ebullient he always was and how he kept being positive about life and what he was trying to do. I feel fortunate that I have become very good friends of the Shrivers and their children who now are giving volunteer service, and so many others.

I don't mean to center on this one family because there are so many. In our church alone, we have some 55,000 serving all over the world. That is just missionaries. If we go beyond that to humanitarian service, there are a lot of people serving in those areas. Almost every major national disaster in the world, the first two churches in there with food, clothing, pharmaceuticals, et cetera, happen to be the Mormon Church and the Catholic Church. They work together. We have worked together all these years to do this type of work.

Volunteers for Prosperity, working together with the Peace Corps, could help fulfill the dreams of so many and would show the world the compassion of our people, leading to a more informed foreign policy. In all cases, we must promote accountability for results and be mindful—very mindful—of cost.

As investments are made in service efforts, programs that are achieving real results should continue, and those that are not working should be defunded.

We also need to do a better job collecting data on the results of these programs and our civic health as a nation. The Nation collects good data about its economy, but it can do a better job collecting information about our country's civic health. This bill will address those needs by establishing a civic health index, building on the good work of the NationalConference on Citizenship and the Corporation for National and Community Service, to collect regular data on volunteering, charitable giving, and other indicators of our civic life, so Americans can work to strengthen these platoons of civil society that have always been the backbone of our democracy. I truly think that this data collected for this index will inform our decisionmaking throughout the policy spectrum.

Those of us supporting this bill—Republicans and Democrats alike—believe an investment in the ingenuity and entrepreneurial spirit of our people is one of the best investments our country can make. At a time wroth with economic uncertainty, we should be all too willing to tap the greatest resource at our nation's disposal—the American people. Our citizens are the most generous, energetic, and innovative people in the world. I believe this bill will inspire them to do much of the heavy lifting in their own communities. At a time when many people would argue that what we need is more Federal Government bureaucrats going into neighborhoods to fix things up, this bill will help private groups and individuals to continue their good work and to inspire other people to join in their efforts.

The Serve America Act has strong bipartisan support because it advances a good American idea that has echoed down the ages. You see, when Americans want to solve problems, they don't first look to government or the State—they look to themselves and their communities. The innovation and

enterprise of the American people will always have a comparative advantage over big government solutions. I know this from my own personal experience, serving as a Mormon missionary when I was only 20 years old, 20 to 22. I am proud to be associated with this effort to remind Americans of their duties to their country, to provide them more opportunities to serve it, and to fulfill the promise of the American experiment, which is truly based on their participation in making it all work. I have faith in the American people that they will make this work, and we will all be very happy when they do.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. KERRY. Madam President, let me begin by thanking the Senator from Utah, whose leadership on this effort has been absolutely spectacular and who obviously, from the words he just spoke, has a deeply personal and historical understanding of the importance of this kind of service. We are all very grateful to him for his partnership with my colleague, Senator KENNEDY, and for the leadership he has offered along the way. I would concur with every word he has spoken about it, all of the good things he said it would do. I couldn't agree more. It will do all those things and more. This is one of the better moments and better bills for which we get an opportunity as Senators to vote.

May I also thank Senator MIKULSKI. She has been tenacious and unbelievably engaged and enthusiastic and wonderful in her commitment to help bring us to this moment. I know how much Senator KENNEDY and Senator HATCH both value the contribution she has made. We all value it. We are grateful to her for stepping in. She has been a tiger. Perish the thought for anybody who has wanted to run counter to her intent to get this done.

I want to speak for a couple moments. I yield myself perhaps 5 minutes. I think we have about 7½ remaining.

This effort we will vote on is going to generate the largest expansion in national service since President Kennedy inspired the creation of VISTA and the Peace Corps. For many of us in public life today, that was the formative moment. That was the demarcation point that excited many of us about public service and brought a lot of us into this arena.

It is particularly fitting that this legislation comes at a time when a new President is inspiring a whole new era of volunteerism, much as President Kennedy did nearly half a century ago. It is equally fitting and appropriate that this legislation bears the name of our friend and beloved colleague, my senior Senator from Massachusetts, TED KENNEDY. As President Obama observed in his first address to Congress, Senator KENNEDY is ''an American who has never stopped asking what he can do for his country.'' It was under Senator KENNEDY's leadership as chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee that this bill was crafted.

This is nothing new for Senator KENNEDY. In 1990, Senator KENNEDY worked with the first President Bush to pass the original National Community Service Act, the Thousand Points of Light Foundation. President Bush called that particular effort, helped by Senator KENNEDY, the hallmark of his Presidency. When President Clinton needed a champion for the proposed Corporation for National Community Service, he didn't have to look any further than TED KENNEDY.

As Senator KENNEDY notes, ''Service is a bipartisan goal.'' Indeed, Members of Congress from across the political spectrum have pledged their support for this measure, which is a clear indication that the ethic of service is spawned not by faithfulness to party but by devotion to country and community.

The Serve America Act is also the work of our colleague from Utah, Senator ORRIN HATCH. Senator HATCH has on many occasions been TED KENNEDY's partner in these kinds of bipartisan efforts. Senator HATCH points out that volunteer service is the lifeblood of our Nation and that it benefits the volunteer as much, if not more, than the country the volunteer is serving. We just heard those words a moment ago from Senator HATCH when he talked about his own experience as a young person, about the mission for faith that he called the greatest of his life. Service is what has always made America, America.

Many times in 2004, when I was running for President, I talked about de Tocqueville's visit to our country and how he found something special here. He wrote about it. He wrote that ''America is great because Americans are good.'' What he meant by that was he had observed this extraordinary spirit of voluntarism, a kind of patriotism that was defined by Americans who would voluntarily give back to their community or help other people or do something openly on behalf of their country and that community. He clearly had not seen or witnessed that kind of giving in his experience in Europe.

Just as it was in de Tocqueville's day, Americans in many ways, big and small, are looking for opportunities to do more for their country. Last year, 62 million Americans gave 8 billion hours of service to the country. Last month, AmeriCorps had tripled the number of applications over the same month as a year ago. I note that my own kids who graduated recently from college commented to me how so many of their classmates in college were all engaged in some kind of local activity, not necessarily fighting on the national stage, but they were involved mentoring kids or helping in a homeless shelter. Indeed, many of our colleges and universities across the country boast unbelievably high percentages of voluntarism.

They are sending us a signal, telling us why this is a good moment to create a new corps of 175,000 volunteers who are going to be organized and assist in their efforts to do the things we need to do in America. That means that in addition to the other volunteer programs, we will have as many as a quarter of a million Americans serving full time or part time working to meet some of our most pressing challenges: modernizing schools, building homes, serving as mentors or tutors in schools, helping with the sick in hospitals and clinics. And with the Serve America Act, it is going to be a lot easier for professionals and retirees, the baby boomers, the people who were first challenged by President Kennedy's call to service in 1961, it is going to be much easier for them to get involved once again.

So we face great challenges. We should have no illusion about the magnitude of those challenges. But we also have extraordinary opportunities staring us in the face. With the Serve America Act, with more Americans involved, with Americans pulling together, I am confident that is going to be the definition of America's future, and it will be a definition we will all be proud of.

So I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this important piece of legislation. I pay tribute, again, to my colleague, TED KENNEDY, and his partners in this effort, Senator MIKULSKI and Senator HATCH, who have brought us to this time. Thank you.

I yield the floor and reserve the remainder of our time.

Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, we are only minutes away from voting on the cloture motion to proceed to the bill. I really urge all of my colleagues to vote yes on this motion so we can proceed to this excellent, dynamic, bipartisan bill called the Serve America Act.

Madam President, in November, people voted for us to change the tone in this country and change the direction and to work on a bipartisan basis to find that sensible center that Colin Powell has so often talked about, to meet America's compelling needs and challenges.

Now, we are not going to turn the economy around quickly, and we are not going to solve some of our great foreign policy challenges immediately. But we can embark upon a major initiative to be able to meet compelling human needs in our society.

We have a bipartisan effort, crafted by Senators KENNEDY and HATCH, to do

exactly that. It is a bipartisan measure to strengthen service and volunteer opportunities. It expands opportunities for individuals of all ages to serve. Its passage is important now, when so many communities are struggling with so many pressing problems and so many people want to serve.

This act invites many more Americans to give a year of service to solve specific challenges in the areas of education, healthy futures, clean energy, even helping our veterans. When they come back from overseas, they are going to have somebody to be with them to get connected to the services and to help those military families while they are serving abroad.

We can do this by passing this legislation. It expands the number of national service corps participants to 250,000 a year. But we do that over a 7-year period. We will be able, through prudent pacing of both recruitment and funding, to do it over a 7-year period.

It also increased the Eli Segal Education Award from $4,725 to $5,350, pegging it to Pell grants, helping those who want to serve be able to reduce their student debt or to get a voucher to be able to pursue higher education.

It supports increased service opportunities for students, particularly very young people in the Learn and Serve Program, and middle and high school students through a summer of service and a semester of service.

It also recruits retirees. Many retirees are ready, able, and willing to be involved through Senior Corps programs—RSVP, Senior Companions, and Foster Grandparents.

We have a program called Encore Fellowships to help retirees participate in longer term public service. It also supports international service opportunities. Senator HATCH is too modest to talk about his own fine hand in this bill, but he has offered an excellent suggestion that has been incorporated. It strengthens the current Volunteers for Prosperity Program, which enables people who are retired, who have skills in business, public works, engineering, et cetera, to provide short-term international service opportunities in developing nations.

This is what America is all about. De Tocqueville, when he studied our Nation, said: What is unique about this new country called America? Well, he called it the ''habits of the heart,'' where neighbor helps neighbor, whether it was the barn raising of another era, to also building Habitat for Humanity here.

We need to harvest all of that goodwill and good intention to help turn our country around. I believe the Serve America Act does this. We will be debating this legislation further tomorrow. I encourage people to vote yes on the cloture motion to proceed. I encourage all who have amendments to come forward tonight and tomorrow morning so we can move it and get the job done. That is what the people want us to do.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. HATCH. Madam President, I thank the distinguished Senator from Maryland. She has played such a pivotal role on this bill, she and Senator ENZI in particular. And, of course, Senator KENNEDY and I both feel very deeply toward her and Senator ENZI.

I also want to thank Pastor Rick Warren. A little over a year ago, he came to see me in my office. He heard I was interested in doing a service in America bill, and he came and went over it with me and was very interested and has done a great deal to inspire a number of us on both sides of the floor to be able to do some things in this area.

I also want to thank JOHN MCCAIN. I have mentioned President Obama and Senator MCCAIN, both of whom are supporters of this bill. And you talk about bipartisanship—I think it shows the great character of Senator MCCAIN that he would come and support this type of legislation and, as he is want to do, in so many ways. I have such respect for him and for the President himself. He has been nothing but a great help to us in this matter.

Like I say, this is an opportunity for all of us to vote for a program that will get people involved from teenage years through senior citizen years, the vast majority of whom will not be paid a dime, the vast majority of whom will be leveraged into working because they want to serve the communities. They want to serve these organizations. They want to be part of doing good.

Like I say, with 75,000 for AmeriCorps, and some of the others we have mentioned, we estimate there are 2.2 million people, extrapolated out, who basically are leveraged out, to where they want to get involved, and not one of them is paid for doing it.

If we figure it out mathematically, in just real terms, with this bill, calling for 175,000 new workers, at low pay, stipends for school, we believe we will have upwards of 7 million-plus people who will be giving voluntary service to their fellow human beings, fellow women and men, in their communities and children in their communities. It will do so much good for our society.

Madam President, I have worked on a lot of legislation in my 33 years here, a number of which happen to be landmark pieces of legislation. We should pass this, and I hope we can with a large majority. Should we pass this? I don't know anything that will do more good in a general way for our society than this particular bill.

I hope everybody will vote for cloture tonight. I also hope we can pass this bill in a relatively short period of time, and I hope we can make it truly bipartisan in every way. We have endeavored to do that. I think we have done a good job on it.

I yield the floor.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 35, H.R. 1388, a bill to reauthorize and reform the national service laws.

Harry Reid, Barbara A. Mikulski, Barbara Boxer, Tom Harkin, Daniel K. Akaka, Tom Udall, Patty Murray, Patrick J. Leahy, Bernard Sanders, Sheldon Whitehouse, Christopher J. Dodd, Jon Tester, Mark R. Warner, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Benjamin L. Cardin, Blanche L. Lincoln, Kent Conrad.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call is waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the motion to proceed to H.R. 1388, a bill to reauthorize and reform the national service laws, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Alaska (Mr. BEGICH), the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER), the Senator from Iowa (Mr. HARKIN), the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. INOUYE), the Senator from Louisiana (Ms. LANDRIEU), the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON), the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. PRYOR) are necessarily absent.

I further announce that, if present and voting, the Senator from Iowa (Mr. HARKIN) would vote ''yea.''

Mr. KYL. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN), the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI), the Senator from Florida (Mr. MARTINEZ), and the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) would have voted ''nay.''

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 74, nays 14, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 108 Leg.]

YEAS—74

Akaka	Dorgan	Lincoln
Alexander	Durbin	Lugar
Barrasso	Feingold	McCain
Baucus	Feinstein	McCaskill
Bayh	Gillibrand	Menendez
Bennet	Graham	Merkley
Bennett	Grassley	Mikulski
Bingaman	Gregg	Murkowski
Bond	Hagan	Murray
Brown	Hatch	Nelson (NE)
Burr	Hutchison	Reed
Burris	Isakson	Reid
Byrd	Johanns	Rockefeller
Cantwell	Johnson	Sanders
Cardin	Kaufman	Schumer
Carper	Kennedy	Shaheen
Casey	Kerry	Snowe
Chambliss	Klobuchar	Specter
Cochran	Kohl	Stabenow
Collins	Lautenberg	Tester
Conrad	Leahy	Udall (CO)
Corker	Levin	Udall (NM)
Dodd	Lieberman	

Voinovich	Webb	Wicker
Warner	Whitehouse	Wyden

NAYS—14

Brownback	Ensign	Roberts
Bunning	Inhofe	Sessions
Coburn	Kyl	Shelby
Crapo	McConnell	Thune
DeMint	Risch	

NOT VOTING—11

Begich	Harkin	Nelson (FL)
Boxer	Inouye	Pryor
Cornyn	Landrieu	Vitter
Enzi	Martinez	

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. WARNER). On this vote, the yeas are 74, the nays are 14. Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn having voted in the affirmative, the motion is agreed to.

Mr. REED. I move to reconsider the vote, and I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

GREEN JOBS

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, in recent weeks and months, a new phrase has been born that has gained in popularity and support. The new phrase that is so in vogue in the Halls of Congress and at the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue is ''green jobs.''

I have no fault with the term. Everyone wants to create green-collar jobs. Green jobs are believed to be a critical component of getting us out of the economic doldrums in which we find ourselves. A new White House middle-class task force recently focused on the creation of green jobs as a means of fueling our economy and creating jobs for the middle class. Vice President BIDEN has defined a green job as one that provides products and services that use renewable energy resources, reduces pollution, and conserves energy and natural resources.

I don't disagree that the creation of these types of jobs is a very worthy ambition. This newfound desire for so-called green jobs has led me to remind my colleagues of an existing industry that is making great strides to reduce pollution, conserve natural resources, and contribute significantly to our economy.

The U.S. renewable fuels industry has been creating good paying jobs in rural America for years. It has been 30 years since a tax incentive for ethanol was passed and 17 years since I fathered the wind energy tax credit. These alternative energies have been producing a renewable resource right here at home that is reducing our dependence on foreign oil and fossil fuels, and it has contributed to a cleaner environment.

U.S. domestic renewable fuels have been doing all these things long before it was cool or in vogue. So don't be surprised that this is the nature of America's farmers, ranchers, and entrepreneurs. They do things because of the intrinsic value to our country and to our economy, whether it is a fad on the east coast or not.

I happen to think it is great that there is a newfound zeal for creating renewable resources here at home. I have been supporting our domestic renewable fuels industry for nearly 30 years as a means to reduce our dependence on volatile nations for our energy, mostly for petroleum. I have been promoting clean wind energy since I fathered the wind energy tax credit back in 1992. I am pleased to see the success and the support wind energy now receives because of my tax incentive.

I hope my colleagues who tout the benefits today of the so-called green jobs fully realize the contribution the domestic ethanol and biodiesel industries have been making for years in this area. Farmers across this country produced more than 9 billion gallons of homegrown renewable fuels last year. Ethanol production displaced 321 million barrels of oil last year. That is the equivalent of our imports from Venezuela for 10 months. The use of 9 billion gallons of ethanol saved American consumers $32 billion last year.

Yet even with this success, our farmers and the biofuel industry have been under constant attack—at least constant attack over the last 2 years. In a high-priced public relations smear campaign, the food manufacturers and the Grocery Manufacturers Association have tried tirelessly to denigrate the efforts of our farmers. In a baseless campaign, they tried to blame the ethanol industry for raising food prices, even though corn makes up about a nickel of the cost of a box of Corn Flakes. The grocery manufacturers thought they found a weak link in the food chain that they could target and scapegoat as a culprit behind the rising cost of food. It was clearly proven that the cost of energy had a significantly greater impact on food prices than did other commodity costs.

The fact is, the ones responsible for the high cost of food are the companies whose names stare back at us as we go through the grocery stores and supermarkets, and they have never hidden their motive during this smear campaign. It was stated clearly at the time the smear campaign was started that it was about ''protecting our bottom line.''

Consumers are still seeing the impact of that pocket lining by big food companies while commodity prices have dropped by half since their highs last summer. But food prices are still at record highs. Even the price of oil has dropped more than $100 a barrel. Yet food companies continue to keep prices high.

You don't need to take my word for it because we have the grocery store chains themselves fighting back now. SuperValu, Safeway, and Wegmans are just a few chains that are speaking publicly against the price increases pushed on them by Kellogg's, General Mills, Kraft, Nestle, and others. An article in the Los Angeles Times as recently as March 2 stated:

> Our large grocery companies operating in Southern California have seen the wholesale price for a carton of Kellogg's Corn Pops rise about 17 percent since June, despite a 52 percent plunge in corn prices from their peak this month.

The chief executive for Safeway was quoted as saying:

> It is disingenuous to consumers that all commodity costs are coming down, interest rates coming down, everything is coming down, and the national brands are taking their prices up.

The chief executive of SuperValu described the situation as a ''battleground'' with manufacturers right now over prices.

I am pleased to see others in the food chain call on these food producers to lower prices in light of the large drop in commodity prices, but this isn't the reason I came to speak today. I would like to take just a few more minutes to share with my colleagues another assault that is taking place on biofuels.

In the 2007 Energy Independence and Security Act, Congress enacted and expanded a renewable fuels standard to greatly increase the production and use of biofuels. A component of that renewable fuels standard was a requirement that various biofuels meet specified life cycle greenhouse gas emission reduction targets. The law specified that life cycle greenhouse gas emissions are to include direct emissions and significantly indirect emissions from indirect land use changes. This means that the emissions from planting, growing, and harvesting the feedstock to the production of biofuels must be included in the calculation. It also means that the Environmental Protection Agency must determine and must measure the greenhouse gas impacts if there is a significant conversion of forest or prairie-to-tillable land because of our biofuel policies.

For the past few months, the Environmental Protection Agency has been working on what we call a rulemaking—notice of proposed rulemaking—to implement the updated renewable fuels standard. While it hasn't been finalized or made public, there are great concerns about this rule within the biofuels industry surrounding the science behind indirect land use changes. And, of course, when you think of the Environmental Protection Agency, isn't science what EPA is all about?

President Obama, during his Presidential campaign and as President

now, has stated that his administration will return to decisions and actions based on ''sound science.'' In January, he said:

> Rigid ideology has overruled sound science. Special interests have overshadowed common sense.

Well, I would encourage President Obama and his staff to take a close look at what the EPA is doing in this rulemaking process called a notice of proposed rulemaking on renewable fuels standards. There are a couple of people in the EPA's Office of Air and Radiation who firmly believe—do you believe this?—they can quantify the indirect land use changes that result from our biofuels policies. I am afraid that the bureaucrats at the Environmental Protection Agency are going down a path of blaming our biofuel producers for land use changes around the globe, and specifically even outside of the United States.

The fact is, measuring indirect emissions of greenhouse gas reduction is far from a perfect science, and dozens of credible scientists agree. There is a great deal of complexity and uncertainty surrounding this issue. One study last year claimed that biofuels, as a result of these indirect impacts, actually led to greater emissions and greenhouse gas emissions than did gasoline. This conclusion defies common sense. Under careful scrutiny, credible scientists on the other side disproved these conclusions, and I want to quote some.

Dr. Wang of the Department of Energy's Argonne National Laboratory replied to these assertions by stating:

> There has also been no indication that the United States corn ethanol production has so far caused indirect land use changes in other countries, because U.S. corn exports have been maintained at about 2 billion bushels a year, and because U.S. distillers' grain exports have steadily increased in the past 10 years.

May I add that really what EPA—through indirect land use—is talking about here, in the most common denominator, is they figure that because Iowa or Missouri or Minnesota or Illinois corn producers are growing corn, and some of it is going into ethanol, that someplace down in Brazil, farmers are just sitting around trying to calculate and are going to plow up acre for acre the amount of land that is maybe being used for production of ethanol at this point. Well, I think the practical matter is that just isn't happening, and that is exactly what Dr. Wang is saying here. And if that were the case, what can the farmers of our country do about it? Are we going to be at the point where something that happens in some other country is going to affect our policy here in the United States as to what we can grow and what we can use that crop for? I don't think that is a credible position to take.

Now, I quoted one study, but there are a number of credible studies that have demonstrated that our biofuel policies will have little, if any, impact on international land use. A recent study by Air Improvement Resource found that the production of 15 billion gallons of corn ethanol by the year 2015 should not result in new forests or grassland conversion in the United States or abroad. Let's look at the University of Nebraska. A peer-review study conducted there and published in the Yale Journal of Industrial Ecology found similar conclusions. They concluded that corn ethanol emits 51 percent less greenhouse gases than gasoline. A third study, conducted by Global Insight, found that it is virtually impossible to accurately ascribe greenhouse gas impacts on indirect land use changes to biofuels.

There are a number of assumptions that can affect the conclusion about indirect land use changes. With any model, if you put garbage in, you will get garbage out, and I want to make sure the EPA isn't putting garbage in. I want to make sure they know yields per acre for corn have doubled between 1970 and today. I want EPA to know that nitrogen fertilizer used per acre has been declining since 1985. The Environmental Protection Agency also needs to know that the ethanol industry today is vastly more efficient than it was just a few years ago. Ethanol producers use one-fifth less energy today than they did just 8 years ago. More fuel is being produced from the same amount or even less land.

The California Air Resource Board is also trying to grasp this issue. They are developing a low carbon fuel standard which is penalizing biofuels with an indirect land use change. On March 2, 2009, to counteract this, 111 scientists sent a letter to California Governor Schwarzenegger on this very matter. The scientists are from leading research labs such as Sandia, Lawrence Berkeley, and the National Academy of Sciences, as well as leading educational institutions, including MIT, UCLA, Michigan State, and Iowa State. Scientists criticized the California Air Resource Board for proposing a regulation that alleges an indirect price-induced land conversion effect around the globe caused by a demand for agricultural production and biofuels.

In other words, they said in this official report what I just said: There isn't some Brazilian farmer just sitting around nervously awaiting whether he can plow up another acre of grassland in Brazil just because some more ethanol is being used out of products we grow here.

The letter of these 111 scientists sent to Governor Schwarzenegger stated:

> The ability to predict this alleged effect depends on using an economic model to predict worldwide carbon effects, and the outcomes are unusually sensitive to the assumptions made by the researchers conducting the model run. In addition, this field of science is in its nascent stage, is controversial in much of the scientific community, and is only being enforced against biofuels.

The two primary conclusions of these scientists are that science surrounding indirect land use changes is far too limited and uncertain for regulatory enforcement. Second, indirect effects are often misunderstood and should not be enforced selectively.

Several of us in the Senate are trying to get the Environmental Protection Agency to wake up and reconsider some of their thoughts. Last week I had the opportunity to join my Iowa colleague, Senator HARKIN, as well as 10 other Senators, in appealing to EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson to be cautious on this issue and as doctors would say about medicine: First do no harm.

Because of the incomplete and limited science, we urge in our letter against any premature and, of course, inaccurate conclusions on indirect land use changes. Instead, the EPA should move forward by allowing for public review and refinement of the methodology that they have developed. I am afraid the climate folks at EPA are heading in the wrong direction on this issue. I do not think they are bad people, but I am afraid they do not understand much about American agriculture. I do not think they are aware of the significant crop yield improvements we have seen in recent years or the great potential for the next 20 years.

I will just give my own farming operation as an example. In 1959, when I started farming, we were raising, on average, about 60 bushels of corn per acre. It happened that the first year I farmed I produced considerably less than that amount, but eventually, within 15 years, this farmer, as well as the Iowa average, had gone to about 90 bushels of corn per acre.

Last year, in my county, we raised 175 bushels of corn per acre. During that period of time, we went from tilling the field probably six or seven times over to produce a crop to now a point where we are only tilling the field once or twice before harvest. In each of these processes, we are producing more corn, we are producing it more efficiently, and at the same time we have an abundance.

When I started farming, farmers were producing about enough food for 44 other people. A family farmer today produces enough food for 140 other people.

I think we have made great progress, but I am not sure EPA understands the efficiency of the American farmer today and for sure they do not understand that people in Brazil are not just sitting around, seeing how they can take advantage of the fact that American farmers might be producing some of their crop for sustainable energy production in this country as opposed to importing more oil.

I also do not think these people fully understand the benefits of valuable ethanol byproducts, which further reduce the effective land used for fuel production.

Along this line, do they understand that when you take a bushel of corn to make 3 gallons of ethanol that corn is

not gone forever, that 18 pounds of the 56 pounds that is in a bushel of corn is left over for animal feed? So it is not all going to production of energy.

To me, it defies common sense that the EPA would publish a proposed rulemaking with harmful conclusions about biofuels based on incomplete science and inaccurate assumptions and especially in light of President Obama's commitment to use sound science in decisionmaking by the bureaucracy carrying out the laws we pass. The Environmental Protection Agency's action, if based on erroneous land-use assumptions, could hinder biofuel development and extend America's dependence upon dirtier fossil fuels from parts of the world that are not very stable.

Agricultural practices and land-use decisions in other countries are not driven by U.S. biofuel policies. In other words, there is no Brazilian farmer sitting around in Brazil, waiting to see what Iowa farmers are going to do with their corn—for food or export or for fuel. Even if they were, we have no accurate way to measure it scientifically and we need to ensure that in that measurement, biofuels get credit for these increased efficiencies of production—of the basic commodity as well as the increase in efficiency producing the ethanol.

President Obama was, and as far as I know is still, a strong proponent of our domestic biofuels industry and he especially was during his time in the Senate. I know he recognizes the benefit of producing homegrown renewable fuels, and I doubt he would agree with the conclusion that biofuels emit the same or more lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions as does gasoline.

I hope the EPA will reconsider its conclusions on this or not hastily draw conclusions.

WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTIONS

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, during the height of the Presidential campaign, President Obama made a number of high profile statements and promises about what actions he would take once he was elected and sworn in. These promises outlined a number of important issues such as closing the revolving door for lobbyists in the executive branch, ending the use of no-bid contracts, and curbing the influence of special interests, to name just a few.

Over the years, I have been an outspoken supporter of legislation that would make the Government more transparent and open. I have authored and supported a number of bills that would open the Government up and make it more accountable to the citizens. In particular I have been strong advocate for whistleblowers. Most importantly, I have always pushed the Government to be accountable by conducting vigorous oversight of the Federal bureaucracy regardless of which party controls Congress or the White House. I have been an equal opportunity overseer and have given my Republican colleagues as many headaches as I have given Democrats.

Given my background on oversight, I was supportive of some of the statements President Obama made as a candidate with respect to transparency and openness in Government. A document on the Obama campaign Web site titled, ''Restoring Trust in Government and Improving Transparency,'' outlined ethics and contracting reform, and included a statement that:

> Obama will sign legislation in the light of day without attaching signing statements that undermine legislative intent.

Candidate Obama further discussed signing statements during a campaign speech where he said that his administration was ''not going to use signing statements as a way of doing an end run around Congress.'' A video of that speech is available online for all to see.

I was also encouraged by candidate Obama's promises to protect employees in the Federal Government who blow the whistle on fraud, waste, and abuse. In yet another campaign document, candidate Obama stated that he would ''strengthen whistleblower laws to protect Federal workers who expose waste, fraud, and abuse of authority in government.'' That statement was posted on the Change.gov Web site of the Obama Transition Team for all to see. It was a welcome message to the employees of the executive branch that risk their careers and stick their necks out to alert Congress, inspectors General, and the public about fraud, waste, and abuse in Government agencies and programs.

These employees, also known as whistleblowers, often do nothing more than ''commit truth,'' and for it they are shunned by their agencies, coworkers, friends, and government. My colleagues have all heard me say time and again that whistleblowers are as welcome as a skunk at a Sunday picnic. These patriot individuals believe that Government can do better for its citizens. They risk everything to make sure that laws are faithfully executed as they were intended and let Congress know when something is not working and needs fixing. Some of the most important reforms to our laws have come from whistleblowers, be it reforming our national security and law enforcement coordination following the tragic events of 9/11, or ensuring we have clean water to drink.

Given Candidate Obama's promise to not use signing statements to circumvent the legislative intent of Congress and his pledge to support whistleblowers, I was shocked to read the signing statement he issued on the Omnibus apprropriations bill that was signed into law on March 11. Not only did President Obama's action run contrary to his promise not to use signing statements to circumvent the intent of Congress, he also appears to have broken his promise to strengthen whistleblower laws by singling out an important whistleblower protection provision that Congres has included in every appropriations bill for the last decade.

Sections 714(1) and (2) of the omnibus bill contains an appropriations rider that states that no appropriation shall be available to pay the salary of any officer or employee of the Federal Government:

> Attempts or threatens to prohibit or prevent, any other officer or employee of the Federal Government from having any direct oral or written communication or contact with any Member, committee, or subcommittee of the Congress.

This rider was first included in appropriations bills in 1997 and has been included in appropriations bills since. It is a strong signal to all agencies that efforts to block federal employees from coming to Congress won't be tolerated.

However, the applicability of this rider is now in question given the signing statement issued by President Obama. His signing statement, in pertinent part, stated that this provision does not:

> detract from [his] authority to direct the heads of executive departments to supervise, control, and correct employees' communications with Congress.

This statement is shocking. It acknowledges that President Obama envisions a scenario where he would order a Cabinet Secretary to supervise, control, and correct statements made by employees to Congress.

Worse yet, the signing statement goes further to add that this authority would be used when employee communications would be ''unlawful or would reveal information that is properly privileged or otherwise confidential.''

I want to emphasize that word ''confidential,'' because you will hear about that in just a minute.

While other Presidents have objected to this appropriations rider in the past, President Obama's signing statement is even more problematic than those because it states that he has the authority to not only restrict privileged material, but also ''confidential'' information.

By failing to define ''confidential,'' President Obama has given a blank check to executive branch agencies to block communications with Congress related to an undefined, broad category of information.

Understand, it is a constitutional power and responsibility of this Congress to oversee, as part of our checks and balances of our Constitution, the agencies of Government to make sure laws are faithfully executed, as the Constitution requires, and as money is spent according to Congress.

Even the New York Times noted President Obama's signing statement includes ''one somewhat unclear objection'' that ''could be read as bumping up against the rights of executive branch whistle-blowers.'' Because, in our constitutional responsibility, we have to rely upon people in the executive branch to tell us when the job isn't being done according to the Constitution or according to law.

So I want to go further than what the New York Times said and say: It does

more than bump up against the rights of whistleblowers. It, in fact, is going to be a chill. It will chill executive branch employees from sharing information with Congress in our congressional obligation of oversight.

It could also be construed to be an attempt to limit Members of Congress from conducting this constitutional duty. I wrote to President Obama last Friday raising my concerns with his signing statement, and, most importantly, the chilling effect that it will have on whistleblower communication with Congress.

Today, I have not received a response. However, I read in the New York Times on March 16 that an unnamed administration official stated that President Obama is ''committed to whistleblower protections,'' and that the administration ''had no intention of going further than did Presidents Bill Clinton and George Bush in signing statements concerning similar provisions.''

Then, what is that word ''confidential'' doing in there? However, that same official did not provide any detail on that additional term ''confidential.'' I would like President Obama to answer my letter soon and clarify exactly what he meant in this signing statement. Absent a more detailed response from President Obama, I cannot see how his signing statement can be reconciled with the pledges and promises made by Candidate Obama, nor can I reconcile the criticism issued by Candidate Obama about President Bush's use of signing statements with the statements made by that unnamed administration source in the New York Times.

The unnamed source said President Obama ''had no intention of going further than did President Clinton or George Bush in signing statements.'' Candidate Obama stated he would not use signing statements in a manner similar to President Bush to circumvent the will of Congress. Now a member of the administration is telling the New York Times that President Obama means to do exactly the same thing as President Bush in issuing signing statements.

It seems to me, if this is the case, Candidate Obama would have a problem with President Obama's use of signing statements to underline the intent of this appropriations rider on whistleblowers.

Now, a number of my colleagues were quick to object to signing statements issued by President Bush but somehow have so far remained silent regarding President Obama's use of signing statements. Well, to those who had concerns in the past, I encourage you to take a close look at this signing statement and the potential harm it will cause for Members of Congress doing our constitutional responsibility of oversight to see that the laws are faithfully executed.

Those who may believe my acts are motivated by partisan politics, I want you to look at my record and see that I have repeatedly objected to signing statements that hindered the rights of whistleblowers. Just one example: I objected to a signing statement issued by President Bush back in 2002 that restricted the application of whistleblower protection provisions included in Sarbanes-Oxley.

I also, as another example, objected when a signing statement was issued by President Bush impacting specific reforms contained in the Inspector General Reform Act of 2008.

In closing, I call upon President Obama to revisit the March 11 signing statement and implement sections 714(1) and (2) in a manner consistent with the spirit and intent of this legislation.

As a former Senator, he must recognize the good that whistleblowers do by speaking out and by shedding light on fraud, waste, and abuse in Government agencies and programs.

Candidate Obama supported whistleblowers, but based upon his recent signing statements, these campaign promises now ring hollow. I hope I have interpreted him wrongly and will give him an opportunity to set the record right because I hope he comes out the same way he did in the campaign: strictly in support of whistleblowers, who are an essential element of the process of our checks and balances of government as Congress does its constitutional job of oversight.

We do not know where all of the skeletons are in the closet. We do not know all of the abuses of law. We do not know of all of the fraudulent things that are going on in government. We need that information from whistleblowers, and the best evidence I can give you of that is the $22 billion that has been brought back into the Federal Treasury since I got the False Claims Act of 1986 passed.

Most of that information would not have been available without the information from whistleblowers.

I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business with Senators allowed to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

OMNIBUS PUBLIC LANDS MANAGEMENT ACT

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. President, I express my strong support for the bipartisan omnibus lands package, HR 146, which the Senate passed overwhelmingly in a floor vote. I thank Energy and Natural Resources Chairman BINGAMAN and Ranking Member MURKOWSKI for working across the aisle to put together this major piece of natural resources legislation. As many of our colleagues have noted, this legislation represents the largest public lands package in decades. Most importantly, this lands package represents a major victory for the people—and the lands—of Colorado.

There is much in this bill to highlight. All of the areas that are slated for protection under this legislation are deserving of such designation.

I have personally visited many of these places that we took action to preserve—places like Longs Peak, a mountain over 14,000 feet that looms over the great plains above Denver; the dramatic red rock canyons where water plunges to the Gunnison River from the Dominguez Canyons; and trails that climb up the steep rocky slopes of Colorado's northern Front Range looking out over the expanse of prairie that reaches to the eastern horizon.

These lands represent a variety of landscapes and natural attributes. They typify the diversity of our Nation, and their dramatic environments inspire visitors and give them a sense that anything is possible.

The connection we have to our natural landscapes and other equally important provisions—such as providing a funding mechanism for a water conduit that will help provide clean water to help enhance the productivity of farms and ranches along the lower Arkansas River—underscore why this bill is so important and worthy of our support. The areas and vital resources that are protected in this bill will help ensure a vibrant and healthy environment and thereby provide a solid foundation for a healthy and vibrant economy. This bill is not just about the special places it encompasses it is about us and our values. It deserves our support.

Specifically for Coloradans, this package will help preserve and protect majestic public landscapes in Colorado and help provide needed water supplies to communities and farmers on Colorado's productive Eastern Plains. These are issues on which I have worked for many years in the U.S. House of Representatives and now in the Senate. On behalf of the people of Colorado, I am proud that the following provisions will likely become law in the coming days.

First, the bill includes the Arkansas Valley Conduit Act of 2009. This legislation will help protect the water supply for the Arkansas River Valley's communities and productive agricultural lands by advancing the construction of the long-planned Arkansas Valley Conduit. The depressed economic status of southeastern Colorado made it a difficult financial undertaking for the region, a challenge that continues

today. This bill will help see this facility become a reality and help the farming and ranching communities in the valley continue to produce needed food for the state and Nation.

Second, the Colorado Northern Front Range Study Act included in the package will help Coloradans protect the scenic Front Range mountain backdrop in the northern Denver-metro area and the region just west of Rocky Flats.

Rising from the Great Plains, the Front Range of the Rocky Mountains provides a scenic mountain backdrop to many communities in the Denver metropolitan area and elsewhere in Colorado. This mountain backdrop, which includes much of the Arapaho-Roosevelt National Forest, is an important aesthetic and economic asset for adjoining communities. It is also part of our unique culture, having beckoned settlers westward before exposing them to the harshness and humbling majesty of the Rocky Mountain West that helped define the region. The pioneers' independent spirit and respect for nature still lives with us to this day.

Yet rapid population growth is increasing recreational use of the Arapaho-Roosevelt National Forest and adding pressure to develop other lands within and adjacent to that national forest. The bill directs the U.S. Forest Service to study the ownership patterns of the lands comprising the Front Range mountain backdrop and identify areas that are open and may be at risk of development. Additionally, it directs the Forest Service to recommend to Congress how these lands might be protected and how the Federal Government could help local communities and residents to achieve that goal.

Third, the bill includes the National Trails System Willing Seller Authority Act. This act will change the current law prohibiting people who own land associated with several units of the trail system from selling those lands to the Federal Government. Because of this act, people who want to sell land for inclusion in certain units of the National Trails System will be able to do so.

Our national trails are a national treasure, and I have enjoyed them for my whole life. We should allow property owners to sell their land along these trails to the Federal Government to be part of our public lands legacy. But we must make clear that these land sales are from willing sellers.

Finally, this legislation includes the Rocky Mountain National Park Wilderness and Indian Peaks Wilderness Expansion Act. This provision will designate nearly 250,000 acres of Rocky Mountain National Park as wilderness. The provision will guarantee the backcountry of Rocky Mountain National Park will be managed so that future generations will experience the park as we know it today. The legislation will also allow the National Park Service to continue its important efforts to battle the devastating bark beetle infestation and to engage in necessary wildfire mitigation efforts and emergency response actions.

The wilderness designation in this bill will cover some 94 percent of the park including Longs Peak and other major mountains along the Great Continental Divide, glacial cirques and snow fields, broad expanses of alpine tundra and wet meadows, old-growth forests, and hundreds of lakes and streams.

Examples of all the natural ecosystems that make up the splendor of Rocky Mountain National Park are included in the wilderness that will be designated by this bill. At the same time, the wilderness boundaries have been drawn so as to allow continued access for the use of existing roadways, buildings and developed areas, and privately owned land.

In conclusion, the passage of this bill in the Senate and House will mark the culmination of many years of work by a number of Coloradans, and I look forward to it becoming law.

FALMOUTH VOLUNTEER WEEK

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, this week marks the Celebrate Volunteers Week at the Falmouth Volunteers in Public Schools Program, VIPS, in Falmouth, MA. I would like to take this opportunity to commend and thank those that participate in the VIPS Program which fosters interaction between the citizens of Falmouth and their public schools. Through this connection the schools are empowered to enrich their curriculum and the community at large benefits from a greater participation in their children's future.

The volunteers in this nonprofit organization log about 40,000 hours each year in support of the students, faculty, administration, and the community. This incredible effort is also supported by the business community in Falmouth that not only invests in VIPS events but also supports employee participation.

By comprehensively involving all facets of the Falmouth community VIPS enriches the lives of all involved. They provide mentoring and tutoring programs aimed at raising children's self esteem and teaching English as a second language. They have made school to business partnerships that enhance the educational experience of students by sharing resources with local businesses and bringing in guest speakers. Their innovative Cross Age Science Teaching Program matches junior high school volunteers to help elementary school students learn about electricity.

VIPS has grown from its inception in 1982, when they only had a handful of volunteers, to a robust program with over 1,100 volunteers in all 7 schools in Falmouth. When we think about improving our education system, what we need to remember is that community involvement can make a world of difference. When you get folks in the community to volunteer and become a part of the educational process, they become invested in the success of the students. That is what is happening in Falmouth. I congratulate all of the people who have helped make the Falmouth Volunteers in Public Service a success, and I commend the work that they do.

(At the request of Mr. REID, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.

VOTE EXPLANATION

• Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, due to an illness, I was forced to miss the previous two rollcall votes.

The first vote was on the nomination of Elena Kagan to be the Solicitor General of the United States. The second vote was on cloture on the motion to proceed to national service bill. Had I been present for these two rollcall votes, I would have voted aye.

Elena Kagan has the qualifications and intellect to be an outstanding Solicitor General. I am proud that she is the first woman to hold this important position.

I also support the motion to proceed to the national service bill and am disappointed that it is necessary to invoke cloture to break the filibuster against this bipartisan legislation. It is important that we act to expand opportunities for Americans who volunteer their time and talents in service to their communities.•

(At the request of Mr. REID, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

REMEMBERING FALLEN POLICE OFFICERS

• Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, it is with deep sadness that I discuss one of the deadliest attacks against California law enforcement in my State's history—an attack that took the lives of four Oakland, CA, police officers, and has left our community reeling from the shock of this terrible and senseless loss.

Every day, our law enforcement officers selflessly and bravely put their lives on the line to protect our families and our communities. If anyone, anywhere, needed a reminder of that, this tragedy puts a spotlight on the risk our police officers face every day.

On Saturday, March 21, what should have been a routine midday traffic stop for Oakland PD officers Mark Dunakin and John Hege quickly turned into a murder scene.

After fatally wounding both officers, the suspect fled the scene, leading to a frantic manhunt that involved more than 200 officers from Oakland PD, Alameda County Sheriff's Office, BART Police and the California Highway Patrol. The suspect was quickly tracked down to an apartment. But when the SWAT team entered the apartment, he fired a series of shots from inside of a closet, fatally wounding officers Daniel

Sakai and Ervin Romans, and injuring a third, before he was shot and killed.

In the days and weeks ahead, we will have important debates about the problems with our justice system that allowed a violent offender to be on the streets in clear violation of his parole. And we will debate the issue of powerful weapons in the hands of dangerous criminals.

As these debates move forward, I will work to give our law enforcement officers more support and more resources to adequately protect our communities and protect themselves.

Now I want to pay tribute to these four fallen officers.

Sergeant Mark Dunakin, age 40, was an 18-year veteran of Oakland PD. He was no stranger to violent crime, having worked homicide cases in the criminal investigation division. But he later transferred to the motorcycle traffic division where his days focused on patrolling our streets on his beloved Harley Davidson, cracking down on drunk drivers and trying to always enforce our State's seatbelt laws. Sergeant Dunakin is survived by his wife Angela Schwab and their three children.

Officer John Hege, age 41, had been with the Oakland PD for 10 years and had only recently started his dream assignment of becoming part of the motorcycle traffic division. Respected by his colleagues and well liked by his neighbors, Officer Hege was often known to lend a helping hand, and even found time to umpire high school baseball in his free time. After being gunned down this weekend, Officer Hege was declared brain dead. And true to the heroism he exhibited in his life, his organs are being donated to help save other lives. Officer Hege is survived by his father and his beloved dog.

Sergeant Ervin Romans, age 43, had been with the Oakland PD since 1996. As a member of the elite SWAT team, Romans was in charge of entering the most dangerous situations to confront and arrest barricaded suspects. Known as just ''Erv'' to his friends and colleagues, he was among a group of officers awarded the department's prestigious Medal of Valor in 1999 for helping to evacuate residents during a fire. His captain, Ed Tracey said he ''had an exterior image of being the tough, rugged guy, but everyone knows he has a soft heart.'' Sergeant Romans is survived by his three children.

Sergeant Daniel Sakai, age 35, had recently been named a leader of the entry SWAT team, and was known to all as a rising star. Before joining the SWAT team, Sergeant Sakai worked in the K–9 division, responding to calls with his dog, Doc. He studied forestry at UC Berkeley, where he was a member of the Alpha Sigma Phi fraternity. He also worked as a community service officer at Berkeley, escorting students around campus at night. He is survived by his wife Jennifer, a UC Berkeley police officer, and their daughter.

My thoughts and prayers are with the families, friends, and colleagues of these fallen officers in this tragic time.

We must come together to support those suffering, and in the coming days we must come together, firmly resolved to end the violence that has for too long eaten away at the fabric of our communities.●

IDAHOANS SPEAK OUT ON HIGH ENERGY PRICES

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, in mid-June, I asked Idahoans to share with me how high energy prices are affecting their lives, and they responded by the hundreds. The stories, numbering well over 1,200, are heartbreaking and touching. While energy prices have dropped in recent weeks, the concerns expressed remain very relevant. To respect the efforts of those who took the opportunity to share their thoughts, I am submitting every e-mail sent to me through an address set up specifically for this purpose to the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. This is not an issue that will be easily resolved, but it is one that deserves immediate and serious attention, and Idahoans deserve to be heard. Their stories not only detail their struggles to meet everyday expenses, but also have suggestions and recommendations as to what Congress can do now to tackle this problem and find solutions that last beyond today. I ask unanimous consent to have today's letters printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

I certainly feel the impact of huge and unpredictable increases in all the necessities: gas/fuel, household energy costs, food, clothing, travel, etc. All of these have risen rather dramatically, sort of like dominoes. I am spending a lot more for a lot less. As I am deciding not to go do something or go buy something, I think of all the merchants and businesses that will, if they are not already, suffer from this (all of us not going places, and buying so much less). I have almost totally quit eating out. Movies are out of the question. I have greatly cut down on my driving. I will just not visit places that I do not absolutely have to (and, truth be told, there are not really that many places one absolutely has to go). I go to the closest grocery store, as they are all expensive. I go to the closest gas station. There is no public transportation between my place of work and my home, which is a real hardship. In fact, our bus service is not bad in Boise, but it is cumbersome and limited. I find this to be a problem. I will not be doing the traveling and vacationing this year that I usually do. I will not be able to visit family members that do not live in Boise. This is not good for business, or morale and attitude (mine). Because I have much less disposable income now, my charitable donations will be, and already are, less. It is so expensive to drive to any of the organizations where I like to help out (''volunteering'') that it has had to be cut out. Driving to attend the civic and fun groups that I am a member of and the activities that I like to participate in is now too costly to continue attending. Shopping? Out of the question, with the exceptions listed above. By the way, did you know that the average fuel usage in Ford's (last, I believe) cars—in his day—was 25 mpg. Do you know what it is in this country today? 21 mpg. We all know that this is ridiculous. Clearly, the only entity that benefits from this is fuel companies, and automakers that have not had to retool their factories for decades. And even with that ''savings'', they're hurting, too, now.

My suggestions, wishes, and hopes?

More public transportation, more types of public transportation, more coverage, more frequent times that public transport goes by, at a minimal cost to riders. And we could use the money that we would save on highways to fund it! Trains are wonderful, both for passengers and goods.

Laws that insist that all parts of the automobile industry quickly get cars ready for market that are lighter, safer, and much more fuel efficient; that include speedily implementing the roll-out of vehicles (all vehicles, including commercial and military) that some of them are already developing, that are outstanding in design and are environmentally responsible. I should say, that are already in development, although perhaps not by the mainstream auto makers. The use of fossil fuels should be seriously lessened. Oil and gas companies should pay their rightful taxes, and should not be subsidized. New ''green'' fuel sources should be subsidized at the rate that oil and gas companies currently are, and should get breaks on their taxes for the early years. These should include, but be not limited to: wind, solar, geothermal; and research into new, unknown possible energy sources (with low environmental impact) should also be encouraged with subsidies and whatever helps, within limits. And the whole ''alternate fuel'' scenario should have some honesty, reality, and integrity infused into it. Specifically: ethanol is in no way environmentally responsible or viable. It is just a give-away for the corporate farm industry. Nuclear fission energy should be banned. There is no way to ensure safe use now, or of the spent fuel in the future, and it misuses precious water resources. I am okay with working towards trying to make nuclear fusion work.

No new drilling—anywhere! Americans can come up with better ideas—let us go back to that ''good old American ingenuity and know-how.'' We used to be on the cutting edge for creativity, inventiveness, and new ideas—and the development of them. Let us ''Be The Best We Can Be.''

And, lastly, and strongly related to the energy problems we are experiencing: land and soil should be nourished and protected. It should be used in an honest and responsible way. That means, for example, that corn should actually have nutritional value, should have lowered sugar levels, not continue to be genetically and artificially altered so as to be useless for actually providing nutrition for people, because it is nothing but sugar that makes the creation of corn syrup, which is destroying the health of our kids, among other unhealthy products, easy and cheap to produce for greedy and/or corporate ''farmers.'' The land should be cherished, not over-used, misused, and abused. It should be mindfully used to produce food for people—good, nourishing, healthy food to nourish healthy children, mothers, and all of us.

The health, safety, and financial benefits of changing our practices and policies are so extensive that it would take too much space to enumerate here. We could be at the world leaders of industry, development, inventiveness, and productivity if we, as a country, were willing to look at things in a fresh way, rather than stubbornly clutching at ''doing things the same old way.''

We are supposed to be conservatives—let us actually practice conserving.

SUSAN.

Our family of 5 spends more than $500 a month now on gasoline (for 3 vehicles—our 3 kids can all drive now), not to mention the higher food prices that are a result of higher fuel costs to truckers and the foolish ethanol policy of the government. We are needing to work additional jobs just to try to make basic ends meet and avoid going deep into debt. If prices go up further, we will still be going into debt just to cover the basics of food, clothing, transportation and shelter.

We are an average family (financially we make about 60,000 a year from 3 jobs between all of us, with 2 now in college—1 just starting, but living at home), but face above average costs when compared to the averages mentioned in the media and by politicians. For example, Barack Obama makes light of a temporary lifting of the gas tax, saying it would be 30 cents a day. We would be at least twice that much, and many truckers would save even more if diesel tax was lifted. And we are an average family, so I do not believe his numbers for a minute.

We cannot afford to buy an expensive high gas mileage small car to offset the higher gas prices. We must continue to nurse along our two more than 10-year old vehicles that get 19 miles per gallon. Most poor and lower-middle class are in the same situation as us. The upper middle-class and wealthy may be able to handle it to some better degree, although I am not a participant in class envy and they should be considered too. But it is interesting how the [liberals] claim to care about the poor and middle class, yet their do-nothing policy on energy contradicts their claims.

If they think taxing oil companies and redistributing the tax to poor and middle class with rebate checks will solve the problem, they are wrong. The tax will be passed on in ever-higher gas prices and/or the oil companies could limit production to stay just below the windfall tax threshold, thus causing shortages and even higher prices. It did not work when Jimmy Carter tried it, and tweaking it a little to allow oil companies to trade the tax for alternative energy production would likely not help much, in my opinion. We need to get the price down, not give each person a small piece of the large wealth redistribution that helps them for only a few months.

The government needs to remove the restrictions and regulations that hinder progress in tapping our domestic energy sources of all types. Many claim that tapping into our domestic oil and natural gas resources would not do any good for many years. They are wrong. And even if they were right, do you avoid planting a tree just because you will not get a full crop of fruit or sufficient shade for several years? This ''tree'' of increased domestic oil supply should have been planted over 10 years ago.

But here is why they are wrong: if speculators are part of the cause of increased oil prices whenever there is something in the Mideast that brings concern about possible reduced supply, then they would logically be part of the cause of reduced oil prices if they received good news that our government was finally serious about allowing increased domestic supply. There would be an almost immediate drop in oil prices which would soon show lower prices at the pump. On top of that, the foreign nations that have control over us now would not want to see us quit buying from them in the future, so they would likely increase production to try to get us to not increase our production. Increasing their production would cause an additional price decrease within a short amount of time.

Increasing our domestic drilling and exploration would create additional jobs, as oil companies would hire people to do the additional exploration and drilling. And additional revenues would be created for the states that participated, by leasing land, taxes paid through the additional employment, etc. This would help our national economy as well, as it became a positive ripple effect.

Increasing other types of energy sources, such as wind, solar, coal, shale, nuclear, natural gas, etc. are all good. Even ethanol is good where it can be produced regionally and help regionally without being forced on us at a certain level by the government, causing a shortage of corn and higher food prices.

A final thought: we need fewer lawsuits by environmentalists, which bog things down way too long. We need to reform the laws to keep them from preventing us from solving this problem. If the government okays further drilling, etc, but allows the radical environmentalists to bring up lawsuit after lawsuit, we'll still be in trouble. Allow a basic environmental process to ensure we are doing this in a reasonable manner, and then have them get out of the way so we can start making use of our resources.

Thanks for allowing me to give my input.

DAVID, *Boise*.

I am a 15-year Idaho resident, and I commute about 55 miles a day to work. The cost of gasoline/diesel is having a profound effect on the local economy-not to mention my own finances. Idaho, and most other inland states, are feeling the effects directly in higher prices across the board. I know several small business owners, in different markets, who have related to me the disastrous impact this is having on them. I cannot stress enough that we need to increase the supply side of this equation. But, of course, everyone in Washington knows this and the situation is being exploited by those on the left to increase dependence on government.

It is obvious to me that the liberals in Congress see high fuel prices as vehicle to provide them greater control over the lives of the citizens of the United States. The more low income people have to spend on fuel, the more likely they are to require government support in other areas of their lives. This is intended to cement the liberal base as permanent government serfs with no choice in for whom they vote. Ultimately, this is an attack on our liberty from within that, if left unchecked, will result in less freedom, and more and bigger government.

There are a number of facets to this problem: environmental regulation, government regulation, and political demagoguery that is unparalleled in our history. The oil companies are not the problem. Most people I know realize this and are fed up with environmental bullshit reasons for not exploring for more oil. The notion that there is a shortage of oil or, that we are running out of oil, is simply not born out by the facts. But facts do not matter when there is an agenda. As Goebels said, the bigger the lie, the easier it is to sell.

I would love to discuss this at length with you, but I am losing faith in the process. However, I appreciate that you are fighting the good fight. Please keep it up.

MIKE.

I am not sure if I have any faith in our Congress changing anything but I feel some satisfaction with at least voicing my thoughts and if I may say so my feelings about these soaring energy costs.

Yes, the soaring energy costs have had a huge impact on me. I am a single women working as a Physical Therapist Assistant. I live 30 miles from my place of employment. I own horses so I own a pick-up truck. Up until recently I only drove my truck. It was not great on fuel economy, but as a person with only one income, a house payment, a vehicle payment, plus other bills. It was not feasible to buy another vehicle. As a single women that is not mechanically inclined (nor do I have the time), I need vehicles that are safe and reliable. Well, now, I have a small vehicle. So now I have two vehicle payments, plus full coverage insurance on two vehicles, plus a house payment, plus fuel, plus all the other costs to get buy! Fuel for my truck, just to go back and forth to work for one week was costing me between $80 & 100 reg. gas, the ''cheap'' stuff! That is not counting doing anything on the weekends, or any ''extra'' driving. That is simply working 4–5 days a week. I usually work (4) 10s and sometimes a few extra hours on day 5. So yes, now my grocery bill has been reduced, my credit cards are being used more, and it scares the hell out of me!

My home energy bill also nearly doubled. I have not doubled my use. I am away from home most of the time. I rarely watch television, except to turn the news on from 4:30 A.M. to 6 A.M. when I am getting ready for work. I turn my computer on for a few minutes several days a week. I go to bed early so my lights are not even on much, yet my power bill doubled! No, I do not use much air conditioning either! I have a small house less than 1100 square feet. I have had it for sale for over a year and I have not been able to sell it. I replaced the roof last summer. The windows could stand to be replaced, yet I cannot afford to replace those old aluminum windows with vinyl.

Oh, I know most people would say to give up my animals and move to town, but then what is all of this about? What pray tell am I working for? My animals bring me joy and peace from a crazy world. I have raised/owned Arabian horses since 1985, and I have owned horses in general most of my 50 years. So the thought of going to work just to pay taxes, lay on a couch and watch TV after work and on weekends does not sound like much of a life to me. So if we cannot have a few things that bring us joy and comfort why are we working?

Yes, the out-of-control energy costs is slowly wiping all of ''working'' people out. If everything is taken away and all that is left is work, who wants to live that life? Think about it! Better yet, maybe those [who enjoy privileges and expensive lifestyles] should come live with us that really have to work and live on a budget. Let us take away those expense accounts and all the other freebies! Do you know how many people think like me? There are a lot.

Thank you for giving me the time to get this off my chest.

JUDY, *Wendell*.

I do not wish to join the whining masses about how energy prices have affected us all. Instead, I wish that Congress would act to pass a national energy policy that would encompass all areas of energy development. We did not win World War II by building only ships or tanks or airplanes, etc. We conquered the global threat at that time by building all assets necessary to win and developed new technologies for the future. The liberals' bumper sticker mantra that we cannot drill our way out of this mess refuses to acknowledge that the way out of this ''mess'' is to get out of our ''boxes'' and look at the wider picture. Back in the 1970s, I learned that C-ration California peanut butter burned right out of the can whereas Georgia stuff would not. Why limit our research to corn, chicken parts, et.al. as potential fuels? We should not keep subsidizing our farmers to not plant if corn and other foods/fuels are now in such demand. We obviously need greater oil production and refining capacity as a significant part of overcoming those

forces in OPEC that continue to enslave us to their output. We should work on developing Hydrogen fuel cell technology and put real delivery ability on the ground because who is going to buy a car he cannot refuel? We absolutely must develop nuclear reactor improvements and capacity which is being developed right now in Idaho. Limit individual financial incentives for energy savings because their cost savings should be incentive enough and any rewards beyond that are too open to fraudulent claims and wasting taxpayer money. Congress is too good at wasting our money already. Buying ''conservation credits'' like Al Gore does for his estate is a sham for the wealthy. It is akin to buying indulgences centuries ago that was the final ''straw'' that began Martin Luther's Reformation. The [conservatives] in Congress lazily missed an opportunity to make a worthwhile energy policy that ''thinks outside the box'' in the last several years and, I fear, that if the [liberals] win control of either house in November that we are doomed to suffer the consequences laid out over a thousand years ago by a Greek philosopher that all democracies are doomed to failure that as the people vote more liberties and indulgences to themselves their governments will be more unable to pay for them and they will lapse into anarchy. I believe we are in the third of his four stages right now.

I hope this has not been too boring or offensive. We, as a nation, must act to avoid an energy demand catastrophe, and our Congress is that body that our forefathers have ordained as the ones to do that task. I appreciate your time if you have really read this,

BILL, *Idaho Falls.*

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO WOODFORD COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

• Mr. BUNNING. Mr. President, today I invite my colleagues to join me in congratulating Jane Brannen and Adam Horn from Woodford County High School, Versailles, KY, for receiving the Achievement Award in writing. This year only 525 students around the country were recipients of this award.

The Achievement Award in writing is given to students who show excellence in English and writing. To be eligible for the award, students must submit a previously written paper and then be invited to participate in a timed essay.

Jane Brannen and Adam Horn both have shown great analytical and writing skills in their submitted papers. I am impressed by the excellence these two students have displayed, and I am confident that they will have success in greater challenges in the future.

Mr. President, I would like to thank Jane Brannen and Adam Horn for their contributions to the Commonwealth of Kentucky and wish them the best of luck in their future endeavors.•

TRIBUTE TO KYLE DARPEL

• Mr. BUNNING. Mr. President, today I invite my colleagues to join me in congratulating Kyle Darpel from Covington Catholic High School, Park Hills, KY, for receiving the Achievement Award in writing. This year only 525 students around the country were recipients of this award.

The Achievement Award in writing is given to students who show excellence in English and writing. To be eligible for the award, students must submit a previously written paper and then be invited to participate in a timed essay.

Kyle Darpel has shown great analytical and writing skills in his submitted paper. I am impressed by the excellence Kyle has displayed, and I am confident that he will have success in greater challenges in the future.

Mr. President, I would like to thank Kyle Darpel for his contribution to the Commonwealth of Kentucky and wish him the best of luck in their future endeavors.•

TRIBUTE TO J. MARI LYNN THOMPSON

• Mr. BUNNING. Mr. President, today I invite my colleagues to join me in congratulating J. Mari Lynn Thompson from Sacred Heart Academy, Louisville, KY, for receiving the Achievement Award in writing. This year only 525 students around the country were recipients of this award.

The Achievement Award in writing is given to students who show excellence in English and writing. To be eligible for the award, students must submit a previously written paper and then be invited to participate in a timed essay.

J. Mari Lynn Thompson has shown great analytical and writing skills in her submitted paper. I am impressed by the excellence she has displayed, and I am confident that she will have success in greater challenges in the future.

Mr. President, I would like to thank J. Mari Lynn Thompson for her contribution to the Commonwealth of Kentucky and wish her the best of luck in her future endeavors.•

TRIBUTE TO CHRISTOPHER G. CAINE

• Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I wish today to honor Christopher G. Caine, who will be leaving International Business Machines, IBM, Corporation after 25 years.

For the past 13 years, Chris has served as IBM's vice president for governmental programs. At this position, Chris has had responsibility for all global public policy issues that impact the IBM Corporation. He represented IBM at a number of policy and economic forums that addressed critical issues in the emerging global economy, including the 2004 National Intelligence Council Conference convened by the Center for Strategic and International Studies; the 2003 World Knowledge Forum in Seoul, Korea; the 2003 World Economic Forum; and events put on by the Shanghai International Forum and the Congressional Black Caucus.

Before taking his current position, Chris served as IBM's director of Human Resources and Environmental Policy, where he worked on a variety of domestic policy issues including health-care reform, labor, personnel, health and safety, environment, and energy. Prior to that, he worked in a variety of government relations capacities for IBM has well as Coca Cola, the Eaton Corporation, and the Electronic Industries Association.

In addition to his professional success, Chris has taken the time to use his skills and expertise for public service. He currently serves on the State Department's Advisory Committees on International Economic Policy and International Communication and Information Policy, where he shares his expertise on global economic issues with our country's top foreign policymakers. He was appointed by then-Governor MARK WARNER to the Virginia Information Technology Investment Board, which works to provide the Commonwealth's government with information technology that will improve efficiency, safeguard important information, and enable the government to better serve the public. He also serves on the advisory boards of the Global Strategy Institute, Ford's Theatre, the Constitution Project, and Brainfood.

Last year, Chris established the Caine's Scholar Award for Global Leadership, Business and Policy at Lafayette College, where he earned his bachelor's degree. This award provides recipients, who are enrolled in Lafayette's policy studies program, a stipend for a summer internship experience. Chris has stated that he created this award with the hope that it will help develop a new generation of leaders that have an appreciation for public policy and business in a global environment.

Looking forward, Chris plans to start his own professional service firm, which will help its clients engage and succeed in our increasingly global economy. If Chris can provide his new clients with the same level of service he gave to IBM and his previous employers, I am confident that his new venture will be a resounding success.

I offer my congratulations and sincere best wishes to Christopher Caine, his wife Betsy, and their two children as he prepares for this exciting new phase in his life.•

REMEMBERING CHIEF MASTER SERGEANT PAUL WESLEY AIREY

• Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, on March 11, 2009, our Nation lost a true American hero, the Air Force's first chief master sergeant, Paul Wesley Airey.

During his 27 years of service, Chief Airey served during both World War II and Korea and earned numerous awards and decorations: the Meritorious Service Medal, the Air Medal with oak leaf cluster, the Air Force Commendation Medal, the POW medal, and the Legion of Merit with oak leaf cluster.

During World War II, Chief Airey served as an aerial gunner on B–24 bombers and became a prisoner of war from July 1944 to May 1945.

After serving during Korea, Chief Airey became first sergeant for the Air Defense Command's 4756th Civil Engineering Squadron at Tyndall Air Force Base, FL, where he retired on August 1, 1970.

Grace and I would like to extend our most sincere condolences to the family of this American hero, including retired CMSgt Dale Airey, who followed in his father's footsteps.

Chief Airey is among the most respected and iconic figures in the Air Force. He dedicated his life to the protection of this country, and for that we honor his memory.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mrs. Neiman, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

At 2:03 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Niland, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bill:

H.R. 1512. An act to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend the funding and expenditure authority of the Airport and Airway Trust Fund, to amend title 49, United States Code, to extend authorizations for the airport improvement program, and for other purposes.

The enrolled bill was subsequently signed by the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

MEASURES REFERRED ON MARCH 19, 2009

The following bill was read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 1216. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1100 Town and Country Commons in Chesterfield, Missouri, as the ''Lance Corporal Matthew P. Pathenos Post Office Building''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bills were read the second time, and placed on the calendar:

S. 651. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to impose an excise tax on excessive bonuses paid by, and received from, companies receiving Federal emergency economic assistance, to limit the amount of nonqualified deferred compensation that employees of such companies may defer from taxation, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1586. An act to impose an additional tax on bonuses received from certain TARP recipients.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. LEAHY, from the Committee on the Judiciary:

Report to accompany S. 386, a bill to improve enforcement of mortgage fraud, securities fraud, financial institution fraud, and other frauds related to federal assistance and relief programs, for the recovery of funds lost to these frauds, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 111–10).

By Mr. LEAHY, from the Committee on the Judiciary, without amendment:

S. 256. A bill to enhance the ability to combat methamphetamine.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Ms. COLLINS:

S. 664. A bill to create a systemic risk monitor for the financial system of the United States, to oversee financial regulatory activities of the Federal Government, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. FEINGOLD:

S. 665. A bill to allow modified bloc voting by cooperative associations of milk producers in connection with a referendum on Federal milk marketing order reform; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. FEINGOLD:

S. 666. A bill to prohibit products that contain dry ultra-filtered milk products, milk protein concentrate, or casein from being labeled as domestic natural cheese, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. FEINGOLD:

S. 667. A bill to amend the Agricultural Adjustment Act to prohibit the Secretary of Agriculture from basing minimum prices for Class I milk on the distance or transportation costs from any location that is not within a marketing area, except under certain circumstances, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mrs. MURRAY (for herself and Ms. CANTWELL):

S. 668. A bill to reauthorize the Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative Act to promote the protection of the resources of the Northwest Straits, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. BURR (for himself, Mr. WEBB, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. WICKER, Mr. COBURN, Mr. DEMINT, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. VITTER, Mr. ENZI, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. ENSIGN, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. COCHRAN, Ms. MURKOWSKI, and Mr. THUNE):

S. 669. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify the conditions under which certain persons may be treated as adjudicated mentally incompetent for certain purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. HARKIN (for himself, Mr. LAUTENBERG, Mr. LEAHY, and Mr. DURBIN):

S. 670. A bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to encourage States to provide pregnant women enrolled in the Medicaid program with access to comprehensive tobacco cessation services; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mrs. LINCOLN (for herself, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. INOUYE, and Mr. WYDEN):

S. 671. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for the coverage of marriage and family therapist services and mental health counselor services under part B of the Medicare program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself and Mr. KERRY):

S. Res. 81. A resolution supporting the goals and ideals of World Water Day; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. SPECTER (for himself, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. KERRY, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mr. CASEY, Mr. LAUTENBERG, Mr. CARDIN, Ms. SNOWE, Mr. BINGAMAN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. REED, Mr. VOINOVICH, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. BEGICH, Mr. MARTINEZ, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. FEINGOLD, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. KENNEDY, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. DODD, Mr. GREGG, Mr. BENNETT, Mr. CARPER, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. KOHL, Mr. RISCH, Mr. INOUYE, Mr. ROCKEFELLER, Mr. ISAKSON, Mrs. MURRAY, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. LUGAR, Mr. NELSON of Florida, and Mr. JOHNSON):

S. Res. 82. A resolution recognizing the 188th anniversary of the independence of Greece and celebrating Greek and American democracy; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. BROWN:

S. Con. Res. 12. A concurrent resolution recognizing and honoring the signing by President Abraham Lincoln of the legislation authorizing the establishment of collegiate programs at Gallaudet University; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 27

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. DORGAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 27, a bill to establish the Daniel Webster Congressional Clerkship Program.

S. 244

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the name of the Senator from Iowa (Mr. HARKIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 244, a bill to expand programs of early childhood home visitation that increase school readiness, child abuse and neglect prevention, and early identification of developmental and health delays, including potential mental health concerns, and for other purposes.

S. 254

At the request of Mrs. LINCOLN, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 254, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for the coverage of home infusion therapy under the Medicare Program.

S. 257

At the request of Mr. WHITEHOUSE, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 257, a bill to amend title 11, United States Code, to disallow certain claims resulting from high cost credit debts, and for other purposes.

S. 277

At the request of Mrs. HAGAN, her name was added as a cosponsor of S. 277, a bill to amend the National and Community Service Act of 1990 to expand and improve opportunities for service, and for other purposes.

At the request of Mr. DORGAN, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 277, supra.

S. 301

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the names of the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL), the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER), the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KENNEDY) and the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) were added as cosponsors of S. 301, a bill to amend title XI of the Social Security Act to provide for transparency in the relationship between physicians and manufacturers of drugs, devices, biologicals, or medical supplies for which payment is made under Medicare, Medicaid, or SCHIP.

S. 307

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the names of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON) and the Senator from Illinois (Mr. BURRIS) were added as cosponsors of S. 307, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide flexibility in the manner in which beds are counted for purposes of determining whether a hospital may be designated as a critical access hospital under the Medicare program and to exempt from the critical access hospital inpatient bed limitation the number of beds provided for certain veterans.

S. 343

At the request of Mrs. LINCOLN, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. DORGAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 343, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for Medicare coverage services of qualified respiratory therapists performed under the general supervision of a physician.

S. 353

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Mr. BEGICH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 353, a bill to amend title IV of the Public Health Service Act to provide for the establishment of pediatric research consortia.

S. 384

At the request of Mr. LUGAR, the names of the Senator from Iowa (Mr. HARKIN) and the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) were added as cosponsors of S. 384, a bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal years 2010 through 2014 to provide assistance to foreign countries to promote food security, to stimulate rural economies, and to improve emergency response to food crises, to amend the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, and for other purposes.

S. 424

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) was added as a cosponsor of S. 424, a bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to eliminate discrimination in the immigration laws by permitting permanent partners of United States citizens and lawful permanent residents to obtain lawful permanent resident status in the same manner as spouses of citizens and lawful permanent residents and to penalize immigration fraud in connection with permanent partnerships.

S. 448

At the request of Mr. SPECTER, the names of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) and the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL) were added as cosponsors of S. 448, a bill to maintain the free flow of information to the public by providing conditions for the federally compelled disclosure of information by certain persons connected with the news media.

S. 450

At the request of Mr. BAUCUS, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 450, a bill to understand and comprehensively address the oral health problems associated with methamphetamine use.

S. 451

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 451, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of the centennial of the establishment of the Girl Scouts of the United States of America.

S. 454

At the request of Mr. LEVIN, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. KAUFMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 454, a bill to improve the organization and procedures of the Department of Defense for the acquisition of major weapon systems, and for other purposes.

S. 464

At the request of Mr. DODD, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BAYH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 464, a bill to amend the National and Community Service Act of 1990 to improve the educational awards provided for national service, and for other purposes.

S. 466

At the request of Mr. DODD, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BAYH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 466, a bill to amend the National and Community Service Act of 1990 to establish a Summer of Service State grant program, a Summer of Service national direct grant program, and related national activities, and for other purposes.

S. 468

At the request of Ms. STABENOW, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mrs. LINCOLN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 468, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to improve access to emergency medical services and the quality and efficiency of care furnished in emergency departments of hospitals and critical access hospitals by establishing a bipartisan commission to examine factors that affect the effective delivery of such services, by providing for additional payments for certain physician services furnished in such emergency departments, and by establishing a Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Working Group, and for other purposes.

S. 491

At the request of Mr. WEBB, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 491, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow Federal civilian and military retirees to pay health insurance premiums on a pretax basis and to allow a deduction for TRICARE supplemental premiums.

S. 500

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 500, a bill to amend the Truth in Lending Act to establish a national usury rate for consumer credit transactions.

S. 525

At the request of Mr. DORGAN, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CONRAD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 525, a bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act with respect to the importation of prescription drugs, and for other purposes.

S. 535

At the request of Mr. NELSON of Florida, the names of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. BURRIS), the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON) and the Senator from Iowa (Mr. HARKIN) were added as cosponsors of S. 535, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to repeal requirement for reduction of survivor annuities under the Survivor Benefit Plan by veterans' dependency and indemnity compensation, and for other purposes.

S. 541

At the request of Mr. DODD, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 541, a bill to increase the borrowing authority of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, and for other purposes.

S. 543

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the names of the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) and the Senator from Delaware (Mr. KAUFMAN) were added as

cosponsors of S. 543, a bill to require a pilot program on training, certification, and support for family caregivers of seriously disabled veterans and members of the Armed Forces to provide caregiver services to such veterans and members, and for other purposes.

S. 546

At the request of Mr. REID, the names of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) and the Senator from Illinois (Mr. BURRIS) were added as cosponsors of S. 546, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to permit certain retired members of the uniformed services who have a service-connected disability to receive both disability compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs for their disability and either retired pay by reason of their years of military service or Combat-Related Special Compensation.

S. 556

At the request of Mr. VITTER, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 556, a bill to amend chapter 44 of title 18, United States Code, to modernize the process by which interstate firearms transactions are conducted by Federal firearms licensees.

S. 567

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. COBURN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 567, a bill to repeal the sunset on the reduction of capital gains rates for individuals and on the taxation of dividends of individuals at capital gains rates.

S. 574

At the request of Mr. AKAKA, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. BURRIS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 574, a bill to enhance citizen access to Government information and services by establishing that Government documents issued to the public must be written clearly, and for other purposes.

S. 582

At the request of Mr. SANDERS, the names of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN), the Senator from Iowa (Mr. HARKIN) and the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) were added as cosponsors of S. 582, a bill to amend the Truth in Lending Act to protect consumers from usury, and for other purposes.

S. 605

At the request of Mr. KAUFMAN, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. CHAMBLISS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 605, a bill to require the Securities and Exchange Commission to reinstate the uptick rule and effectively regulate abusive short selling activities.

S. 614

At the request of Mrs. HUTCHISON, the names of the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) and the Senator from Delaware (Mr. KAUFMAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 614, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the Women Airforce Service Pilots (''WASP'').

S. 622

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WEBB) was added as a cosponsor of S. 622, a bill to ensure parity between the temporary duty imposed on ethanol and tax credits provided on ethanol.

S. 631

At the request of Mr. KOHL, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 631, a bill to provide for nationwide expansion of the pilot program for national and State background checks on direct patient access employees of long-term care facilities or providers.

S. 645

At the request of Mrs. LINCOLN, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. SNOWE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 645, a bill to amend title 32, United States Code, to modify the Department of Defense share of expenses under the National Guard Youth Challenge Program.

S. 656

At the request of Mr. REED, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 656, a bill to provide for the adjustment of status of certain nationals of Liberia to that of lawful permanent residents.

S. 659

At the request of Mr. ALEXANDER, the names of the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. BYRD) and the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KENNEDY) were added as cosponsors of S. 659, a bill to improve the teaching and learning of American history and civics.

S. 661

At the request of Mr. BINGAMAN, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 661, a bill to strengthen American manufacturing through improved industrial energy efficiency, and for other purposes.

S. RES. 72

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the names of the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON) and the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 72, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate regarding drug trafficking in Mexico.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Ms. COLLINS:

S. 664. A bill to create a systemic risk monitor for the financial system of the United States, to oversee financial regulatory activities of the Federal Government, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, at the heart of the deep recession is a crisis in our financial system that has choked off credit upon which the health of our economy depends. With their jobs disappearing and their life savings evaporating, the American people rightly ask why the Federal Government failed to protect them from Wall Street's greed, unwise decisions, and manipulations that have caused so much harm.

As a former Maine financial regulator, I am convinced regulatory reform is essential to restoring public confidence in our financial markets. America's main street small businesses, homeowners, employees, savers, and investors deserve the protection of a new regulatory system that modernizes regulatory agencies, sets safety and soundness requirements for financial institutions to prevent excessive risk-taking, and improves oversight, accountability, and transparency.

To achieve those goals, I am introducing the Financial System Stabilization and Reform Act of 2009. This legislation will fundamentally restructure our financial regulatory system. It will strengthen oversight and accountability in our financial markets, and it would help rebuild the confidence of our citizens in our economy and help restore stability to our financial markets.

Mr. President, as financial institutions speculated in increasingly risky products and practices, not one of the hundreds of Federal and State agencies involved in financial regulation was responsible for detecting and assessing the risk to the system as a whole. The financial sector was gambling on the rise of the housing market, yet no single regulator could see that everyone, from mortgage brokers to credit default swap traders, was betting on a bubble that was about to burst. Instead, each agency viewed its regulated market through a narrow lens, missing the total risk that permeated our financial markets.

In order to prevent this problem from recurring, a single financial regulator must be tasked with understanding the full range of risks our financial system faces. This regulator also must have the authority to take proactive steps to prevent or minimize systemic risk.

This is an urgent need. Unemployment reached 7.8 percent in my home State in January. Last month, the national unemployment rate hit 8.1 percent, the highest in 25 years. Earlier this month, the Federal Reserve reported that the net worth of American households plummeted by more than $11 trillion in 2008, a staggering drop of nearly 20 percent, the most in 63 years. And, at the same time, court proceedings and congressional hearings on the Bernie Madoff case revealed that this multibillion-dollar Ponzi scheme of nonexistent transactions and fraudulent statements was perpetrated for

years under the very noses of the Federal agencies that should have stopped it.

The American people need more than words of optimism or promises of a turnaround. With their jobs lost or in jeopardy, with their financial plans in ruin, and now with their hard-earned tax dollars on the line to clean up the mess, they need reforms. They need action.

The American people are angry, and rightfully so. They are angry because the current crisis was not created from their own bad investments or decisions, but by those on Wall Street who concocted complicated financial instruments that ended up backfiring. Investment firms borrowed to the hilt when they did not have the resources to do so.

When the average American decides to purchase a security on credit, margin requirements dictate that he or she put up at least 50 percent of its value in cash. But investment banks did not have to play by the same rules when they bought for their own accounts. And they took advantage of this system.

Indicative of the extent of the borrowing, Bear Stearns had a leverage ratio of 35 to 1, which means the firm borrowed $35 for every dollar of its own money. For example, suppose your net worth is a dollar and you combine that dollar with $35 in borrowed money to buy an asset worth $36. If the value of that asset declines by only $2, to $34, you are now bankrupt. This is exactly what happened to Bear Stearns and other investment banks.

Since last spring, the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, on which I serve as ranking member, has held a series of hearings on the roots of the present crisis. We began by looking at the derivatives and commodity markets and more recently looked at the steps that can be taken to protect our Nation's financial system as a whole by creating a systemic-risk regulator. The many expert witnesses who have appeared before us have described how our financial system was destabilized by a combination of reckless lending, complex new instruments, securitization of assets, poor disclosure and understanding of risks, excessive leverage, and inadequate regulation.

Our witnesses were in wide agreement that the mounting risk went virtually undetected by the vast network of Federal and State regulatory agencies. As the Government Accountability Office put it in a recent report to the committee, ''it has become apparent that the regulatory system is ill-suited to meet the nation's needs in the 21st century.'' To meet this challenge, Federal Reserve Chairman Bernanke said recently:

> We must have a strategy that regulates the financial system as a whole, in a holistic way, not just its individual components.

This statement confirms a view that I find inescapable, our current system suffers from regulatory gaps that pose enormous risks to our entire economy. The holistic approach recommended by Chairman Bernanke is the guiding principle of the comprehensive legislation I introduce today. Like legislation I introduced last fall, this bill would also regulate Wall Street investment banks for safety and soundness and close the gap that has allowed credit default swaps and other financial instruments to escape regulation by both Federal and State regulators.

To ensure a systemic approach to Federal financial regulation, this legislation calls for the creation of an independent financial stability council to serve as a ''systemic-risk regulator.'' The council would maintain comprehensive oversight of all potential risks to the financial system, and would have the power to act to prevent or mitigate those risks. The financial stability council would be composed of representatives from existing Federal agencies which now have the responsibility to oversee segments of the financial system—the Federal Reserve; the Treasury Department; the Securities and Exchange Commission; the Commodity Futures Trading Commission; the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation; and the National Credit Union Administration.

The council would be led by a chairman nominated by the President and confirmed by the Senate, with the responsibility for the day-to-day operations of the council. The chairman would be required to appear before Congress twice a year to report on the state of the country's financial system, areas in which systemic risk are anticipated, and whether any legislation is needed for the council to carry out its mission of preventing systemic risks.

Witnesses who have appeared before our committee have stressed the need to ensure that the systemic-risk regulator has the responsibility and the authority to ensure that risks to our financial system are identified and addressed. If it is not clear who has that responsibility, then agencies will dig in their heels and resist changes they do not agree with, and engage in finger-pointing when things go bad. At the same time, other witnesses have stressed the dangers of consolidating too much power in the hands of a single regulator and the need to maintain the level of oversight Congress has historically exercised with respect to financial market regulation.

The financial stability council created by this legislation balances these concerns. As Damon Silvers, the AFL–CIO representative on the TARP congressional oversight panel, testified before our committee earlier this month:

> [T]he best approach is a body made up of the key regulators. . . . It is unlikely a systemic risk regulator would develop deep enough expertise on its own. . . . To be effective it would need to cooperate. . . . with all the routine regulators where the relevant expertise would be resident. . . .

Former Senator John Sununu, another member of the congressional oversight panel, recognized that ''systemic risk can materialize in a broad range of areas within our financial system. . . . Thus, it is impractical, and perhaps a dangerous concentration of power, to give one single regulator the power to set or modify any and all standards relating to such risk. Systemic risk oversight and management must be a collaborative effort. . . .''

The financial stability council will be the primary entity responsible for detecting systemic risk and implementing the steps necessary to protect against that risk. The key to such a structure, I believe, is to ensure that the council is headed by a chairman confirmed by the Senate and subject to oversight by Congress, who is dedicated entirely to the mission of the council, and who does not carry a bias in favor of any particular agency on the council.

Some have suggested that the Federal Reserve play the role of systemic-risk regulator. That is not what my bill contemplates. The chairman of the Federal Reserve will be a member of the council, and of course, the Nation's top banker will play a critical role in how the council discharges its responsibilities. But in my view, the Federal Reserve already has enough on its plate, and does not need additional, heavy responsibilities. I should add that nothing in my bill alters the Federal Reserve's role with respect to monetary policy in any way.

This bill, however, would apply safety and soundness regulation to investment bank holding companies by assigning the Federal Reserve this responsibility. Although the five big firms have left the field, this is a necessary step. Any new investment bank would fall into the same regulatory void as its predecessors. The SEC would be able to regulate its broker-dealer operations, but no agency would have the explicit authority to examine its operations for safety and soundness or for systemic risk. The collapses at Bear Stearns and Lehman Brothers illustrate the tremendous costs that can be inflicted if these investment banks are not regulated for safety and soundness. Under this legislation, the council's role as the systemic-risk regulator will support the critical importance of the Federal Reserve's safety and soundness duties.

Under my bill, whenever the financial stability council believes that a risk to the financial system is present due to a lack of proper regulation, or by the appearance of new and unregulated financial products or services, it would have the power to propose changes to regulatory policy, using the statutory authority provided to our existing Federal financial regulatory agencies.

The financial stability council will have the power to obtain information directly from any regulated provider of financial products and, in limited form, from State regulators regarding the solvency of State-regulated insurers.

The council will also be able to propose regulations of financial instruments which are designed to look like insurance products, but that in reality are financial products which could present a systemic risk. But—and I want to stress this point—my bill does not preempt State law governing traditional insurance products.

In keeping with the recommendations of the experts who testified before our committee, the bill provides the council with the power to adopt rules designed to address the ''too big to fail'' problem. How often we have heard that term lately. We hear financial experts and Federal officials telling us we have to continue to bail out large institutions like AIG because they are ''too big to fail.'' We need to remedy this problem so we don't find ourselves in the same situation a decade from now. This bill provides the council with the power to adopt rules designed to discourage financial institutions from becoming ''too big to fail'' or to regulate them appropriately if they become what we call ''systemically important financial institutions.'' The need to regulate how these systemically important financial institutions, or ''SIFIs,'' invest their own capital was not previously recognized. Indeed, the prevailing attitude was that if firms failed because of bad investments, possibly bringing some of their creditors down with them, that was how the market was supposed to work. In true Darwinian fashion, eliminating firms with less investment acumen would only serve to strengthen American capitalism. We now know the fallacy of that reasoning, and it has been a very painful lesson, for it is not just the large investment houses that are hurt, but average Americans from Maine to California also suffer.

Under this legislation the council would help make sure financial institutions do not become ''too big to fail'' by imposing different capital requirements on them as they grow in size, raising their risk premiums, or requiring them to hold a larger percentage of their debt as long-term debt. The TARP congressional oversight panel adopted this position, explaining:

> We should not identify specific institutions in advance as too big to fail, but rather have a regulatory framework in which institutions have higher capital requirements and pay more on insurance funds on a percentage basis than smaller institutions which are less likely to be rescued as being too systemic to fail.

I want to make clear, though, that the power this bill provides to the council is not meant to restrict financial institutions from growing in size, but rather from becoming risks to the system as a whole.

The bill also provides the council with authority to address so-called regulatory ''black holes,'' created by new and imaginative financial instruments that do not fall within the jurisdictional authority of any Federal financial regulatory agency. Credit default swaps are a perfect example of this problem. Prior to 2000, credit default swaps existed in a regulatory limbo. Neither the SEC nor the CFTC were willing to exert authority over the credit default swap market. As a result, they fell through the jurisdictional cracks. Congress then compounded the problem by explicitly exempting credit default swaps from regulation under the Commodity Futures Modernization Act of 2000.

As was the case with AIG, serious problems can arise when a major ''credit event'' suddenly reveals that massive claims for collateral posting or payment are converging on credit default swap parties who cannot meet their obligations. But because the market was bilateral and over-the-counter, it was often impossible for regulators—and even market participants—to know in advance how all the tangled webs of contract commitments overlapped and affected any particular party. Under the current system which lacks a systemic-risk regulator, regulators at times lack the authority to take action against excessive debt, inadequate reserves, and other threats, even when they see them occurring.

This legislation specifically addresses the credit default swap problem by repealing the exemption from regulation that Congress created for these instruments in 2000, and by setting up a government-regulated clearinghouse.

But beyond credit default swaps, risky new financial instruments could still avoid the reach of our regulatory system. For that reason, my legislation provides the council with the power to propose regulations and legislation governing the sale or marketing of any financial instrument which would fall into a ''black hole,'' and would otherwise present a systemic risk to the financial systems of the United States if left unmonitored.

Professor Howell Jackson, the acting dean of Harvard Law School, discussed this ''black hole'' problem in his testimony to our committee early this year. He stated that the underlying issue is that ''well-advised financial services firms are capable of exploiting the legalistic boundaries of jurisdictional authority that characterize our system of financial regulation. Without broad jurisdictional mandates, our financial regulators will remain at a serious disadvantage in setting policy for new financial products and risks.''

Finally, my bill will merge the Office of Thrift Supervision, OTS, into the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, OCC. Secretary Paulson recommended this merger in the plan he released last year, and 2 years ago, John Dugan, the U.S. Comptroller, said that such a merger would be ''appropriate and healthy.'' There are currently at least four agencies involved in bank regulation, including the FDIC, the Federal Reserve, and the OCC and OTC. Consolidating and reducing the number of banking regulators would improve the efficiency and effectiveness of this system.

OTS is the best candidate for several reasons, including that many of its largest regulated entities, thrifts, have either collapsed or been acquired in the midst of the financial crisis—such as Washington Mutual and Indy Mac. And in the last 4 months, the inspector general for Treasury has raised serious questions about the objectivity and effectiveness of OTS's supervision of the largest thrifts.

Mr. President, the regulatory reforms in this legislation are absolutely essential to restoring public confidence in our financial markets. We have relied too long on a patchwork of regulatory agencies that is incapable of understanding or controlling risks to the system as a whole. The overarching purpose of this legislation is to ensure that, as the financial-services industry becomes ever more global and complex, those in government, responsible for overseeing the system's stability, can see the whole picture. We are in this crisis precisely because firms, whether for good or bad, exploited legal boundaries, risky financial instruments fell beyond the reach of regulators, and institutions doomed to fail grew too big to fail.

Honest savers, borrowers, investors, Main Street businesses, and responsible financial institutions deserve a regulatory system suited to demands of modern times, where dangerous gaps are closed, and where risky transactions are indentified and controlled before they pose a threat to the markets as a whole. These reforms must be made to restore the confidence necessary to stabilize our financial markets. That is what this legislation aims to do, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

By Mr. FEINGOLD:

S. 665. A bill to allow modified bloc voting by cooperative associations of milk producers in connection with a referendum on Federal milk marketing order reform; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, the first day of spring is appropriately also National Agriculture Day and a time to recognize the important contribution made by farmers, ranchers and the agriculture industry that is largely responsible for putting food on the table and clothes on our backs. Agriculture is critically important to both our Nation and Wisconsin. Over 22 million Americans and 420,000 Wisconsinites are employed by farms or agriculture related businesses. Approximately a fifth of U.S. gross domestic product is linked to agriculture and Wisconsin's farms and farm-related businesses create $51.5 billion in economic activity each year.

Unfortunately, Agriculture Day this year comes at an unusually stressful time for the farm community. Even for an industry used to ups and downs from

a variety of sources, the recent problems associated with the global economic troubles are taxing farmers and agriculture in general more than usual. Dairy farmers have been particularly hard hit recently, with the price they receive for their milk having fallen by 50 percent or more since last year. While I was glad that the dairy safety net or Milk Income Loss Contract program was reauthorized and improved during the farm bill, the dramatic drop in prices combined with relatively high input costs will mean that many dairy farmers are not coming close to covering their expenses even with the safety net.

Given these serious challenges facing dairy farmers, on January 30, 2009, I sent a letter with Senator KOHL and 33 other Senators to U.S. Department of Agriculture, USDA, Secretary Tom Vilsack that calls on the USDA to take a series of actions to protect the industry from instability. This geographically diverse group of senators is asking the USDA to more fully utilize existing programs like the Dairy Product Price Support Program, DPPSP, and the Dairy Export Incentive Program, to reverse the outgoing administration's recent decision to halt purchases of value-added dairy products by the DPPSP, and to help more low-income individuals, food banks and schools gain access to nutritious dairy products.

As Americans and businesses are feeling the impact of the current economic troubles and sometimes falling behind on payments, farmers across the country are increasingly facing the same prospect as well. This is one reason I supported $193 million for Farm Service Agency farm loans and loan restructuring as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, P.L. 111–5, also known as the stimulus bill—to ensure that credit for farmers is available during these difficult times. Also along these lines, on March 5, 2009, I sent a letter with Senators BROWN, KOHL, GILLIBRAND and 15 other Senators urging the Obama administration to help reduce farm foreclosures related to the troubled economy. The letter to Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack and Treasury Secretary Tim Geithner called for additional requirements for banks and other financial institutions that have taken Federal bailout funds to work with farmers to restructure farm loans to help keep them in their homes and businesses. These conditions would mirror requirements that are already in place on farm loans supported by the USDA Farm Service Agency and the requirements being developed for home loans held by these same lenders that have taken bailout funds. While I did not support the flawed bailout bill, I believe it is essential that bailout funds be used as much as possible to help consumers, farmers, home-owners and others feeling the pain of the economic crisis we are in.

In addition to focusing resources to help farmers and others in agriculture ride out the current economic storm, it is still important to seek solutions to long term inequities in agriculture. I have been particularly concerned about the increasing concentration in agriculture sectors and the potential for this market power to be used unduly against farmers and small independent businesses. During a Senate Judiciary Committee hearing on March 10, 2009, I discussed the grave concerns of Wisconsin farmers about slumping dairy prices and the Bush administration's failure to take action against anticompetitive behavior in the agriculture industry. Under my questioning, Christine Anne Varney, the nominee to be Assistant Attorney General of the Antitrust Division in the Department of Justice, committed, if she is confirmed, to make agriculture a priority of the Antitrust Division. She indicated that she will examine questionable antitrust decisions of the Bush administration and order a thorough review of slumping farm-level dairy prices, which do not appear to be reflected in retail prices paid by consumers.

Even with the troubles currently facing agriculture, farmers, and agriculture are resilient and entrepreneurial. I am certain that these individuals and businesses will bounce back and continue to push for more opportunities for farmers, agriculture and the rural communities that depend on them. Wisconsin's diverse agricultural producers—from ginseng growers to cheese makers to cranberry growers and everything in between—are rightly proud of their work and look for ways to differentiate themselves and add value whether it is through country-of-origin or other labeling, converting to organic production or other measures. During debate on the farm bill, I was glad to support federal programs such as organic programs, Value-Added Producer Grants and the Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program as ways that the federal government can support important new opportunities for farmers to improve their livelihood without drastically changing the size and methods of their production.

Of more general importance to all rural residents is closing the digital divide and providing affordable broadband Internet access to all Americans. I was glad the farm bill made improvements to the USDA broadband programs and that the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act followed this up with a commitment to spend $7.2 billion. On March, 9, 2009, I cosigned a series of letters to the administrators of the Federal broadband programs highlighting the need to ensure that these funds are targeted toward bringing broadband and the opportunities that come with this connectivity to rural areas without service.

Finally, the first day of spring also seems like an opportune time to reintroduce some legislation related to agriculture. While I was able to include several of my proposals in the farm bill last year including a tax provision to allow farmers to remain eligible for Social Security benefits in lean years, country-of-origin labeling for ginseng, a new higher profile office at USDA for small farms, and a provision similar to a bill I had with Senator Grassley to give farmers an option to opt out of mandatory binding arbitration in contracts, I have three bills to reintroduce: The Quality Cheese Act, The Democracy for Dairy Farmers Act and the Federal Milk Marketing Reform Act.

The import of milk protein concentrates and casein, which can substitute for domestic milk in many food products, continues to put pressure on our farmers and can threaten the integrity of our dairy products. For example, concerns about the safety of imported dairy products such as the recent Chinese melamine adulteration have the potential to threaten consumer confidence even for U.S. dairy products. The Quality Cheese Act will preserve the integrity of our natural cheeses by preventing milk protein concentrates and other imported milk substitutes from ever entering cheese vats.

Under the Federal Milk Marketing Order system, the deck has been stacked against Wisconsin's dairy farmers for some time. The legacy of transportation costs being calculated for the base milk price based on the distance from Eau Claire, WI, remains a problem to this day. This rule unfairly keeps Wisconsin's milk price disproportionately low, and bears no relation to the actual costs of transportation. While I hope that the commission provided for by the farm bill can address this problem also, my Federal Milk Market Reform Act would even the playing field for Wisconsin's producers and remove this longstanding inequity.

If a dairy cooperative decides to vote on behalf of all of its members or ''bloc vote,'' individual members have no opportunity to voice opinions separately. That seems unfair when you consider what significant issues may be at stake. The Democracy for Dairy Producers Act of 2007 is simple and fair. It provides that a cooperative cannot deny any of its members a ballot to opt to vote separately from the cooperative. It also contains safeguards to make sure that farmers have information about each vote and is structured in such a way that it will not slow down the process, and the implementation of any rule or regulation would proceed on schedule.

By Mrs. MURRAY (for herself and Ms. CANTWELL):

S. 668. A bill to reauthorize the Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative Act to promote the protection of the resources of the Northwest Straits, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be placed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 668

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative Reauthorization Act of 2009''.

SEC. 2. REAUTHORIZATION OF NORTHWEST STRAITS MARINE CONSERVATION INITIATIVE ACT.

The Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative Act (title IV of Public Law 105–384; 112 Stat. 3458) is amended—

(1) in section 402, by striking ''(in this title referred to as the 'Commission')''; and

(2) by striking sections 403, 404, and 405 and inserting the following:

''SEC. 403. FINDINGS.

''Congress makes the following findings:

''(1) The marine waters and ecosystem of the Northwest Straits in Puget Sound in the State of Washington represent a unique resource of enormous environmental and economic value to the people of the United States.

''(2) During the 20th century, the environmental health of the Northwest Straits declined dramatically as indicated by impaired water quality, declines in marine wildlife, collapse of harvestable marine species, loss of critical marine habitats, ocean acidification, and sea level rise.

''(3) At the start of the 21st century, the Northwest Straits have been threatened by sea level rise, ocean acidification, and other effects of climate change.

''(4) In 1998, the Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative Act (title IV of Public Law 105–384) was enacted to tap the unprecedented level of citizen stewardship demonstrated in the Northwest Straits and create a mechanism to mobilize public support and raise capacity for local efforts to protect and restore the ecosystem of the Northwest Straits.

''(5) The Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative helps the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and other Federal agencies with their marine missions by fostering local interest in marine issues and involving diverse groups of citizens.

''(6) The Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative shares many of the same goals with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, including fostering citizen stewardship of marine resources, general ecosystem management, and protecting Federally managed marine species.

''(7) Ocean literacy and identification and removal of marine debris projects are examples of on-going partnerships between the Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

''SEC. 404. DEFINITIONS.

''In this title:

''(1) COMMISSION.—The term 'Commission' means the Northwest Straits Advisory Commission established by section 402.

''(2) INDIAN TRIBE.—The term 'Indian tribe' has the meaning given that term in section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 450b).

''(3) NORTHWEST STRAITS.—The term 'Northwest Straits' means the marine waters of the Strait of Juan de Fuca and of Puget Sound from the Canadian border to the south end of Snohomish County.

''SEC. 405. MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMISSION.

''(a) COMPOSITION.—The Commission shall be composed of up to 14 members who shall be appointed as follows:

''(1) One member appointed by a consensus of the members of a marine resources committee established under section 408 for each of the following counties of the State of Washington:

''(A) San Juan County.

''(B) Island County.

''(C) Skagit County.

''(D) Whatcom County.

''(E) Snohomish County.

''(F) Clallam County.

''(G) Jefferson County.

''(2) Two members appointed by the Secretary of the Interior in trust capacity and in consultation with the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission or the Indian tribes affected by this title collectively, as the Secretary of the Interior considers appropriate, to represent the interests of such tribes.

''(3) One member appointed by the Governor of the State of Washington to represent the interests of the Puget Sound Partnership.

''(4) Four members appointed by the Governor of the State of Washington who—

''(A) are residents of the State of Washington; and

''(B) are not employed by a Federal, State, or local government.

''(b) VACANCIES.—A vacancy in the Commission shall be filled in the manner in which the original appointment was made.

''(c) CHAIRPERSON.—The Commission shall select a Chairperson from among its members.

''(d) MEETING.—The Commission shall meet at the call of the Chairperson, but not less frequently than quarterly.

''(e) LIAISON.—The Secretary of Commerce shall, acting through the Under Secretary for Oceans and Atmosphere and in consultation with the Director of the Commission appointed under section 407(a), appoint an employee of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration—

''(1) to serve as a liaison among the Commission and the Department of Commerce; and

''(2) to attend meetings and other events of the Commission as a nonvoting participant.

''SEC. 406. GOAL AND DUTIES OF THE COMMISSION.

''(a) GOAL.—The goal of the Commission is to protect and restore the marine waters, habitats, and species of the Northwest Straits region to achieve ecosystem health and sustainable resource use by—

''(1) designing and initiating projects that are driven by sound science, local priorities, community-based decisions, and the ability to measure results;

''(2) building awareness and stewardship and making recommendations to improve the health of the Northwest Straits marine resources;

''(3) maintaining and expanding diverse membership and partner organizations;

''(4) expanding partnerships with governments of Indian tribes and continuing to foster respect for tribal cultures and treaties; and

''(5) recognizing the importance of economic and social benefits that are dependent on marine environments and sustainable marine resources.

''(b) DUTIES.—The duties of the Commission are the following:

''(1) To provide resources and technical support for marine resources committees established under section 408.

''(2) To work with such marine resources committees and appropriate entities of Federal and State governments and Indian tribes to develop programs to monitor the overall health of the marine ecosystem of the Northwest Straits.

''(3) To identify factors adversely affecting or preventing the restoration of the health of the marine ecosystem and coastal economies of the Northwest Straits.

''(4) To develop scientifically sound restoration and protection recommendations, informed by local priorities, that address such factors.

''(5) To assist in facilitating the successful implementation of such recommendations by developing broad support among appropriate authorities, stakeholder groups, and local communities.

''(6) To develop and implement regional projects based on such recommendations to protect and restore the Northwest Straits ecosystem.

''(7) To serve as a public forum for the discussion of policies and actions of Federal, State, or local government, an Indian tribe, or the Government of Canada with respect to the marine ecosystem of the Northwest Straits.

''(8) To inform appropriate authorities and local communities about the marine ecosystem of the Northwest Straits and about issues relating to the marine ecosystem of the Northwest Straits.

''(9) To consult with all affected Indian tribes in the region of the Northwest Straits to ensure that the work of the Commission does not violate tribal treaty rights.

''(c) BENCHMARKS.—The Commission shall carry out its duties in a manner that promotes the achieving of the benchmarks described in subsection (f)(2).

''(d) COORDINATION AND COLLABORATION.—The Commission shall carry out the duties described in subsection (b) in coordination and collaboration, when appropriate, with Federal, State, and local governments and Indian tribes.

''(e) REGULATORY AUTHORITY.—The Commission shall have no power to issue regulations.

''(f) ANNUAL REPORT.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Each year, the Commission shall prepare, submit to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate, the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives, and the Under Secretary for Oceans and Atmosphere, and make available to the public an annual report describing—

''(A) the activities carried out by the Commission during the preceding year; and

''(B) the progress of the Commission in achieving the benchmarks described in paragraph (2).

''(2) BENCHMARKS.—The benchmarks described in this paragraph are the following:

''(A) Protection and restoration of marine, coastal, and nearshore habitats.

''(B) Prevention of loss and achievement of a net gain of healthy habitat areas.

''(C) Protection and restoration of marine populations to healthy, sustainable levels.

''(D) Protection of the marine water quality of the Northwest Straits region and restoration of the health of marine waters.

''(E) Collection of high-quality data and promotion of the use and dissemination of such data.

''(F) Promotion of stewardship and understanding of Northwest Straits marine resources through education and outreach.

''SEC. 407. COMMISSION PERSONNEL AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS.

''(a) DIRECTOR.—The Manager of the Shorelands and Environmental Assistance Program of the Department of Ecology of the State of Washington may, upon the recommendation of the Commission and the Director of the Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, appoint and terminate a

Director of the Commission. The employment of the Director shall be subject to confirmation by the Commission.

''(b) STAFF.—The Director may hire such other personnel as may be appropriate to enable the Commission to perform its duties. Such personnel shall be hired through the personnel system of the Department of Ecology of the State of Washington.

''(c) ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES.—If the Governor of the State of Washington makes available to the Commission the administrative services of the State of Washington Department of Ecology and Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, the Commission shall use such services for employment, procurement, grant and fiscal management, and support services necessary to carry out the duties of the Commission.

''SEC. 408. MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEES.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—The government of each of the counties referred to in subparagraphs (A) through (G) of section 405(a)(1) may establish a marine resources committee that—

''(1) complies with the requirements of this section; and

''(2) receives from such government the mission, direction, expert assistance, and financial resources necessary—

''(A) to address issues affecting the marine ecosystems within its county; and

''(B) to work to achieve the benchmarks described in section 406(f)(2).

''(b) MEMBERSHIP.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Each marine resources committee established pursuant to this section shall be composed of—

''(A) members with relevant scientific expertise; and

''(B) members that represent balanced representation, including representation of—

''(i) local governments, including planning staff from counties and cities with marine shorelines;

''(ii) affected economic interests, such as ports and commercial fishers;

''(iii) affected recreational interests, such as sport fishers; and

''(iv) conservation and environmental interests.

''(2) TRIBAL MEMBERS.—With respect to a county referred to in subparagraph (A) through (G) of section 405(a)(1), each Indian tribe with usual and accustomed fishing rights in the waters of such county and each Indian tribe with reservation lands in such county, may appoint one member to the marine resources committee for such county. Such member may be appointed by the respective tribal authority.

''(3) CHAIRPERSON.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Each marine resources committee established pursuant to this section shall select a chairperson from among members by a majority vote of the members of the committee.

''(B) ROTATING POSITION.—Each marine resources committee established pursuant to this section shall select a new chairperson at a frequency determined by the county charter of the marine resources committee to create a diversity of representation in the leadership of the marine resources committee.

''(c) DUTIES.—The duties of a marine resources committee established pursuant to this section are the following:

''(1) To assist in assessing marine resource problems in concert with governmental agencies, tribes, and other entities.

''(2) To assist in identifying local implications, needs, and strategies associated with the recovery of Puget Sound salmon and other species in the region of the Northwest Straits listed under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.) in coordination with Federal, State, and local governments, Indian tribes, and other entities.

''(3) To work with other entities to enhance the scientific baseline and monitoring program for the marine environment of the Northwest Straits.

''(4) To identify local priorities for marine resource conservation and develop new projects to address those needs.

''(5) To work closely with county leadership to implement local marine conservation and restoration initiatives.

''(6) To coordinate with the Commission on marine ecosystem objectives.

''(7) To educate the public and key constituencies regarding the relationship between healthy marine habitats, harvestable resources, and human activities.

''SEC. 409. NORTHWEST STRAITS MARINE CONSERVATION FOUNDATION.

''(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Director of the Commission and the Director of the Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve may enter into an agreement with an organization described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to establish a nonprofit foundation to support the Commission and the marine resources committees established under section 408 in carrying out their duties under this Act.

''(b) DESIGNATION.—The foundation authorized by subsection (a) shall be known as the 'Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Foundation'.

''(c) RECEIPT OF GRANTS.—The Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Foundation may, if eligible, apply for, accept, and use grants awarded by Federal agencies, States, local governments, regional agencies, interstate agencies, corporations, foundations, or other persons to assist the Commission and the marine resources committees in carrying out their duties under this Act.

''(d) TRANSFER OF FUNDS.—The Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Foundation may transfer funds to the Commission or the marine resources committees to assist them in carrying out their duties under this Act.''.

By Mr. BURR (for himself, Mr. WEBB, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. WICKER, Mr. COBURN, Mr. DEMINT, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. VITTER, Mr. ENZI, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. ENSIGN, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. COCHRAN, Ms. MURKOWSKI, and Mr. THUNE):

S. 669. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify the conditions under which certain persons may be treated as adjudicated mentally incompetent for certain purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Mr. BURR. Mr. President, I rise today to again introduce bipartisan legislation that would end an arbitrary process through which our own government takes away the 2nd Amendment rights of veterans.

I am pleased to be joined by three of my fellow Veterans' Affairs Committee Members on this legislation—Senators WEBB, GRAHAM, and WICKER—and 12 other members of the Senate, all as original cosponsors.

The legislation is nearly identical to the bill I introduced last Congress under the same title. Unfortunately, after it was approved as an amendment at a Committee markup and reported to the full Senate, no further action was taken. I am hopeful that things will be different this Congress.

As most of my colleagues know, the Federal Gun Control Act prohibits the sale of firearms to certain individuals, including convicted felons, fugitives, drug users, illegal aliens, and individuals who have been ''adjudicated as a mental defective.''

The Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act requires the government to maintain a database on these individuals called the National Instant Criminal Background Check System, or ''NICS''. The Brady Law and the NICS database aim to prevent those who may pose a danger to society or themselves from purchasing a firearm.

Gun shop owners reference the NICS to screen customers. Needless to say, it is a serious matter to have one's name on the NICS. Every American should expect a rigorous and fair process before their right to bear arms is taken away.

Unfortunately, when it comes to certain veterans, spouses, dependent children, and dependent parents, the process is neither rigorous nor fair.

Since 1999, VA has sent the names of 116,000 of its beneficiaries to the FBI for inclusion on the NICS.

None of these names were sent to the FBI because they were determined to be a danger to themselves or others. They were listed in NICS because they could not manage their financial affairs. We should not take away a Constitutional right because someone can't balance a checkbook or pay their bills on time.

VA's review process for assigning a fiduciary is meant to determine one's financial responsibility in managing VA-provided cash assistance such as disability compensation, pension, and other benefits.

For example, a veteran may be assigned a fiduciary if they have credit problems.

VA focuses on whether or not benefits paid by VA will be spent in the manner for which they were intended. Nothing involved with VA's appointment of a fiduciary even gets at the question of whether an individual is a danger to themselves or others, or whether the person should own a firearm.

Yet that is exactly what happens if VA appoints a fiduciary. Over 116,000 individuals have been listed in NICS since 1999 because they were appointed a fiduciary.

Again, this includes veterans, surviving spouses and, strangely enough, dependent children. That's right, a child entitled to receive survivor's compensation because their mother or father died as a result of service has their name sent to a government database filled with criminals. Even worse, the child's name stays on this list permanently unless he or she petitions to have it taken off.

This makes no sense. States have age restrictions preventing kids from purchasing firearms. VA sending the names of innocent children to Government database of criminals just because their parent died as a result of service to their country simply makes no sense, and it is downright insulting.

This process is not only arbitrary, it is unfair. Taking away a Constitutional right is a serious action and veterans should be afforded due process under the law. At the very least we should expect such decisions to be made by a competent judicial authority and not by civilian government employees.

The current process is also a double standard. Only VA beneficiaries fall under these guidelines. The Social Security Administration assigns fiduciaries to help beneficiaries, yet it does not send their names to the NICS.

Why are we singling out those who fought for this country and those who sacrificed while their spouse or parent served?

My legislation would end this arbitrary and unfair practice that strips the finest men and women of this country of their right to bear arms. This legislation would require a judicial authority to determine that an individual is a danger to themselves or others before their 2nd Amendment rights are taken away.

I am not here to ask that we put guns in the hands of dangerous people. I am here to ask that we treat our veterans fairly and that we take their rights seriously. Many of our veterans' organizations and other groups agree.

The Veterans 2nd Amendment Protection Act has the support of the The American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, AMVETS, the Military Order of the Purple Heart, the National Alliance on Mental Illness, the National Rifle Association, and Gun Owners of America.

No matter where my colleagues fall on the gun issue, I hope we can all agree that we need a process that is consistent and fair. Our veterans took an oath to uphold the Constitution. They deserve to enjoy the rights they fought so hard to protect.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be placed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 669

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Veterans 2nd Amendment Protection Act''.

SEC. 2. CONDITIONS FOR TREATMENT OF CERTAIN PERSONS AS ADJUDICATED MENTALLY INCOMPETENT FOR CERTAIN PURPOSES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 55 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

''§ 5511. Conditions for treatment of certain persons as adjudicated mentally incompetent for certain purposes

''In any case arising out of the administration by the Secretary of laws and benefits under this title, a person who is mentally incapacitated, deemed mentally incompetent, or experiencing an extended loss of consciousness shall not be considered adjudicated as a mental defective under subsection (d)(4) or (g)(4) of section 922 of title 18 without the order or finding of a judge, magistrate, or other judicial authority of competent jurisdiction that such person is a danger to himself or herself or others.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 55 of such title is amended by adding at the end the following new item:

''5511. Conditions for treatment of certain persons as adjudicated mentally incompetent for certain purposes.''.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 81—SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF WORLD WATER DAY

Ms. COLLINS (for herself and Mr. KERRY) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 81

Whereas the United Nations General Assembly, by resolution, has designated March 22 of each year as ''World Water Day'';

Whereas a person needs 4 to 5 liters of water per day to survive;

Whereas a person can live weeks without food, but only days without water;

Whereas every 15 seconds a child dies from a water-borne disease;

Whereas, for children under age 5, water-borne diseases are the leading cause of death;

Whereas millions of women and children already spend several hours a day collecting water from distant, often polluted sources;

Whereas every dollar spent on water and sanitation saves an average of $9 in costs averted and productivity gained;

Whereas, at any given time, ½ of the hospital beds in the world are occupied by patients suffering from a water-borne disease;

Whereas 88 percent of all diseases are caused by unsafe drinking water, inadequate sanitation, and poor hygiene;

Whereas 1,100,000,000 (1 in 6) people lack access to an improved water supply;

Whereas 2,600,000,000 people in the world lack access to improved sanitation;

Whereas the 263 transboundary lake and river basins in the world are part of the territory of 145 countries and cover nearly ½ of the land surface of the Earth;

Whereas climate change may cause more extreme floods and droughts, increasing political tension and the potential for clashes over transboundary fresh water resources;

Whereas the global celebration of World Water Day is an initiative that grew out of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro;

Whereas the participants in the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, including the United States, agreed to the Plan of Implementation which included an agreement to work to reduce by ½ from the baseline year 1990 ''the proportion of people who are unable to reach or to afford safe drinking water'', ''and the proportion of people without access to basic sanitation'' by 2015; and

Whereas Congress passed and the President signed into law the Senator Paul Simon Water for the Poor Act of 2005 (Public Law 109–121), which was intended to ''elevate the role of water and sanitation policy in the development of U.S. foreign policy and improve the effectiveness of U.S. official programs'': Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) supports the goals and ideals of World Water Day;

(2) urges an increased effort and the investment of greater resources by the Department of State, the United States Agency for International Development, and all relevant Federal departments and agencies toward providing sustainable and equitable access to safe drinking water and sanitation for the poor and the very poor; and

(3) encourages the people of the United States to observe the week of World Water Day with appropriate activities that promote awareness of the importance of—

(A) access to clean water; and

(B) cooperation between stakeholders in transboundary water management.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I rise today to submit a resolution supporting the ideals and goals of World Water Day. I am pleased to have my colleague Senator JOHN KERRY joining me as the cosponsor of this resolution.

March 22 was established as World Water Day by the United Nations General Assembly to promote awareness of the importance of access to clean water and improved sanitation. More than one billion people lack access to an improved water supply and 2.6 billion people lack access to improved sanitation.

This year's theme, ''Shared Water—Shared Opportunities,'' highlights opportunities to build trust among countries as they manage their common water resources in ways that promote sustainable economic growth. In the U.S. half of the States border shared waters, and there are growing pressures on the environmental quality and use of these waters.

To recognize World Water Day, activities are planned internationally and here in the U.S. Many cities are sponsoring World Water Day benefit walks, runs and musical celebrations. I urge citizens to participate in these activities and recognize this important day.

In 2000, the United Nations adopted a goal to reduce by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation by 2015. We have made some progress toward that goal, but more needs to be done. Each day millions of women and girls still spend hours traveling miles to transport water to their homes. In many cases, the source is polluted, leading to disease for them and other members of their families.

The Senator Paul Simon Water for the Poor Act of 2005 provided for U.S. assistance in developing countries to provide equal and affordable access to clean and safe water and sanitation. This access is important to U.S. foreign policy interests, and, more important, is a basic human right.

SENATE RESOLUTION 82—RECOGNIZING THE 188TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE INDEPENDENCE OF GREECE AND CELEBRATING GREEK AND AMERICAN DEMOCRACY

Mr. SPECTER (for himself, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. KERRY, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mr. CASEY, Mr. LAUTENBERG, Mr. CARDIN, Ms. SNOWE, Mr. BINGAMAN, Mr.

WHITEHOUSE, Mr. REED, Mr. VOINOVICH, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. BEGICH, Mr. MARTINEZ, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. FEINGOLD, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. KENNEDY, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. DODD, Mr. GREGG, Mr. BENNETT, Mr. CARPER, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. KOHL, Mr. RISCH, Mr. INOUYE, Mr. ROCKEFELLER, Mr. ISAKSON, Mrs. MURRAY, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. LUGAR, Mr. NELSON of Florida, and Mr. JOHNSON) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 82

Whereas the ancient Greeks developed the concept of democracy, in which the supreme power to govern was vested in the people;

Whereas the Founding Fathers of the United States, many of whom read Greek political philosophy in the original Greek, drew heavily on the political experience and philosophy of ancient Greece in forming our representative democracy;

Whereas Greek Commander in Chief Petros Mavromichalis, a founder of the modern Greek state, said to the citizens of the United States in 1821 that ''it is in your land that liberty has fixed her abode and . . . in imitating you, we shall imitate our ancestors and be thought worthy of them if we succeed in resembling you'';

Whereas the Greek national anthem, the ''Hymn to Liberty'', includes the words, ''Most heartily was gladdened George Washington's brave land'';

Whereas the people of the United States generously offered humanitarian assistance to the Greek people during their struggle for independence;

Whereas Greece played a major role in the World War II struggle to protect freedom and democracy through such bravery as was shown in the historic Battle of Crete, which provided the Axis land war with its first major setback, setting off a chain of events that significantly affected the outcome of World War II;

Whereas hundreds of thousands of Greek civilians were killed in Greece during World War II in defense of the values of the Allies;

Whereas, throughout the 20th century, Greece was one of a few countries that allied with the United States in every major international conflict;

Whereas Greece is a strategic partner and ally of the United States in bringing political stability and economic development to the volatile Balkan region, having invested more than $20,000,000,000 in the countries of the region, thereby helping to create more than 200,000 new jobs, and having contributed more than $750,000,000 in development aid for the region;

Whereas Greece actively participates in peacekeeping and peace-building operations conducted by international organizations including the United Nations, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the European Union, and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe;

Whereas Greece received worldwide praise for its extraordinary handling during the 2004 Olympic Games of more than 14,000 athletes and more than 2,000,000 spectators and journalists, a feat Greece handled efficiently, securely, and with hospitality;

Whereas Greece, located in a region where Christianity meets Islam and Judaism, maintains excellent relations with Muslim nations and Israel;

Whereas the Government of Greece has taken important steps in recent years in furthering cross-cultural understanding and rapprochement with Turkey, as seen with the January 2008 visit to Turkey by the Prime Minister of Greece, Kostas Karamanlis, the first official visit by a Greek Prime Minister in 49 years;

Whereas Greece and the United States are at the forefront of the effort for freedom, democracy, peace, stability, and human rights;

Whereas those and similar ideals have forged a close bond between Greece and the United States; and

Whereas it is proper and desirable for the United States to celebrate March 25, 2009, Greek Independence Day, with the Greek people and to reaffirm the democratic principles from which these two great nations were born: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) extends warm congratulations and best wishes to the people of Greece as they celebrate the 188th anniversary of the independence of Greece;

(2) expresses support for the principles of democratic governance to which the people of Greece are committed; and

(3) notes the important role that Greece has played in the wider European region and in the community of nations since gaining its independence 188 years ago.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 12—RECOGNIZING AND HONORING THE SIGNING BY PRESIDENT ABRAHAM LINCOLN OF THE LEGISLATION AUTHORIZING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF COLLEGIATE PROGRAMS AT GALLAUDET UNIVERSITY

Mr. BROWN submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. CON. RES. 12

Whereas in 2009, the United States honored the 200th anniversary of the birth of President Abraham Lincoln;

Whereas on July 4, 1861, President Lincoln stated in a message to Congress that a principal aim of the United States government should be ''to elevate the condition of men—to lift artificial weights from all shoulders—to clear the paths of laudable pursuit for all—to afford all, an unfettered start, and a fair chance, in the race of life'';

Whereas on April 8, 1864, President Lincoln signed into law the legislation (Act of April 8, 1864, ch. 52, 13 Stat. 45) authorizing the conferring of collegiate degrees by the Columbia Institution for Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb and the Blind, which is now called Gallaudet University;

Whereas that law led for the first time in history to higher education for deaf students in an environment designed to meet their communication needs;

Whereas Gallaudet University was the first, and is still the only, institution in the world that focuses on educational programs for deaf and hard-of-hearing students from the pre-school through the doctoral level;

Whereas Gallaudet University has been a world leader in the fields of education and research for more than a century; and

Whereas since 1869, graduates of Gallaudet University have pursued distinguished careers of leadership in the United States and throughout the world: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That Congress—

(1) congratulates and honors Gallaudet University on the 145th anniversary of President Abraham Lincoln's signing of the legislation authorizing the establishment of collegiate programs at Gallaudet University; and

(2) congratulates Gallaudet University for 145 years of unique and exceptional service to the deaf people of the United States and the world deaf community.

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Samantha Harvell, a fellow in Senator BINGAMAN's office, be granted the privilege of the floor during the pendency of H.R. 1388.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONGRATULATING THE COLUMBUS CREW FOR WINNING THE 2008 MAJOR LEAGUE SOCCER CUP

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Judiciary Committee be discharged from further consideration, and the Senate now proceed to S. Res. 61.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 61) commending the Columbus Crew Major League Soccer Team for winning the 2008 Major League Soccer Cup.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 61) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 61

Whereas, on Sunday, November 23, 2008, the Columbus Crew defeated the New York Red Bulls by a score of 3–1 to win the 2008 Major League Soccer (MLS) Cup;

Whereas the Columbus Crew led the league with a record of 17 wins, 7 losses, and 6 draws and scored 50 regular season goals and 8 playoff goals;

Whereas Columbus Crew head coach Sigi Schmid was named the 2008 MLS Coach of the Year and became the first MLS Coach to win an MLS Cup with two different teams;

Whereas Columbus Crew forward Guillermo Barros Schelotto was named the 2008 MLS Most Valuable Player and led the league with 19 regular season assists and 6 playoff assists;

Whereas Columbus Crew defender Chad Marshall was named the 2008 MLS Defender of the Year;

Whereas Columbus Crew forward Alejandro Moreno led the team in scoring with 9 regular season goals and 1 playoff goal;

Whereas Columbus Crew goalkeeper Will Hesmer had 17 wins, 97 saves, and 10 shutouts in 29 regular season games;

Whereas Alejandro Moreno, Chad Marshall, and Frankie Hejduk all scored goals in the MLS Cup Championship game;

Whereas the Columbus Crew was the winner of the 2008 MLS Supporters' Shield for being the team with the best regular season record;

Whereas Columbus Crew Captain Frankie Hejduk led the team to its first MLS Cup since the team's creation in 1994; and

Whereas the Columbus Crew, along with its supporters, has energized Columbus and brought great pride to the State of Ohio: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) congratulates the Columbus Crew on winning the 2008 Major League Soccer Cup;

(2) recognizes the achievements of Sigi Schmid, Chad Marshall, Guillermo Barros Schelotto, and the other members of the Columbus Crew for their tireless work ethic and championship form;

(3) salutes the support of the Columbus Crew fan groups, including the Hudson Street Hooligans, the Crew Union, La Turbina Amarilla, and the rest of the Nordecke for unwavering dedication to the Columbus Crew; and

(4) expresses the hope that the Columbus Crew and Major League Soccer will continue to inspire soccer fans and players throughout Ohio, the United States, and the world.

188TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE INDEPENDENCE OF GREECE

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to S. Res. 82.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 82) recognizing the 188th anniversary of the independence of Greece and celebrating the Greek and American democracy.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motion to reconsider be laid on the table, there be no intervening action or debate, and any statements relating to this matter be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 82) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 82

Whereas the ancient Greeks developed the concept of democracy, in which the supreme power to govern was vested in the people;

Whereas the Founding Fathers of the United States, many of whom read Greek political philosophy in the original Greek, drew heavily on the political experience and philosophy of ancient Greece in forming our representative democracy;

Whereas Greek Commander in Chief Petros Mavromichalis, a founder of the modern Greek state, said to the citizens of the United States in 1821 that "it is in your land that liberty has fixed her abode and . . . in imitating you, we shall imitate our ancestors and be thought worthy of them if we succeed in resembling you";

Whereas the Greek national anthem, the "Hymn to Liberty", includes the words, "Most heartily was gladdened George Washington's brave land";

Whereas the people of the United States generously offered humanitarian assistance to the Greek people during their struggle for independence;

Whereas Greece played a major role in the World War II struggle to protect freedom and democracy through such bravery as was shown in the historic Battle of Crete, which provided the Axis land war with its first major setback, setting off a chain of events that significantly affected the outcome of World War II;

Whereas hundreds of thousands of Greek civilians were killed in Greece during World War II in defense of the values of the Allies;

Whereas, throughout the 20th century, Greece was one of a few countries that allied with the United States in every major international conflict;

Whereas Greece is a strategic partner and ally of the United States in bringing political stability and economic development to the volatile Balkan region, having invested more than $20,000,000,000 in the countries of the region, thereby helping to create more than 200,000 new jobs, and having contributed more than $750,000,000 in development aid for the region;

Whereas Greece actively participates in peacekeeping and peace-building operations conducted by international organizations including the United Nations, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the European Union, and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe;

Whereas Greece received worldwide praise for its extraordinary handling during the 2004 Olympic Games of more than 14,000 athletes and more than 2,000,000 spectators and journalists, a feat Greece handled efficiently, securely, and with hospitality;

Whereas Greece, located in a region where Christianity meets Islam and Judaism, maintains excellent relations with Muslim nations and Israel;

Whereas the Government of Greece has taken important steps in recent years in furthering cross-cultural understanding and rapprochement with Turkey, as seen with the January 2008 visit to Turkey by the Prime Minister of Greece, Kostas Karamanlis, the first official visit by a Greek Prime Minister in 49 years;

Whereas Greece and the United States are at the forefront of the effort for freedom, democracy, peace, stability, and human rights;

Whereas those and similar ideals have forged a close bond between Greece and the United States; and

Whereas it is proper and desirable for the United States to celebrate March 25, 2009, Greek Independence Day, with the Greek people and to reaffirm the democratic principles from which these two great nations were born: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) extends warm congratulations and best wishes to the people of Greece as they celebrate the 188th anniversary of the independence of Greece;

(2) expresses support for the principles of democratic governance to which the people of Greece are committed; and

(3) notes the important role that Greece has played in the wider European region and in the community of nations since gaining its independence 188 years ago.

APPOINTMENTS

The PRESIDEING OFFICER. The Chair, on behalf of the majority leader, pursuant to Public Law 111–5, appoints the following individual to the Health Information Technology Policy Committee: Dr. Frank Nemec of Nevada.

The Chair announces, on behalf of the Secretary of the Senate, pursuant to Public Law 110–509, the appointment of Sheryl B. Vogt, of Georgia, to the Advisory Committee on the Records of Congress.

ORDERS FOR TUESDAY, MARCH 24, 2009

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 10 a.m. tomorrow morning, Tuesday, March 24; that following the prayer and pledge, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the morning hour be deemed expired, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and there then be a period of morning business for up to 1 hour, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the Republicans controlling the first half and the majority controlling the second half, and with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each; further, that following morning business, the Senate resume consideration of the motion to proceed to H.R. 1388, a bill to reauthorize and reform the national service laws, with the time running postcloture as provided under the previous order; finally, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate recess from 12:30 p.m. until 2:15 p.m. to allow for the weekly caucus luncheons.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. REID. If there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it adjourn under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 7:10 p.m., adjourned until Tuesday, March 24, 2009, at 10 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

JULIUS GENACHOWSKI, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION FOR A TERM OF FIVE YEARS FROM JULY 1, 2008, VICE JONATHAN STEVEN ADELSTEIN, TERM EXPIRED.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

JOE LEONARD, JR., OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE, VICE MARGO M. MCKAY, RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

KRISTINA M. JOHNSON, OF MARYLAND, TO BE UNDER SECRETARY OF ENERGY, VICE CLARENCE H. ALBRIGHT, RESIGNED.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

CYNTHIA J. GILES, OF RHODE ISLAND, TO BE AN ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY, VICE GRANTA Y. NAKAYAMA, RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

LAEL BRAINARD, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE AN UNDER SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY, VICE DAVID H. MCCORMICK, RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

HAROLD HONGJU KOH, OF CONNECTICUT, TO BE LEGAL ADVISER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, VICE JOHN B. BELLINGER III, RESIGNED.

JOHNNIE CARSON, OF ILLINOIS, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE (AFRICAN AFFAIRS), VICE JENDAYI ELIZABETH FRAZER, RESIGNED.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

LAUREN MINTO

HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2009

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Madam Speaker, the Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittee will soon bid farewell to our Congressional Fellow, Lauren Minto, who has been with the Subcommittee for over a year. Before her detail with the Committee, Ms. Minto served the United States Army Corps of Engineers as Legal Clerk and Assistant District Counsel at the Corps' Louisville Office of Counsel for over six years. There, she supported the implementation and regulation of Corps projects funded through the appropriations process. Reviewing legislative language, responding to Congressional requests, and evaluating policy compliance, Ms. Minto developed a strong understanding of the relationship between Congressional legislation and on-site execution as well as a unique level of legal expertise required to facilitate the process.

It is no surprise, therefore, that Ms. Minto quickly became an invaluable member of the Committee staff when she joined the team in February 2008. Her in-depth knowledge of the legal implications of bill language and policy compliance, as well as her technical experience with the Corps' civil works projects, made her an indispensible addition to the staff. A remarkably fast learner and tireless worker, Ms. Minto quickly mastered the responsibilities assigned to her. Her refined analytical skills and exceptional attention to detail have been critical to our success in reviewing requests, synthesizing disparate information, and, ultimately, producing the bills and reports for the fiscal year 2009 and American Reinvestment and Recovery Act.

Perhaps her most noteworthy contribution, however, has been to the development of the Energy and Water Subcommittee's Member Request Database. A relatively new system, the database is meant to facilitate the review and processing of requests made to the Subcommittee. Ms. Minto had the unfortunate experience of being one of the first to deal with the system. In her typically tireless way, she not only overcame any of the unforeseen obstacles, but took an active role in updating and reforming the database. Working closely with our IT department, Ms. Minto made targeted suggestions to perfect the system and, because of her work, our jobs, and those of future staff members will be easier. Indeed, Members' offices have expressed their appreciation for the standardized system of authorized projects that are now generated automatically. Ms. Minto's efforts have lead to more reliable, accurate requests and more transparency. This has enabled Members to focus more on the policy behind the earmarks and less on the technical aspects of entering requests.

For these innovations, and for her overall diligence, ingenuity, and consistently positive attitude over the past year, all of us at the Energy and Water Subcommittee would like to thank her. She will be sorely missed. We wish her all the best in her future endeavors, and are confident that she will go on to do great things.

IN REMEMBRANCE OF DR. HENRY DAVID PRENSKY

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2009

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, I rise today in honor and remembrance of Dr. David Prensky—a profoundly respected and admired activist, lecturer and classical music enthusiast.

Dr. Prensky was born in Brooklyn, New York in 1917, to a mother who encouraged him to study piano and from whom he inherited his love of classical music. Dr. Prensky attended dental school and served as a ship's dentist for the U.S. Navy during World War II. Following his service in the Navy, he found a way to integrate his profession and his love of classical music through his dental practices in Miami, Florida and Mexico City, Mexico by playing classical music to relax his patients. In 1954, he married fellow art enthusiast Bryna Prensky, who opened her own art gallery featuring Contemporary Mexican Art.

Dr. Prensky dedicated his time to supporting local art programs, education and was an active member in the local Democratic Party. He shared his love of classical music with audiences around Palm Beach, Florida as a lecturer for the Society of the Four Arts and Regional Arts, the Etta Res Institute of New Dimensions at Palm Beach Community College, as well as for the Florida Philharmonic Orchestra. He was integral in the advancement of the Alexander W. Dreyfoos Jr. School of the Arts in West Palm Beach and dedicated his time to developing the schools' art and music libraries, scholarships and foundation. In honor of his commitment to the school, the orchestra rehearsal hall bears his name. In addition to Dr. Prensky's dedication to the advancement of the arts, he was an avid activist for universal health care and founded Floridians for Health Care. Additionally, he co-founded the local Palm Beach Democratic Club. Although it has been almost a year since his passing, Dr. Prensky's ability to mobilize the community and advocate for the social welfare of others continues to be evident to all those who have been touched by his efforts.

Madam Speaker and colleagues, please join me in remembrance of Dr. Henry David Prensky and in honor of his outstanding achievements in the advancement of arts education and health care.

GENERATIONS INVIGORATING VOLUNTEERISM AND EDUCATION ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. PHIL HARE

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 18, 2009

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 1388) to reauthorize and reform the national service laws:

Mr. HARE. Mr. Chair, President Obama has set high goals for this nation to improve public education, combat climate change, extend quality affordable health care to all Americans, and honor our veterans. I believe renewing our nation's commitment to service will be the vehicle through which we meet these challenges.

Under the leadership of Chairman MILLER and Subcommittee Chair, Congresswoman MCCARTHY, the GIVE Act (H.R. 1388) answers the President's call to service, and I am proud to be an original cosponsor of this legislation.

Mr. Chair, very important to me as a veteran of the Army Reserves and the veterans' community is a provision I worked to secure in the GIVE Act that establishes a Veterans' Corps.

Last Congress when we considered legislation similar to H. R. 1388, I offered an amendment to create a grant program to enhance service opportunities for veterans and military families. The GIVE Act builds upon this effort by establishing a separate Veterans' Corps.

As more and more troops return from Iraq and Afghanistan, fulfilling our promise to them will be an even greater challenge and priority for our nation. Through the Veterans' Corps we can recruit and mobilize veterans into service projects that provide educational and economic opportunities, job training, mentoring and outreach to other veterans.

Mr. Chair, our nation's veterans have already demonstrated a profound commitment to service. The Veterans' Corps aims to harness that spirit and in the process give back to those who have sacrificed so much for us.

I would like to acknowledge the work of my friend and colleague, Congressman JOHN SARBANES of Maryland. Together, we introduced H.R. 1401, the VET Corps Act, which was the foundation for the Veterans' Corps in the GIVE Act.

I ask my colleagues to vote yes on the GIVE Act.

HONORING GLORIA MENDOZA

HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2009

Mr. ENGEL. Madam Speaker, Gloria Mendoza has dedicated her life to education, starting as a kindergarten teacher and advancing

to administrator, all the time an advocate for students and staff. She has had a consistent commitment to quality education for all students, in the process becoming a role model for students.

She worked in New York City public schools for ten years as a teacher and administrator and in 1987 started her career with the Yonkers Public Schools as an Assistant Principal at Enrico Fermi School for the Performing Arts.

In 1991, she was appointed Principal of School 17, and served as Principal of Museum Middle School prior to her current assignment as Principal of Enrico Fermi School for the Performing Arts.

She has built partnerships with community organizations to create initiatives for her schools, including the Groundworks Gardening Project, the Parents-as-Partners Family Resource Center, the Healthy Eating Program, sponsored by St. John's Hospital and the Gorton High School Medical Magnet, the Westchester County Grandparent Volunteer Program, Yonkers Police Department's DARE Program, and St. Joseph's Hospital Yonkers Spectrum Clinic.

She has demonstrated that civic involvement and community service are important to her students' success and has encouraged staff, parents and students to reach out to the sick and the elderly, as well as to members of the United States Military in Iraq.

One of her passions, the Yonkers Pathways to Success, is a program to help adults learn to speak English and earn their high school diploma.

For her dedication to education she is being honored by the Yonkers YWCA with its Pacesetter Award, and I congratulate her and thank her for her great work in educating our children.

A TRIBUTE TO LEGAL ACTION OF WISCONSIN

HON. GWEN MOORE

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2009

Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin. Madam Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Legal Action of Wisconsin. Legal Action of Wisconsin is the largest staff-based provider of civil legal services for low income persons in Wisconsin. In April, 2009, Legal Action of Wisconsin will celebrate its 40th anniversary.

In 1968, Milwaukee Legal Services and Freedom Through Equality merged to become Legal Action of Wisconsin. Legal Action staff and volunteer attorneys providing pro bono services have represented and served over 400,000 clients since its inception. The agency has gained public benefits on behalf of clients, helped clients gain custody of their children, and assisted clients in relief from evictions. Further, Legal Action has always sought to go beyond individual representation for low income people by seeking systemic change for problems in order to provide relief to as many clients possible. Legal Action's intervention on behalf of low-income clients has resulted in many achievements including rule changes and modifications, improved procedures from agencies and greater income for clients. They have also positively impacted school systems, health care systems, prison systems and the agribusiness industry to benefit and provide fundamental justice for clients.

The sole mission of Legal Action of Wisconsin has been to achieve fundamental justice for its clients through creative and effective legal representation. To that end, Legal Action of Wisconsin's lawyers, paralegals and support staff have always upheld the basic democratic principle that all people are entitled to equal justice under law. Legal Action continues to act in cooperation with clients, the private bar, and community organizations to ensure that they remain a community oriented law firm.

Madam Speaker, it is with great pleasure and admiration that I pay tribute to Legal Action of Wisconsin for their 40 years of service. Its dedicated staff, board of directors, and volunteers continue to adhere to the principle that all people are entitled to equal justice under the law in the 4th Congressional District and the entire State of Wisconsin.

THANKING JOE DAVID BERG FOR HIS SERVICE TO THE HOUSE

HON. ROBERT A. BRADY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2009

Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, on the occasion of his retirement on February 2, 2009, we rise to thank Mr. Joe David Berg for 32 years of distinguished service to the United States House of Representatives. Joe has served this great institution as a valuable employee of House Information Resources (HIR), in the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer.

Joe began his tenure with the United States House of Representatives in 1977 as a Senior Technical Aid working in the Configuration Planning and Management Section (CPMS). All computing capabilities were provided by a huge mainframe computer with hardware that filled a 10,000 square foot room. Joe provided technical support to the mainframe programmers as a member of the Programmer Assistance Team for ten years.

Joe served the House in many different roles during his 32 years working at HIR. His expertise in the Configuration Planning and Management Section led to Joe becoming manager of that group. Joe served as assistant to the Operations Manager, where he implemented automated system monitoring and alerts. The use of automated monitoring tools was so effective that Joe continues to implement automated monitoring and alerts systems on current technology. Joe served as Security Manager of House systems for more than 2 years. He also served as Special Assistant in Communications, working on the budget, planning and coordination of Communications activities. In Technical Support, Joe provided direct support to Member offices with the National Change of Address service, better known as NCOA. The NCOA service, formerly operated by HIR, improves the accuracy of postal mailing lists. Joe currently serves as a Senior System Engineer on the Windows System Engineering team.

Joe's excellent level of performance over the years gave him the opportunity to oversee and work on many complex projects to include building the AppManager monitoring system and was an active part of the design and build of the FinMart financial system that will become a part of the Atlas Project. Joe assisted in the initial build of the SQL database clusters that are the backbone of the majority of Windows based applications and websites for the House and is the primary engineer for the Windows based Active Server Page (ASP) and Moveable Type websites for Member and Committee offices. Joe single-handedly created sites for over 202 offices. He is also the primary engineer supporting the Federal Funds project. He has actively worked with our Virtualization effort in our ''Green the Capitol'' initiative and was instrumental in preliminary testing and subsequent implementation. He is one of the primary engineers for all hardware based efforts and server builds on the Infrastructure Team. He has provided countless consulting services to customers for various application and system creation projects.

On behalf of the entire House community, we extend congratulations to Joe for many years of dedication and outstanding contributions to the United States House of Representatives. We wish Joe many wonderful years in fulfilling his retirement dreams.

HELPING FAMILIES SAVE THEIR HOMES ACT

HON. PHIL HARE

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2009

Mr. HARE. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 1106, the Helping Families Save Their Homes Act of 2009.

When I was a kid, my parents lost their house. My father became sick and could not keep up with the payments. Millions of Americans have suffered a similar fate during the current economic crisis and millions more are hanging on by a thread. We have a moral obligation to help prevent vulnerable homeowners from experiencing the same pain and suffering my family did.

It is projected that nearly 4,000 homes in my congressional district will go into foreclosure this year with over 8,000 to follow in the next 4 years.

H.R. 1106, the Helping Families Save Their Homes Act would provide lenders the incentive to refinance mortgages for homeowners in danger of foreclosure. It would reduce fees for refinancing and protect lenders from investor lawsuits. In addition, the bill would allow bankruptcy judges to modify the terms of a mortgage for homeowners who can no longer afford their payments. This provision will save an estimated 1,225 homes in my district.

Millions of Americans have lost their jobs through no fault of their own. So it is no wonder that many cannot afford their house payments. Allowing working families to renegotiate the terms of their mortgage is both fair and responsible.

Addressing the foreclosure crisis is key to our economic recovery. The mortgage meltdown got us into this mess, driving down home values and leaving our banks frozen with toxic assets. This legislation will protect homeowners and get our economy back on track. I urge my colleagues to vote yes on H.R. 1106 and help families save their homes.

IN HONOR OF DR. MITCHELL J. BIENIA

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2009

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, I rise today in honor and recognition of Dr. Mitchell J. Bienia, as he is honored as the recipient of the 2009 Cleveland Society of Poles ''Good Joe'' Polish Heritage Award. Dr. Bienia's dedicated service to the Cleveland community as well as to the Polish American community continues to be evident throughout his life.

In his 30-year tenure with the Cleveland School District, he worked as teacher, guidance counselor, department head and administrator. For ten years, Dr. Bienia worked as a part-time guidance counselor at Cuyahoga Community College. Among numerous professional accolades, Dr. Bienia was the recipient of the 1970 Martha Holden Jennings Outstanding Teacher of the Year Award, the 1990 Phi Delta Kappa Award, and the 1995 Counselor of the Year Award. Dr. Bienia's integrity and dedication to making a difference in his professional life is mirrored in his personal life as well. A lifelong volunteer, he has served as a member and leader with numerous social service organizations, including his current post as a Board Member with Cleveland Metropolitan General Hospital.

In addition to his community service, Dr. Bienia has worked tirelessly to promote and preserve his Polish heritage. He has been an active member and leader with several local and national Polish organizations and currently serves as the National Director for the Chicago-based Polish Roman Catholic Union of America. Dr. Bienia and his wife Krystyna are the proud parents of two grown daughters—Krystyna and Michelle, to whom they have passed down the value of family, faith and service to others.

Madam Speaker and colleagues, please join me in honor and recognition of Dr. Mitchell J. Bienia, whose service to family, friends, community and dedication to sharing Poland's cultural gifts all serve to illuminate the diversity that defines the Cleveland community and is the foundation of our country. Dr. Bienia's faith, his love of family and commitment to community is a testament to the true meaning of citizenship and reflects the American dream.

COMMENDING MARTIN AND BETH ARON OF SPRINGFIELD, NEW JERSEY

HON. LEONARD LANCE

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2009

Mr. LANCE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay special tribute to Martin and Beth Aron of Springfield, New Jersey. For nearly two decades, Martin and Beth Aron have worked tirelessly to make a difference in their community by helping others.

In fact, there are dozens of New Jersey civic, social welfare, educational, artistic and religious organizations that have benefited from the Arons' hard work, dedication and selfless sacrifices to help those in need.

On March 31, 2009 Congregation Israel in Springfield, New Jersey will honor Martin and Beth at the synagogue's 34th Annual Tribute Dinner for their remarkable and enduring contribution to Congregation Israel and to communities throughout New Jersey.

Over the years, the Arons have been involved in the Zamir Chorale and Zamire Chorale Foundation, both of which promote Jewish choral music as a vehicle to inspire Jewish life, culture and continuity. The Zamir Chorale performed at the White House this past year. The Arons have also been involved in the formation and development of Joseph Kushner Hebrew Academy of Livingston, New Jersey, improving the education opportunities of children with unique learning challenges, as well as in the charitable, community outreach and children's programming activities at Congregation Israel.

It gives me great pleasure to share the remarkable efforts of Martin and Beth Aron with my colleagues in the United States Congress and with the American people. I am also honored to join Congregation Israel in recognizing their outstanding service to their community.

HONORING THE LIFE OF FRANK L. SWANNER

HON. JEFF MILLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2009

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Madam Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, it is with great respect and honor that I rise today to recognize the life and legacy of Northwest Florida's beloved Frank Swanner.

Frank Swanner was a man who lived his life deeply rooted in his strong faith in God and love for his family and community. Born in Tanner, Alabama on January 28, 1921, he began his working career as a farmer, member of the Limestone County School Board, and an active member of the local Baptist Church and Baptist Association, as well as, working at Chemstrand/Monsanto.

When Chemstrand/Monsanto transferred the Swanner family from Decatur to the Pensacola Plant in 1959, Mr. Swanner and his family moved to Milton, Florida, where he continued his active service in the church and community as Deacon and music leader in Ferris Hill Baptist Church, treasurer of the Santa Rosa Baptist Association, a member of the Santa Rosa County Civil Service Board, the Local Democratic Committee, and the Kiwanis Club.

In addition to his love for God and family, Frank had a tremendous love for our country. During World War II, Frank Swanner joined the United States Army, which brought him to Omaha Beach and the shores of Normandy on June 6, 1944. With honor and sacrifice, he and millions of men and women answered the call of duty. They have become known as the ''Greatest Generation,'' and we are eternally grateful for their service.

To some, Frank Swanner will be remembered as a community leader and fellow worshipper, and to others, an avid softball player and bowler. To some he will be remembered as a friend in the Wendy's Lunch Bunch, and to others, a comrade in the United States Army and World War II Veteran. He will long be remembered by his family and friends as a loving and compassionate person full of energy and charisma. Frank Swanner touched a number of lives, and all who knew him are forever blessed for the love and inspiration that has left a lasting impression in our hearts.

Madam Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, I am proud to honor one of America's great heroes, Frank Swanner, for his honorable leadership and service to Northwest Florida and to this great Nation.

TAXPAYER FUNDED BONUSES AT AIG

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2009

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Madam Speaker, I rise today to add my voice in opposition to plans by American International Group Inc. (AIG) to reward their executives with ''job performance'' bonuses worth over $165 million at a time when the American people, including my constituents in Minnesota, are making huge sacrifices to make ends meet.

Yesterday, I joined my colleagues in cosigning a letter to Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner to express my objection to AIG's payment of these ill-timed executive bonuses.

I want to go further and call on the Administration to repeal AIG's latest federal stabilization infusion of $30 billion until they retrieve the $165 million in bonuses, provide assurances that bonuses will no longer be disbursed without Congressional oversight and agree to turn over regular disclosure forms to account for how taxpayer funds are being used.

We must demand the highest level of transparency and accountability, especially since American taxpayers have provided over $170 billion in funding to AIG and control approximately 80 percent of the company.

The purpose of the funds is to stabilize and prevent the devastating collapse of the financial markets, not to reward executives whose performance deserves an ''F'' grade for their failure to protect investors and consumers.

For traders—whose recklessness and greed greatly contributed to the financial crisis—to think they can profit at the expense of the taxpayers is unconscionable.

This latest irresponsible act by AIG has further compromised the public trust.

I am pleased that President Obama has responded so quickly by pursuing every legal avenue to block these bonuses. Like the President, who yesterday expressed that he is ''choked up with anger,'' I am angry and so are the millions of families bearing the brunt of the economic meltdown.

These monies must be recovered immediately and AIG must provide documentation as to which executives were to receive the bonuses so we can determine if these awards violate recently enacted federal restrictions.

In January, I voted for House passage of H.R. 384, the TARP Reform and Accountability Act, to strengthen accountability and oversight of the Troubled Asset Relief Program and require tough, sensible restrictions on executive pay.

And recently, Congress passed the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act, which President Obama signed into law, to curb

multi-million dollar packages and limit bonuses.

We must work closely with the Obama Administration to rigorously enforce these requirements and close potential loopholes so that taxpayers are protected.

HONORING CONSTANCE WALKER-FOWLER

HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2009

Mr. ENGEL. Madam Speaker, Constance Walker-Fowler is a native of Detroit who moved to Yonkers in 1997 and has been deeply involved in the community and civic organizations since her arrival.

She is Chair of the Yonkers Commission on Human Rights, where she helped to develop the language for the resolution Against Domestic Violence. She is a Life Member of the National Council of Negro Women and for the past four years president of its Hudson Valley Section.

She is also a member of the Hudson River Community Association; Sister-to-Sister Inc.; the Westchester Black Women's Political Caucus; a Trustee of the Schomburg Corporation; and serves on the Advisory Board of Groundworks Hudson Valley. She is also Democratic District Leader and Secretary of the Third Ward election district.

Further, she is Secretary of the International Governing Board of Voices of African Mothers, an organization dedicated to alleviating hunger in Africa.

Even further, she is dedicated to her family, often visiting her son Andre in England and helping her Aunt Mamie and her sister Norice and her family.

In short, Constance Walker-Fowler is dedicated to helping her communities from every aspect while still maintaining close and devoted ties to her family.

I congratulate her on her receiving the Humanitarian Award of the Yonkers YWCA and wish her every success.

INTRODUCTION OF THE ''FIXING THE FEDERAL VOTING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM ACT''

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2009

Mrs. MALONEY. Madam Speaker, today, along with Representative HONDA (D–CA), I am reintroducing the ''Fixing the Federal Voting Assistance Program Act'' which would do two things: (1) make the Director of the Federal Voting Assistance Office a presidential appointee confirmable by the Senate, and (2) create an advisory board to strengthen oversight of the office to ensure better access to the ballot by overseas military and civilian voters.

The Federal Voter Assistance Program (FVAP) is the government's primary office for helping ensure access to the ballot for thousands of overseas voters, both civilian and military, in recent elections. This legislation is designed to bring greater attention to the voting office in the Department of Defense and enhanced oversight to ensure that it does its job of providing greater access to voting for our soldiers, sailors and airmen, their families, as well as civilians living overseas.

The ''Fixing the Federal Voting Assistance Program Act'' is a necessary step in ensuring that overseas voters are counted in elections. I believe that Americans serving in the military abroad or civilians residing overseas still do not have adequate help from the government in facilitating their right of access to the ballot. Representative HONDA and I believe we need to start working on improving access to the next election now while the problems are still fresh in our minds so that we are not facing them again in 2010.

IN RECOGNITION OF SAM BURNS

HON. DORIS O. MATSUI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2009

Ms. MATSUI. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Sam Burns, a dear friend and tireless community leader who recently passed away. Sam served as the head of the Sacramento Convention Center and Visitors Bureau and was an admired advocate for drawing tourism into Sacramento. As his family and friends gather to honor and remember his wonderful life, I ask all of my colleagues to join me in saluting one of Sacramento's most well-respected figures.

Sam was a prominent leader in the Sacramento Region, and his death leaves a tremendous void in the community. When Sam was hired by city leaders in 1972, the Memorial Auditorium was the largest local venue for conventions. Under Sam's leadership, a new Sacramento Community Center opened in 1974, finally putting Sacramento on the map as a convention host. With an $80 million expansion in 1995, the Community Center was renamed Sacramento Convention Center Complex and is now home to dozens of major events, conventions, and community gatherings each year.

Sam was a strong supporter of all that Sacramento has to offer, from the prestigious Crocker Art Museum to Old Sacramento and the city's riverfront. The high quality of his work and his dedication to Sacramento led to the expansion of his duties in 1993, when he was named to lead the Community and Visitor Services Department. Sam became responsible for drawing large crowds to Sacramento as he promoted the Sacramento Jazz Festival and other city events.

Sam's passion and commitment resonated in his work and will not soon be forgotten by the Sacramento community. His positive impact is seen across our city in the expansion of downtown hotels and the numerous conventions held each year. Sam was a wonderful public servant and ambassador to Sacramento, but he was an even better husband and father. He leaves behind his lovely wife Betsy and three children, Brandi, Michael and Brett.

Madam Speaker, as Sam Burns' family and friends gather to honor his wonderful legacy and many contributions, I am honored to pay tribute to him. Those of us who were privileged enough to call him our friend will deeply miss him. I ask all my colleagues to pause and join me in paying respect to an extraordinary man, Sam Burns.

TRIBUTE TO KANSAS CITY, KANSAS, YWCA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CATHY BREIDENTHAL

HON. DENNIS MOORE

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2009

Mr. MOORE of Kansas. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Cathy Breidenthal, the longtime executive director of the YWCA of Kansas City, Kansas, who retired from that position on February 28, 2009, after nearly 23 years of dedicated service to that important community institution. Cathy's reinvigoration of the Kansas City YWCA, which included a capital campaign, coupled with a significant expansion in services and programs, will be celebrated at a ''Heart of Gold'' fundraiser for the institution on March 27th. The Kansas City Star recently carried an article detailing Cathy Breidenthal's service to our local YWCA community; I include it here for review by our colleagues, who I am sure join with me in recognizing the important contributions made by Cathy Breidenthal during her years of service to the YWCA of Kansas City, Kansas. We wish her well upon her well-earned retirement!

[From the Kansas City Star, Dec. 31, 2008]

YWCA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO RETIRE

(By Joy Gipple)

Cathy Breidenthal, executive director for 22 years of the YWCA of Kansas City, Kan., recently announced her retirement.

''When longtime EDs (executive directors) retire, it's kind of an initial shock,'' said YWCA board member Theresa Reyes Cummings. ''She's really been a pillar.''

''Eliminating racism, empowering women'' is the branding statement for the YWCA's mission.

''The growth in those two areas is something that I feel really good about,'' Breidenthal said.

Breidenthal has been credited with a regeneration of the YWCA during her tenure. A major effort was the capital campaign that resulted in sweeping improvements to the facility at 1017 N. Sixth St. and a subsequent expansion in services and programs.

''That process started in 2001, which was our 100th year,'' Breidenthal said. ''In 2002, a lot of construction development was occurring right on our block—the BPU office building and hotel, etc.,—so we had some decisions to make as to whether we were going to stay and be a positive part of this (downtown revitalization) development.''

The YWCA board decided the agency should stay in the original building. The project included an art gallery, theater and meeting space, as well as a health and fitness facility.

In 2003 the YWCA started its first entrepreneurial initiative: the Corner Café.

''I was looking at the opportunity and some of the amenities that are so important to urban development,'' Breidenthal said. ''We knew there was no upscale coffee shop or café at that time, and we felt that if we were going to phase this in, we needed to do something that really showed progress and our willingness to take that leap of faith.''

Underwriting support helped to get it started, and five years later the café continues to provide daily lunch, ''happy hour''

cookies and coffees, catering services and culinary classes.

''Like any new business, particularly in an area that hasn't quite reached its full potential for development, it has taken some time,'' Breidenthal said. ''I think the same is true with the art and community meeting space and the health and fitness facility.''

She described people's reactions when they see the facility for the first time, or for those who remember the old building and then notice the change.

''They are truly amazed,'' Breidenthal said. ''Every time we have an event and people are there seeing that and they realize they can rent that space, that our food is wonderful—we have an excellent chef—that it's really a quality thing . . . seeing is believing.''

When Breidenthal came on board at the YWCA in 1986, she was the only full-time staff member. Today there are 15 full- or part-time employees, and that number was even larger while some government-funded programs used the new facility for a time.

A program called the Teen Pregnancy Network shifted the focus to adolescent health issues. ''It really started us in that direction that is still one of the mainstays of our program,'' Breidenthal said.

The Resource Sharing Project was another way of using the space and providing services. ''We had an entity that was an adult day care looking for space,'' Breidenthal explained. ''We had the space but very limited programming. So it was a very win-win for a number of years until we started growing our program and needed the full facility.''

Breidenthal also chairs the Downtown Shareholders Group, working on the business improvement district.

''I have a real commitment and I really care about the YWCA and the downtown,'' Breidenthal said. ''I've been part of that urban environment for over 35 years and certainly want it to succeed.''

The YWCA board is planning the transition and there will likely be a job posting in January. Breidenthal's last day will be Feb. 28.

She expects the YWCA will continue to be a leader in downtown revitalization. ''Being at the crossroads of so many cultures here—certainly that can be one of our strengths and that's another area that fits with the YWCA's mission,'' Breidenthal said.

Theresa Reyes Cummings echoed those sentiments. ''We're going to move forward and we have a lot to offer the community,'' Cummings said. ''It's an exciting time.''

HONORING CLAUDETTE J. STOTHART

HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2009

Mr. ENGEL. Madam Speaker, Claudette J. Stothart is a retired teacher with vast experience in teaching, from grade school to college and who is also an active member of her community.

For 24 years she taught in New York City as a special education teacher as well as coordinating English as a Second Language courses and Social Studies. She was an adjunct Professor at Rockland Community College for 12 years and at Mercy College for 4 years. She also worked in Greenburgh as a middle school teacher during the summer months.

She worked closely with students, especially to make sure those who were merely acting out did not become candidates for special education, while advising parents of their rights, in the process inspiring both parents and students.

She was nominated by her students for, and accepted by, Who's Who Among American Teachers.

She is a long time member of the Westchester Black Women's Political Caucus, a member of Westchester Women's Leaders, the International Women's Round Table, and the African American Advisory Board.

She is a firm believer in education as a means to ease socioeconomic ills. She is deservedly receiving the Yonkers YWCA Inspiration Award and I congratulate her for her life's work in inspiring students, teachers and parents.

HILLSBOROUGH HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WORK TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

HON. LEONARD LANCE

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2009

Mr. LANCE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the efforts of high school students from the Seventh Congressional District who are volunteering their time to help those in need throughout the world.

Specifically, I would like to commend hundreds of Hillsborough High School students who are volunteering for an annual fundraising event known as Shelter From The Storm 4. The event takes place on Saturday, March 28, 2009 and will raise funds to help students in Haiti and Honduras have access to pure, clean drinking water.

The students have recognized that access to clean water is so basic—yet so precious to disadvantaged communities around the world. The funds Hillsborough High School students raise will help purchase water filters, rainwater collection compartments and provide education on proper sanitation.

Organized by students, Shelter From The Storm 4 will feature numerous educational guest speakers, a three-hour concert and a special festival.

Several dozen student organizations at Hillsborough High School are playing important roles in the event's success, such as the Rotary Club and Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts. I also commend the leadership of all the teachers involved, who provided guidance to the students throughout the planning stages and implementation of the fundraiser.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to commend all of the Hillsborough High School students who are involved with this special fundraising event. These students are clearly working hard to make a difference and help those in need.

GENERATIONS INVIGORATING VOLUNTEERISM AND EDUCATION ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 18, 2009

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 1388) to reauthorize and reform the national service laws:

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 1388, the ''Generations of Invigorating Volunteerism and Education Act or the 'GIVE Act'.'' I would like to thank my colleague Congresswoman MCCARTHY for introducing this important legislation, as well as the Chairman of the Committee on Education and Labor, Congressman GEORGE MILLER, for his leadership in bringing this bill to the floor today.

Mr. Chair, this legislation will expand the already highly successful volunteer programs that empower community activists and improve the education and economic conditions of cities throughout the United States. It supports and increases funding for key community services programs, including AmeriCorps, Learn and Serve America, VISTA, National Civilian Community Corps, and Senior Corps.

The GIVE Act creates opportunities for green jobs that will contribute to energy conservation and environmental protection. It will create critical educational opportunities for disadvantaged youth and will create incentives for students to improve their communities.

Every year, more than 70,000 Americans participate in the AmeriCorps program alone, which provides relief to cities during natural disasters and reinvigorates communities. Over 50 million American volunteers build homes, organize food-drives, and improve schools through national service programs. The GIVE Act will broaden the opportunities for students and activists to participate in national service via education rewards that keep up with soaring costs of universities and Summer Service programs. After Ike and Katrina, thousands of local students worked to help rebuild communities and provide necessary services to distressed families. The GIVE Act is the critical lynchpin in sustaining this civic activism.

Specifically, the GIVE Act would expand the job opportunities for Volunteers in Service to America, or VISTA, to re-integrate youth into society, increase literacy in communities through teaching opportunities in before and after-school programs, and to provide health and social services to low-income communities. VISTA is a critical step toward poverty alleviation, and the GIVE Act will equip it with the resources to fulfill its obligations.

I am pleased to see that my colleague, representative CUELLAR, revised the legislation to increase the number of volunteers from 75,000 to 250,000 members and added provisions for unemployed individuals to be included in the national service workforce, a step that will be a critical step to combating the employment crisis afflicting millions. I am also pleased that Congressman MILLER further specified that the increase in volunteers is not just designed for AmeriCorps, but for all national service programs such as the Peace Corps and Opportunity Corps, and also included language promote community based

efforts to reduce crime and recruit public safety officers.

In addition, the GIVE Act will create 4 new service opportunities including a Clean Energy Corps, an Education Corps, a Healthy Futures Corps, and a Veteran Service Corps. These volunteer opportunities will further improve environmental protection, health-care access, and services for veterans. These new service corps will address critical concerns in low-income communities. I am very happy that Congressman TEAGUE revised the legislation to aid veterans in their pursuit of education and professional opportunities, and help veterans with the claims process, and assist rural, disabled, and unemployed veterans with transportation needs. Moreover, the GIVE Act will recognize colleges and universities that are strongly engaged in service through grants and rewards that will in turn improve educational access in the United States.

I am pleased to see the Retention of my Language from the 110th Congress that gives special consideration to historically black colleges and universities, Hispanic-serving institutions, Tribal universities, and colleges serving predominantly minority populations. So strong are these universities' support of service, that ''veritas et beneficium,'' or ''truth and service'' in Latin, is inscribed on their insignias.

The GIVE Act will create a Campuses of Service Program that will encourage and assist students in pursuing public service careers. It will also focus on recruiting scientists and engineers to keep America competitive for years to come. The Act will expand the Senior Corps as a way to keep Older Americans including seniors engaged in public service, and will create a Youth Engagement Zone to increase the number of young students in volunteer services.

Moreover, it expands the focus of The National Civilian Community Corps to include disaster relief efforts and infrastructure improvement to allow quicker and more effective responses to disasters like Katrina and Ike that devastated numerous communities in the United States. Finally, the Give Act will launch a nation-wide Call to Service Campaign that encourages all Americans to engage in national service and to recognize September 11th as a National Day of Service and Remembrance.

I am honored to cosponsor this legislation that will add service before self to America's future leaders. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this legislation.

RECOGNIZING THE INAUGURAL NATURALIZATION CEREMONY OF THE CITIZENSHIP COUNTS ORGANIZATION

HON. HARRY E. MITCHELL

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2009

Mr. MITCHELL. Madam Speaker, I rise in recognition of the Citizenship Counts organization, whose inaugural naturalization ceremony is being held today to welcome new American citizens. The event's keynote speaker, Gerda Weissmann Klein, is one of very few living survivors of the Holocaust and the founder of Citizenship Counts. She has used her experiences to educate and inspire others in our community and all over the world.

Gerda's story is one of true bravery and heroism. She survived the perils of six concentration camps during the Holocaust and a 350-mile march through Eastern Europe before being liberated by Allied forces. In the many years since, Gerda has dedicated her life to being an advocate for the teaching of tolerance, empowerment, and respect through her extensive work with the Gerda and Kurt Klein Foundation and Citizenship Counts.

The Citizenship Counts organization motivates students through civics education and community service while bolstering pride in their citizenship. Through these programs, Citizenship Counts effectively promotes the ideal of American citizenship as a responsibility, and instills the strong moral values that Gerda has worked so tirelessly to uphold.

Madam Speaker, please join me in recognizing Citizenship Counts, an organization whose efforts have truly strengthened our community.

RECOGNIZING THE CELEBRATION OF NOWRUZ

HON. HENRY A. WAXMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2009

Mr. WAXMAN. Madam Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize Nowruz, a traditional Persian holiday taking place this week that celebrates the arrival of spring.

Dating back more than 3,000 years, Nowruz is observed by millions of people of Persian descent in the United States, Iran, Iraq, Central Asia, and many other regions of the world. The two-week holiday symbolizes renewal, health, happiness, and prosperity. The holiday's ecumenical values are celebrated by adherents of many religions including Islam, Judaism, Zorastrianism, and the Bahai'i faith. It is considered a special time to share with family and friends and honor cultural traditions.

Here in the United States, Nowruz serves to remind us of the many noteworthy and lasting contributions of Iranian-Americans to the social and economic fabric of American society. I am pleased to join Iranian-Americans in my congressional district and others around the country and around the world in honoring this special occasion.

FEDERAL MUNICIPAL BOND MARKETING SUPPORT AND SECURITIZATION ACT OF 2009

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2009

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Madam Speaker, today I introduced the Federal Municipal Bond Marketing Support and Securitization Act of 2009 to address the collateral damage suffered by our state and local governments as a result of the financial crisis. The nation's 55,000 issuers of tax-exempt bonds, including most state and local governments, continue to experience limited access to the capital markets due to the liquidity crisis despite the fact that municipal bonds have always been among the safest investments.

A municipal bond expert recently told me, pointedly, that it is a nightmare out there for those entities attempting to float bonds.

Prior to my election to Congress last November, I spent the last 14 years in local government as a member of the Board of Supervisors of Fairfax County, Virginia, the last five as Chairman. I oversaw a local government with an annual budget of $4.5 billion and a AAA rating from Wall Street's three main credit rating agencies. I understand state and local governments, and I believe they are the most effective engines for creating jobs on Main Street, whether by building new schools, fire stations and water treatment plants, or repairing our nation's ailing infrastructure and implementing our environmental agenda.

State and local governments issue debt for their myriad projects through the selling of bonds, and the municipal bond market was one of many victims of the financial meltdown last fall. After the fallout, investors and money fled from those bond markets to U.S. Treasury notes as a safe haven. As a result, the nation's 55,000 issuers of tax-exempt bonds, our state and local governments, are experiencing limited access to the capital markets due to the liquidity crisis despite the fact that ''munis'' are and always have been among the safest of investments.

Further complicating the issue is the fact that the private insurance market has virtually disappeared, eliminating a viable means of credit enhancement, which allows a small town water authority, for example, to attain the same credit-worthiness as a metropolitan transportation authority.

The drying up of bond markets and lack of insurance has created a double-whammy of steep shortfalls and tough financial choices for state and local governments. In light of this fiscal and capital crisis, legislation is needed to direct the Secretary of the Treasury to establish a program to provide direct credit enhancements or insurance for municipal bonds to help our state and local partners move forward on their shovel-ready projects.

House Financial Services Committee Chairman BARNEY FRANK agreed with me during a colloquy on the subject in mid-January in which he called states and municipalities among the most sympathetic victims of the economic turmoil. Since then, I have been consulting with Chairman FRANK, my colleagues, municipal governments and others who are active in the municipal bond market to craft a solution. What I proposed today may not provide the ultimate solution, but it provides a starting point to begin addressing this critical situation.

My legislation directs the Secretary of the Treasury and Federal Reserve Board to work together to strategically intervene in the municipal bond market to restore liquidity and spark local job creation. It gives the Treasury Secretary the authority, either directly or through the Federal Financing Bank, to provide credit enhancements or guarantees or to outright purchase municipal bonds. It calls on the Federal Reserve to exercise its authority to establish a credit facility for the express purpose of assisting our local and state partners. Of course, the method, source, timing and conditions of any new financing arrangement would be subject to Treasury's approval.

The federal government historically has been reluctant to interfere with the municipal markets, but I believe such concerns could be

addressed by imposing some reasonable limits and conditions on the nature and amount of assistance to minimize risk. Furthermore, municipal bonds historically have a solid performance rating with a low rate of default.

A basic measure for the public to have confidence that the recovery and reinvestment package is working will be the creation of jobs and the completion of physical projects. President Obama has set the goal of creating three to four million jobs. Unlike the financial services relief plan, in which the reward for our investment was largely unseen by the general public, expectations are high for tangible results—paychecks and progress—from this stimulus plan.

It is my firm belief that the primary vehicle for delivering on that promise will be our investments in state and local governments, but we first need to ensure that localities are ready to run with the ball once we make the hand-off. That will require immediate federal action to stabilize their fiscal situation and to revive the municipal bond market.

I believe this bill can help stabilize the municipal bond market, and I look forward to working with Chairman FRANK and other interested members in finding a solution to this serious problem.

FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION EXTENSION ACTS OF 2009

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 18, 2009

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 1512, To amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend the funding and expenditure authority of the Airport and Airway Trust Fund, and for other purposes, introduced by my distinguished colleague from New York, Representative CHARLES B. RANGEL. This important legislation will extend funding in order to improve transportation for Americans across the nation.

The costs of air travel have increased rapidly in the last few months. Airlines have not only increased the price of air fare, but they have been forced to put charges on extra baggage, cut flights, and lay off hundreds of employees. Air travel is essential, as it is beneficial environmentally, socially, and especially economically. Without the ability to travel by air cheaply and easily, the flow of people, goods, and ideas would substantially decrease.

If we do not extend funding to airline programs, many negative consequences will ensue, including cutting services, such as air traffic control, certification, and inspection, as well as the inability by the airlines to buy new equipment for the aging infrastructure.

It is obvious that something must be done to solve this pressing problem. It is necessary for airlines to look into 2 alternative means in order to increase their effectiveness. However, it is also necessary for the United States to fund several programs.

The Airport and Airway Trust Fund was established in 1970 "to provide for the expansion and improvement of the nation's airport and airway system." Since then, it has provided funds for the Federal Aviation Administration. Various pieces of legislation have come before the Congress to extend this fund, and yet partisanship has stalled these bills. It is necessary for us to extend this program in order to modernize our air traffic control system. NextGen, a state-of-the-art air traffic control system would allow control towers to pinpoint the exact locations of aircrafts, making the skies less chaotic, and air travel much more efficient.

Additionally, the extension of the Airport Improvement Program is necessary in order to improve safety and efficiency in our air travel. Airports are sites used by millions and millions of Americans every single day. It is vital that airports, travelers, and air flight personnel be secure, and thus it is important to continue to fund this program.

Even though air travel is obviously important, other forms of travel contribute to the nation as well. The Highway Trust Fund was created by the Highway Revenue Act of 1956 to ensure a dependable source of financing for the National System of Interstate and Defense Highways. This is the premier fund for government spending on highways, with approximately 45% of all highway spending coming from this fund. The Congressional Budget Office predicts the fund will run a deficit of $1.7 billion at the end of 2009 and $8.1 billion by the end of 2010. The Highway Trust Fund balance must be restored.

This bill will extend the taxes that fund The Airport and Airway Trust Fund, extend the expenditure authority of The Airport and Airway Trust Fund, extend the Airport Improvement Program, and restore the Highway Trust Fund balance. This is a vital bill for cities like Houston, Texas, which happens to have one of the top 10 airports in the Nation. I urge my fellow members of Congress to support H.R. 1512 in order to increase efficiency, safety, and functioning of our nation's transportation systems.

HONORING THE MEMORY OF J.W. ANDREWS, JR.

HON. JO BONNER

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2009

Mr. BONNER. Madam Speaker, the city of Jackson and, indeed, the entire State of Alabama recently lost a dear friend, and I rise today to honor J.W. Andrews, Jr., and pay tribute to his memory.

Born in Prestwick, Alabama, Mr. Andrews married Ida Virginia Tiggs Andrews in 1937, and the two were married nearly 55 years when she died. He began his career as a machine operator at a veneer mill before becoming an insurance agent for Unity Burial Life Insurance Co. in the early 1950s. By the end of the decade, he had become manager of the company as well as of the accompanying Unity Funeral Home. In the mid–1970s, Mr. Andrews and his wife purchased the funeral home, which became Andrews Funeral Home in 1986. The couple also owned Andrews Flower and Gift Shop.

During the 1960s, Mr. Andrews became active in both politics and the civil rights movement in Clarke County. He traveled to various communities holding voter registration classes, helping familiarize residents with the voter questionnaire used by the Board of Registrars. He was also a longtime president of the Clarke County Voters League, an organization formed to promote and protect the voting rights of African Americans.

Mr. Andrews was instrumental in the formation of several county commission and school board districts, which provided African Americans representation on those boards. In 1985, Mr. Andrews became one of the first two African Americans to be elected to serve on the Jackson City Council, a seat he held for 14 years. He was also the first African American to serve on the Clarke County Board of Education.

In recognition of his many achievements, the city of Jackson honored Mr. Andrews by rededicating State Highway 177 from the end of Commerce Street to U.S. 43 as the "J.W. Andrews Highway." In 1997, he was honored as the Civitan Club's 47th "Citizen of the Year."

Mr. Andrews was an active member of his church, St. Union Baptist Church in Jackson. He served as a deacon for more than 50 years as well as treasurer, Sunday school superintendent, and choir member. For more than 50 years, he served as host of the Sunday morning radio programs "Spiritual Time" and later "Early Morning Gospel" on WHOD–FM. He also served as an Alabama Democratic Conference chairman for more than 35 years.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in remembering a dedicated community leader and friend to many throughout south Alabama. J.W. Andrews, Jr., will be dearly missed by his family—his children, William Wesley Andrews, Sr., Hattie Virginia Sampson, Carl Gregory Andrews, and Harriette Andrews Douglas; his sister, Jessie Mae Jackson; his 11 grandchildren; his 22 great-grandchildren; and his seven great-great-grandchildren—as well as the countless friends he leaves behind.

Our thoughts and prayers are with them all during this difficult time.

IN HONOR OF OFFICER CHRISTOPHER TRUCILLO

HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2009

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Christopher Trucillo, Chief of Department of the Port Authority Police of New York & New Jersey. Chief Trucillo began his law enforcement career in 1978 as a municipal police officer in Harrison, New Jersey. He continued his career of public service by later joining the Port Authority Police Department in 1986. As an officer for the Port Authority, Chief Trucillo worked different operational, administrative, and investigative functions. On September 11, 2001 while assigned as the Commanding Officer of the Internal Affairs Bureau, Chief Trucillo responded to the World Trade Center disaster by mobilizing the members of his staff and accounting for all Port Authority Police personnel who responded. Under his leadership an irreplaceable connection was created between the families of those who were lost in the tragic events of 9/11 and the police department. Chief Trucillo was named the "2004 Boss of the Year" by the New York State Shields for "outstanding leadership and

commitment to law enforcement." He was also honored with the Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Police Defense Foundation. On January 6, 2009, he retired after thirty years of public service and dedication as a police officer. His years of valuable service and commitment are greatly appreciated and will certainly be remembered.

I would also like to enter into the RECORD this poem that was given to me about Chief Trucillo and his service as it is a fitting tribute to a dedicated public servant. The poem was written by Albert Caswell, a friend of Chief Trucillo.

TRUE

True . . .
To Be True!
In Life, and In Death . . . and In All You Do . . .
Jersey's Best . . .
This, and no less . . .
All In That Moment of Truth . . .
When death lies so close . . . right before you as the most . . .
A Father, A Husband . . . A Top Cop . . .
A Leader of Heroes, at the top . . .
Straight, as an arrow . . .
With a heart of girth . . .
Which, could not be stopped . . .
Kind and caring . . .
He's at the Top . . .
He's a Top Cop . . .
As on this night, for him . . . all of our tears are sharing . . .
Sharing, knowing . . . such men so glowing . . . are but few and far between . . .
Just Everything!
Who Are True!
As he touches all . . .
A Man, who in our hearts stand's so very tall . . .
For All of his Men and Women in Blue . . .
As his heart goes out to them . . . so calls . . .
All out there on That Thin Blue Line . . .
Quiet Heroes, living and reacting with death . . . all in micro seconds in time . . .
Giving all, until none lies left . . .
For What is Real, For What Is Really True . . .
For on this night, who will they save? Who will they bless?
As a cop lies dying . . . as their precious lives, they will give no less!
Being True!
As have all of those families who have lived with death . . .
All for them, over the years . . . so many sleepless nights, and the tears he's shed . . .
For all those who have died . . .
Consoling, all those husbands and wives . . .
Looking, into their children's eyes . . .
Being True, to all those lives . . . for them he cries . . .
Working his way up . . .
A Cop's Cop . . .
Walking out that door . . .
His family, not knowing for sure . . . if they'd ever see him any more . . .
For his job, Chris must be True!
In our lives, and in our times . . . in all we do . . .
The Greatest of all things . . . that a heart can be!
Is True!
Yes Chris . . . that's you . . . True!
True!

STOP AIDS IN PRISON ACT OF 2009

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 17, 2009

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1429, "Stop AIDS in Prison Act of 2009." I want to thank my colleague Congresswoman MAXINE WATERS of California for introducing this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly support H.R. 1429, which is designed to address the growing impact that HIV/AIDS is having on minority communities. According to the Black AIDS Institute, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) statistics reveal that African Americans account for half of all new HIV/AIDS cases. Racial and ethnic minorities comprise 69 percent of new cases, according to the 2005 data released by the CDC. African-American women account for the majority of new AIDS cases among women (67% in 2004); whereas white women account for 17% and Latinas 15%. The CDC estimates that 73% percent of all children born to HIV infected mothers in 2004 were African American. HIV/AIDS is now the leading cause of death among African Americans ages 25 to 44—deadlier than heart disease, accidents, cancer, and homicide.

The CDC reported that Hispanics accounted for 18% of new diagnoses reported in the 35 areas with long-term, confidential name-based HIV reporting in the United States, and that most Hispanic men were exposed to HIV through sexual contact with other men, followed by injection drug use and heterosexual contact; and that most Hispanic women were exposed to HIV through heterosexual contact, followed by injection drug use.

According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, African Americans made up 41 percent of all inmates in the prison system at the end of 2004. Since African Americans are disproportionately represented in jails and prisons, the Stop AIDS in Prison Bill is one way to begin addressing this problem.

The Stop AIDS in Prison Act of 2009 directs the Bureau of Prisons to develop a comprehensive policy to provide HIV testing, treatment, and prevention for inmates in federal prisons and upon reentry into the community. The bill would require initial testing and counseling of inmates upon entry into the prison system and then ongoing testing available up to once a year upon the request of the inmate, or sooner if an inmate is exposed to the HIV/AIDS virus or becomes pregnant. Furthermore, the Bureau of Prisons will be required to make HIV/AIDS counseling and treatment available to prisoners, and give testing and treatment referrals to prisoners prior to reentering the community. The bill protects the confidentiality of prisoners, and allows prisoners to refuse routine HIV testing.

Finally, the bill contains a requirement that the Bureau of Prisons report to Congress, no later than one year after enactment, the number of inmates who tested positive for HIV upon intake; the number of inmates who tested positive prior to reentry; the number of inmates who were not tested prior to reentry because they were released without sufficient notice; the number of inmates who opted-out of taking the test; the number of inmates who were tested following exposure incidents; and the number of inmates who were under treatment for HIV/AIDS.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 1429 because we must reverse these costly trends. Currently, the only cure we have for HIV/AIDS is prevention.

Had the bill gone through regularly and been marked up, I was planning on offering an amendment that would permit those infected with HIV to elect, on their own volition, to be housed separately from the general population as long as the prison had the facilities. This way, those infected with HIV could be housed in safety.

The HIV/AIDS pandemic is indeed a state of emergency in the African-American and Hispanic community. We must use all resources necessary to defeat this deadly enemy that continues to devastate the minority community. As Americans, we have a strong history, through science and innovation, of detecting, conquering and defeating many illnesses. We must and we will continue to fight HIV/AIDS until the battle is won.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly support H.R. 1429, "Stop AIDS in Prisons Act of 2009," and urge my colleagues to support it as well.

A TRIBUTE TO MAYOR HARRY L. BALDWIN OF SAN GABRIEL

HON. ADAM B. SCHIFF

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2009

Mr. SCHIFF. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Harry L. Baldwin, retiring as Mayor of the City of San Gabriel. Mayor Baldwin served on the City Council for seventeen years and was selected Mayor by his colleagues on the council for three terms. Mayor Baldwin's legacy in the City of San Gabriel and surrounding communities will endure for generations to come.

During his tenure, Mayor Baldwin worked vigorously and enthusiastically to promote and secure funds for many important projects. One of Mayor Baldwin's greatest accomplishments has been his work to obtain federal funding for the construction of grade separations and safety mitigation for the Alameda Corridor East Project. Over a decade of effort, nearly five hundred million dollars was acquired for this endeavor. Mayor Baldwin's service as President of the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments (COG) and Vice Chairman of the Alameda Corridor East Construction Authority (ACE) was crucial in securing this funding.

Promoting the interests of the region has been a high priority for Mayor Baldwin. While working on the City Council, he secured funds for park expansions and was essential to the formation of the San Gabriel Rivers and Mountains Conservancy. Additionally, public safety has always been a significant concern of Mayor Baldwin's. He was able to identify a pressing need in the city's Fire Department for expanded services and instituted a paramedic training program for the staff.

Mayor Baldwin and his wife Sally have lived in the Mission District for over forty-five years. The product of California public schools, he graduated from both Mark Keppel High School and UCLA. After graduating, Harry worked in the insurance business until just six years ago.

Before election to the City Council in 1992, Mr. Baldwin was president of the San Gabriel Chamber of Commerce. Since then, he has been actively involved with the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG). He served as President of the West San Gabriel Valley YMCA and is currently a board member of the Arthritis Foundation of Southern California, San Gabriel Valley Branch, in addition to being involved with many other organizations.

Mayor Baldwin has been a tireless advocate for the City of San Gabriel and the region as a whole. I ask all Members to join me in thanking Harry L. Baldwin for the years of selfless, dedicated service he has provided to the community.

IN RECOGNITION OF NOWRUZ, IRANIAN NEW YEAR

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2009

Mrs. MALONEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of Nowruz, which marks the traditional Iranian New Year and dates back more than 3,000 years. Nowruz, literally meaning "new day," celebrates the arrival of spring and occurs on the vernal equinox which this year happened on Friday, March 20th.

Through the ages Nowruz has provided the occasion for renewal and rejuvenation, displaying new resolve in settling old issues, and making new beginnings. Nowruz celebrates the core of our common humanity and our relation to Mother Nature. Although colored with vestiges of Iran's Mazdian and Zoroastrian past, Nowruz celebration is neither religious nor national in nature, nor is it an ethnic celebration. Muslim, Jewish, Zoroastrian, Baha'i, and Christian Iranians as well as many other peoples celebrate Nowruz with the same enthusiasm and sense of belonging.

As an original cosponsor of H. Res. 267, which recognizes the cultural and historical significance of Nowruz, I am pleased that we are using this occasion to reflect on the many contributions Iranian Americans have made to our society. I am proud of the ethnically diverse district that I represent and greatly appreciate all that Iranian Americans have added to the rich and varied culture of New York City.

Recognizing the cultural and historical significance of Nowruz and in its observance, I want to wish Iranian Americans and all those who observe this holiday a happy and prosperous new year.

HONORING THE LIFE AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF MS. BESSIE SWINDLE AND THE DEDICATION OF THE BESSIE SWINDLE COMMUNITY CENTER IN HOUSTON, TEXAS

HON. AL GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2009

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, today I am honored to recognize the life and contributions of a distinguished member of my Houston staff, a constituent and more importantly a friend who was honored on Saturday, March 21, 2009 with the naming of the Bessie Swindle Community Center in Houston, Texas.

A respected leader and activist, Ms. Swindle has committed her life to serving her community. Over the course of more than thirty years, she has endeavored to serve as the voice for those who have, over the years, found themselves in unfortunate and difficult circumstances. I believe her record of unselfish dedication to her city and community will serve as a bright light for those who dare to follow in her footsteps.

Ms. Bessie Swindle was born in Loreauville, Louisiana and transplanted to Houston. Currently, she is the Outreach Coordinator for Congressman AL GREEN of the 9th Congressional District of Texas. Ms. Swindle was appointed by Mayor Bill White to his Phone Tower Commission and is a former member of the Police Officers Civil Service Commission-City of Houston, which is responsible for reviewing HPD criminal activities.

During her distinguished lifetime of service, Ms. Swindle has earned numerous awards and honors. In 2004, she was a recipient of an Honorary Associate in Arts Degree from Houston Community College System.

Finally, Madam Speaker, I would be remiss if I did not thank Mayor Bill White, City Controller Annise Parker, and the distinguished members of the Houston City Council, including the Honorable Wanda Adams who sponsored this special tribute, for their foresight in honoring my friend, Ms. Bessie Swindle.

SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION EXTENSION

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 17, 2009

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 1541.

The Small Business Administration (SBA) was created in 1953, and has a current business loan portfolio of roughly 220,000 loans worth more than $50 billion, which makes it the largest single financial backer of U.S. businesses. My district is home to many of these businesses, many of which are struggling to hang tough in this trying economy.

In the 110th Congress, several short-term SBA authorization measures were enacted; the latest was signed into law on May 23, 2008. Under that law, authorization for SBA programs is scheduled to expire on March 20. I am hopeful that President Obama continues the recognition and support for small businesses that he demonstrated yesterday. His leadership, along with that of my colleague NYDIA VELÁZQUEZ on these issues could not come at a more important time.

Small business is frequently viewed as an incubator for employment and economic growth, and is a continuing legislative and oversight concern for Congress due to its constitutional role, through the interstate commerce and general welfare clauses, to promote economic well being and prosperity.

While many analysts believe a very significant percentage of the nation's jobs are created by small businesses, others note that a great many small businesses fail every year thereby eliminating jobs.

The 111th Congress is likely to consider many small business issues as it debates reauthorization for the many Small Business Administration (SBA) programs that are scheduled to expire in 2009. Our small business owners need certainty to plan for the future and I will continue to work hard for a more permanent solution to complement the authorizations that many businesses have to endure.

A primary issue in the reauthorization is likely to be the cost to the government of various small business assistance programs. The Bush Administration had proposed that certain loan programs be cut back or eliminated, that borrowers in the SBA's basic loan program be charged higher fees, and that interest rates for disaster loans rise to market levels after five years. I hope that a full review of these policies is underway by the new administration.

Ways to insure that small businesses benefit from economic stimulus programs are likely to be considered. Finding ways for small businesses to provide health insurance to employees could be vital in getting elements of the business community to be actively supporting and working with Congress as we press ahead with legislation on health care. I understand that we in Congress cannot run your businesses for you. I just want to be there to help fashion fair and reasonable legislation that affects small business.

Mr. Speaker, this bill authorizes Small Business Administration programs and authority through July 31 and again it is my hope that we continue to engage the business community as this Congress seeks to move America from recession back to prosperity.

NATIONAL CONSUMER COOPERATIVE BANK ACT AMENDMENTS OF 2009

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2009

Mrs. MALONEY. Madam Speaker, I rise to offer the National Consumer Cooperative Bank Act Amendments of 2009. This legislation makes a technical correction to the National Consumer Cooperative Bank Act of 1978.

The National Consumer Cooperative Bank Act of 1978 created the National Consumer Cooperative Bank, NCB, which is dedicated to strengthening communities nationwide through the delivery of banking and financial services, complemented by a special focus on cooperative expansion and economic development. The same Act established a non-profit corporation to reach further into low income communities and to serve disadvantaged populations. NCB Capital Impact is that non-profit, mission-driven subsidiary of NCB that works to provide housing, education, health care, cultural centers, small businesses and social services in economically distressed communities.

NCB Capital Impact has an impressive track record providing assistance to low- and moderate-income communities. Over time, NCB has invested $250 million for education facilities; helped finance 137,396 school seats; 33,132 units of multifamily homeownership or

other affordable housing and 8,900 affordable assisted living units for seniors and persons with disabilities; 2.9 million square feet of community health center space serving 350,300 patients annually, and helped created 25,000 jobs for low-income individuals.

Back in my district—the 14th district of New York—NCB Capital Impact has played a significant role in providing financing for much needed housing and community development projects. NCB has facilitated more than 600 loans in my district alone. Most of these loans are for housing, including affordable housing, as well as loans for community facilities and loans to non-profit organizations like the Council of New York Cooperatives and Condominiums. Together, these groups are able to provide assisted living, affordable housing and services to the frail and elderly.

Despite their good work in serving low-income communities and disadvantaged populations, NCB Capital Impact is not eligible for assistance authorized under the Community Development Banking and Financial Institutions Act of 1994, which is administered by the CDFI Fund. NCB Capital Impact meets all of the eligibility criteria on its own and without exception; however the Fund has ruled it cannot certify NCB Capital Impact as a CDFI because of the corporate structure of its parent NCB. In short, NCB Capital Impact is shut off from critical sources of financial awards that are needed to maintain their housing and community development efforts.

The interest of NCB Capital Impact in gaining CDFI certification is two-fold. First, it has a track record that is comparable to other organizations that received CDFI status; its mission is dedicated to working with low income populations and communities. Second, increasingly in the community development finance field, CDFI certification is viewed as a 'good housekeeping seal' of approval in working with other federal agencies and other private and public institutions.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this technical amendment to the NCB statute so that the non-profit, mission-driven NCB Capital Impact may continue to provide services to distressed and underserved communities throughout New York and the country at-large.

CONGRATULATING LADY TIGERS OF BENTON HARBOR HIGH SCHOOL

HON. FRED UPTON

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2009

Mr. UPTON. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Lady Tigers of Benton Harbor High School on their first ever state basketball championship. These outstanding young women have come a long way this past season and have made their community so very proud. It had been 25 years since the Lady Tigers last appeared in the Class A finals . . . and this time they emerged as champions!

Winning a state championship is something that will last a lifetime. It is a remarkable achievement that few teams in southwest Michigan ever experience, and it is a legacy that will live with the 2008–09 Lady Tigers forever. The Lady Tigers and Coach Harvey know what brought this state title back to Benton Harbor—hard work. It is doing that one extra sprint, that extra drill, shooting that extra free throw after practice that helped make the Lady Tigers champions. Nobody outworked the Tigers and nobody could beat them in the state tournament. And nobody had a greater following or more community support than our Lady Tigers.

It is an honor to pay tribute to the entire Lady Tiger squad: Olivia Askew, Damonica Buford, Tiara Greer-Allen, Andrea Ellis, Iesha Ellis, Deborah Meeks, Rashonda Pargo, Nyesha Winbush, and All-American Destiny Williams, who led the Lady Tigers with 31 points and added 21 rebounds. We salute all of you.

On behalf of all the residents of southwest Michigan, congratulations again to the Lady Tigers and Coach Harvey and the entire Benton Harbor community—you are an inspiration to us all. It is Tiger Pride at its finest. Go Tigers!

INTRODUCTION OF THE PAY FOR PERFORMANCE ACT

HON. ALAN GRAYSON

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2009

Mr. GRAYSON. Madam Speaker, tonight I am proud to introduce the Pay for Performance Act of 2009.

Madam Speaker, this bill is based on two simple concepts. One, no one has the right to get rich off taxpayer money. And two, no one should get rich off abject failure.

An economy in which a bank executive can line his own pocket by destroying his company with risky bets is an economy that will spiral downwards. And a government that hands out money to such executives is a government that fails to protect the taxpayers.

Our job is to act on behalf of taxpayers to fix our economy, and we do so tonight with this bill.

Madam Speaker, the U.S. Government spent $170 billion to stabilize AIG, and it now owns 80% of that company. Yet recently, AIG paid more than $165 million in bonuses to 73 employees with this taxpayer money. That is like paying an arsonist to put out his own fires.

The restrictions in this bill apply only to financial institutions that have taken capital investments from the taxpayer, and they are commonsense restrictions. Pay can't be excessive or unreasonable, and bonuses must be based on performance standards. And if the banks want to avoid these common-sense restrictions, there's a very simple solution—just pay the bailout money back to the government, as so many banks claim they want to do. I know the taxpayers in my district will take it back happily.

As I asked the CEO of AIG when he came to testify before the Financial Services committee, is it more important to protect bank executives who have lost billions of dollars, or to protect us? The answer to that question is now before this body.

I know which side I'm on.

I encourage my colleagues to cosponsor this important bill.

CONGRATULATING MAYOR SAM JONES FOR BEING NAMED MOBILIAN OF THE YEAR

HON. JO BONNER

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2009

Mr. BONNER. Madam Speaker, it is with great pride and pleasure that I rise today to honor Mobile Mayor Sam Jones on the occasion of being named Mobilian of the Year for 2008 by the Cottage Hill Civitan Club. The Mobilian of the Year is the city's most prestigious civic honor, and Mayor Jones is most deserving of this award in recognition of his tireless efforts on behalf of the Port City.

A native of Mobile, Mayor Jones graduated from Central High School in Mobile. He attended Florida Junior College and Jacksonville University in Florida before enrolling at the Alabama Interdenominational Seminary, where he was awarded an honorary doctorate.

Mayor Jones started his career in the U.S. Navy where he served for nine years. He served on the USS *Forrestal* where he was a flight deck troubleshooter for A–7 aircraft, an equal opportunity officer, race relations education specialist, and community services coordinator.

From 1980 until 1987, Mayor Jones was executive director of Mobile Community Action, Inc., where he oversaw a 240–person staff and a $5 million annual budget. He then served as a Mobile County Commissioner for four terms.

In 2005, Sam Jones was elected as the first African American mayor of Mobile. Mobile's Press-Register recently editorialized that "Mobile's first African American mayor has demonstrated to the nation that Mobile is a progressive and inclusive Southern city where all residents have the opportunity for public service."

Mayor Jones is a man known for working 10–12 hour days, including weekends, and is rarely one to take a vacation. As captain of the city of Mobile, Mayor Jones has done yeoman's work helping to recruit several significant economic projects to Mobile, including the biggest economic development project in the history of our state, ThyssenKrupp's $4 billion state-of-the-art steel plant.

Mayor Jones has an obvious love for Mobile. He has served as the past president of the Association of County Commissions of Alabama; a former member of the National Association of Counties Board of Directors; the National Association of Counties Election Reform Steering Committee; co-chair of Renewal 90 Educational Initiative; steering committee member of the 1988, 1992 and 2000 Education Funding Referendum Initiatives; former member of the Alabama Sentencing Commission; judge, Alabama Court of the Judiciary; former member of the Judicial Inquiry Commission; past member of the Alabama Port Authority; former member of the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors; former board member of the United Way of Southwest Alabama and 1998 chairman of a $7 million campaign for the organization; founder of the Mobile County Community Development Partnership; founder, Prichard Federal Credit Union; former chair of Envision Mobile/Baldwin; member, Underage Drinking Task Force; member, 100 Black Men, Mobile

Chapter; and director of Christian Education and Sunday School Superintendent for Macedonia Missionary Baptist Church.

He also currently serves on the boards of several organizations, including the University of South Alabama, the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission, the Mobile United Steering Committee, the Mobile Senior Bowl Committee, the MLK Redevelopment Corporation, the Mobile County Governmental Utilities, Mobile County Communication District, Volunteers of America, and Maritime Center of the Gulf of Mexico. He also serves as chair of the Metropolitan Planning Organization and is an emeritus member of the Community Foundation of Southwest Alabama.

Madam Speaker, I would like to offer my personal congratulations to Mayor Sam Jones for being named the Mobilian of the Year for 2008 and in so doing recognize him for his many outstanding accomplishments.

I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating a dedicated professional and friend to many throughout south Alabama. I know his many friends and colleagues join me in praising his accomplishments and extending thanks for his many efforts over the years on behalf of the city of Mobile and the entire state.

RECOGNIZING ZEIDERS ENTERPRISES CELEBRATING TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OF BUSINESS

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2009

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the contributions of Zeiders Enterprises over the 25 years since its founding in Prince William County, Virginia. The more than 700 staff members of Zeiders Enterprises provide services and assistance to more than 1.5 million military and family members at nearly 50 military installations worldwide each year.

Zeiders employees serve in crucial roles as clinical counselors, victim advocates, new parent support specialists, financial counselors, transition specialists, and relocation specialists. Through these activities, Zeiders Enterprises has made a direct, positive difference in the lives of individuals, families, their communities, and the organizations in which they serve. Especially noteworthy is the role that Zeiders plays in supporting the special needs of military service members and their families. Zeiders Enterprises is a founding sponsor of The Quality of Life Foundation, whose mission is to honor and serve our severely injured combat service members and their families by helping them face the life-changing challenges unique to their situations.

Employees at Zeiders contribute outside the workplace through extensive volunteer service. This volunteer support of the American Red Cross, Peace Corps, local schools, youth development programs, mentoring programs, victim advocate programs, youth sports programs, community orchestras, volunteer fire and rescue departments, and military service in National Guard and Reserve occurs in Prince William County, Virginia, and across the nation where Zeiders employees live and work. The consistent contributions of Zeiders employees to the communities in which they serve are truly impressive.

A culture of public services emanates from the top of the Zeiders Enterprises organization. Michael Zeiders, president and CEO, serves the citizens of Prince William County and Virginia as an active member of both the Northern Virginia Workforce Investment Board and the SkillSource Group Board. Under his leadership, Zeiders Enterprises is an active partner in the community. Additionally, Mr. Zeiders has supported families of Wounded Warriors nationwide through the Quality of Life Foundation.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join with me today to congratulate Zeiders Enterprises on its 25th anniversary and to pay tribute to the significant contributions its employees have made in improving the lives of our brave men and women who serve this great country.

AUTHORIZING PILOT PROGRAM FOR PATENT CASES

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 17, 2009

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 629, the ''Patent Judges Pilot Program in Certain District Courts.'' I urge my colleagues to support this bill. This bill will provide more expertise in skill in a difficult area of law: patent law. Americans hold the patents and patent law as important, integral to our very lives. Patents reward ingenuity and creativity.

As the Blackberry litigation demonstrated, deficiencies in the current system have the ability to paralyze America. Indeed, the New York Times noted that ''[something] has gone very wrong with the United States patent system.'' The Financial Times opined that ''[i]t is time to restore the balance of power in U.S. patent law.'' Indeed, there has been a cry for change in the patent system and increased expertise for many years now.

The Constitution mandates that we ''promote the progress of science and the useful arts . . . by securing for limited times to . . . inventors the exclusive right to their . . . discoveries.'' In order to fulfill the Constitution's mandate, we, as Members of Congress, must examine the system periodically to determine whether there may be flaws in the system that may hamper innovation, including the problems described as decreased patent quality, prevalence of subjective elements in patent practice, patent abuse, and lack of qualified persons to study patent law.

H.R. 628 attempts to correct some of these problems.

H.R. 628 creates a pilot program to increase the expertise of U.S. District Court judges who wish to hear cases that involve issues related to patents or plant variety protection. The bill provides for the designation of not less than 6 United States district courts in at least 3 different circuits to take part in the pilot program. In the designated courts, judges who elect to hear patent or plant variety protection cases will be designated to do so by the chief judge. Cases will be assigned randomly, but undesignated judges may decline to accept patent and plant variety protection cases. The bill authorizes the expenditure of not less than $5 million per year for up to 10 years to pay for the educational and professional development of designated judges, and for compensation for law clerks with technical expertise related to patent and plant variety protection cases to be appointed by the designated courts.

The high cost of patent litigation is widely publicized. It is not unusual for a patent suit to cost each party upwards of $10 million. Appeals from United States district courts to the Federal Circuit are frequent, in part because of the perception within the patent community that most district court judges are not sufficiently prepared to adjudicate complex, technical patent cases. In 2008, 45 percent of the patent cases that were appealed to the Federal Circuit were reversed in whole or in part or vacated and remanded. This bill seeks to promote consistency among United States district courts by increasing the expertise of district court judges, thus providing for more certainty in intellectual property protection.

Taken together, these improvements would bring the American patent system up to speed for the twenty-first century. Instead of remaining a hindrance to innovation and economic growth, the patent system should work for inventors, ensuring America's patent system remains the best in the world and prevents risks to innovation.

I am encouraged by this bill, and I am hopeful that minorities and women take advantage of this pilot program. The patent judges pilot program and pilot program for law clerks provides for the educational and professional development of the designated district judges in matters relating to patent and plant variety protection, and for compensating law clerks with expertise in technical matters arising in patent and plant variety protection cases. This is yet another step that America is taking to ensure that its patent system is the best in the world. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Title IV of Senate Resolution 4, agreed to by the Senate on February 4, 1977, calls for establishment of a system for a computerized schedule of all meetings and hearings of Senate committees, subcommittees, joint committees, and committees of conference. This title requires all such committees to notify the Office of the Senate Daily Digest—designated by the Rules Committee—of the time, place, and purpose of the meetings, when scheduled, and any cancellations or changes in the meetings as they occur.

As an additional procedure along with the computerization of this information, the Office of the Senate Daily Digest will prepare this information for printing in the Extensions of Remarks section of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on Monday and Wednesday of each week.

Meetings scheduled for Tuesday, March 24, 2009 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

MARCH 25

9:30 a.m.

Foreign Relations

To hold hearings to examine the nomination of Christopher R. Hill, of Rhode Island, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Career Minister, to be Ambassador of the United States of America to the Republic of Iraq.

SD–419

Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

To hold hearings to examine Southern border violence, focusing on homeland security threats, vulnerabilities, and responsibilities.

SD–342

Judiciary

To hold oversight hearing to examine the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

SH–216

Veterans' Affairs

To hold hearings to examine State-of-the-Art information technology (IT) solutions for Veterans' Affairs benefits delivery.

SR–418

9:45 a.m.

Commerce, Science, and Transportation

Aviation Operations, Safety, and Security Subcommittee

To hold hearings to examine Federal Aviation Administration reauthorization, focusing on NextGen and the benefits of modernization.

SR–253

10 a.m.

Appropriations

Defense Subcommittee

To hold hearings to examine the President's proposed budget request for fiscal year 2010 for National Guard and Reserve.

SD–192

Environment and Public Works

To hold hearings to examine transportation investment.

SD–406

10:30 a.m.

Small Business and Entrepreneurship

To hold hearings to examine the President's proposed budget request for fiscal year 2010 for the Small Business Administration.

SR–428A

Aging

To hold hearings to examine an update from the Alzheimer's Study Group.

SD–106

2 p.m.

Energy and Natural Resources

Energy Subcommittee

To hold hearings to examine how to improve energy market transparency and regulation.

SD–366

2:30 p.m.

Budget

Business meeting to markup the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2010.

SD–608

Foreign Relations

To hold hearings to examine foreign policy and the global economic crisis.

SD–419

Finance

Health Care Subcommittee

To hold hearings to examine the role of long-term care in health reform.

SD–215

Armed Services

Personnel Subcommittee

To hold hearings to examine reserve component programs of the Department of Defense.

SR–232A

MARCH 26

9:30 a.m.

Armed Services

To hold hearings to examine the nominations of Ashton B. Carter, of Massachusetts, to be Under Secretary for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics, James N. Miller, Jr., of Virginia, to be Deputy Under Secretary for Policy, and Alexander Vershbow, of the District of Columbia, to be Assistant Secretary for International Security Affairs, all of the Department of Defense.

SH–215

Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

To continue hearings to examine enhancing investor protection and the regulation of securities markets.

SD–538

Energy and Natural Resources

To hold hearings to examine legislation to strengthen American manufacturing through improved industrial energy efficiency.

SD–366

Foreign Relations

To hold hearings to examine the nomination of Karl Winfrid Eikenberry, of Florida, to be Ambassador of the United States of America to the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Department of State.

SD–419

10 a.m.

Budget

Business meeting to continue a markup of the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2010.

SD–608

Environment and Public Works

To hold hearings to examine the nominations of Jonathan Z. Cannon, of Virginia, to be Deputy Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, and Thomas L. Strickland, of Colorado, to be Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife, Department of the Interior.

SD–406

Finance

To hold hearings to examine middle income tax relief.

SD–215

Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

To hold hearings to examine the nomination of Jane Holl Lute, of New York, to be Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security.

SD–342

Judiciary

Business meeting to consider S. 515, to amend title 35, United States Code, to provide for patent reform, and the nominations of Tony West, of California, Lanny A. Breuer, of the District of Columbia, and Christine Anne Varney, of the District of Columbia, each to be an Assistant Attorney General, all of the Department of Justice.

SD–226

10:30 a.m.

Commerce, Science, and Transportation

To hold hearings to examine health insurance industry practices.

SR–253

2 p.m.

Armed Services

Airland Subcommittee

To hold hearings to examine current and future roles, missions, and capabilities of United States military land power.

SR–222

2:30 p.m.

Foreign Relations

To hold hearings to examine the nomination of Rose Eilene Gottemoeller, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of State for Verification and Compliance.

SD–419

Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

To hold hearings to examine the nomination of John Berry, of the District of Columbia, to be Director of the Office of Personnel Management.

SD–342

Intelligence

To hold closed hearings to examine certain intelligence matters.

SH–219

MARCH 31

9:30 a.m.

Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry

To hold hearings to examine Federal school meal programs, focusing on nutrition for kids in schools.

SR–328A

10 a.m.

Commerce, Science, and Transportation

To continue hearings to examine health insurance industry practices.

SR–253

Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce, and the District of Columbia Subcommittee

To hold hearings to examine the Office of the Chief Financial Officer, focusing on the progress it has made since the financial crisis of the 1990s, the financial management challenges in the years ahead, and the steps that are being taken to address those challenges.

SD–342

APRIL 1

10 a.m.

Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

Business meeting to consider pending calendar business.

SD–430

Veterans' Affairs

To hold hearings to examine the nomination of W. Scott Gould, of the District of Columbia, to be Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

SR–418

Daily Digest

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S3583–S3619

Measures Introduced: Eight bills and three resolutions were introduced, as follows: S. 664–671, S. Res. 81–82, and S. Con. Res. 12. **Page S3609**

Measures Reported:

Report to accompany S. 386, to improve enforcement of mortgage fraud, securities fraud, financial institution fraud, and other frauds related to federal assistance and relief programs, for the recovery of funds lost to these frauds. (S. Rept. No. 111–10)

S. 256, to enhance the ability to combat methamphetamine. **Page S3609**

Measures Passed:

Commending the Columbus Crew Major League Soccer Team: Committee on the Judiciary was discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 61, commending the Columbus Crew Major League Soccer Team for winning the 2008 Major League Soccer Cup, and the resolution was then agreed to. **Pages S3618–19**

188th Anniversary of the Independence of Greece: Senate agreed to S. Res. 82, recognizing the 188th anniversary of the independence of Greece and celebrating Greek and American democracy. **Page S3619**

Measures Considered:

Generations Invigorating Volunteerism and Education Act—Agreement: Senate resumed consideration of the motion to proceed to consideration of H.R. 1388, to reauthorize and reform the national service laws. **I11Pages S3592–S3601**

During consideration of this measure today, Senate also took the following action:

By 74 yeas to 14 nays (Vote No. 108), three-fifths of those Senators duly chosen and sworn, having voted in the affirmative, Senate agreed to the motion to close further debate on the motion to proceed to consideration of the bill. **Pages S3600–01**

A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing for further consideration of the motion to proceed to consideration of the bill at approximately 11 a.m., on Tuesday, March 24, 2009, and that the post-cloture time continue to run during any period of morning business, recess, or adjournment of the Senate; provided further, that the remaining provisions of the previous order continue to be in effect. **Page S3619**

Appointments:

Health Information Technology Policy Committee: The Chair, on behalf of the Majority Leader, pursuant to Public Law 111–5, appointed the following individual to the Health Information Technology Policy Committee: Dr. Frank Nemec of Nevada. **Page S3619**

Advisory Committee on the Records of Congress: The Chair, announced on behalf of the Secretary of the Senate, pursuant to Public Law 101–509, the appointment of Sheryl B. Vogt, of Georgia, to the Advisory Committee on the Records of Congress. **Page S3619**

Nominations Received: Senate received the following nominations:

Julius Genachowski, of the District of Columbia, to be a Member of the Federal Communications Commission for a term of five years from July 1, 2008.

Joe Leonard, Jr., of the District of Columbia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Agriculture.

Kristina M. Johnson, of Maryland, to be Under Secretary of Energy.

Cynthia J. Giles, of Rhode Island, to be an Assistant Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

Lael Brainard, of the District of Columbia, to be an Under Secretary of the Treasury.

Harold Hongju Koh, of Connecticut, to be Legal Adviser of the Department of State.

Johnnie Carson, of Illinois, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (African Affairs). **Page S3619**

Messages from the House: **Page S3609**

Measures Placed on the Calendar: **Pages S3583, S3609**

Enrolled Bills Presented: **Page S3609**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages S3609–11**

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: Pages S3611–18

Additional Statements: Pages S3608–09

Privileges of the Floor: Page S3618

Record Votes: One record vote was taken today. (Total—108) Pages S3600–01

Adjournment: Senate convened at 2 p.m. and adjourned at 7:10 p.m., until 10 a.m. on Tuesday, March 24, 2009. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Majority Leader in today's Record on page S3619.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

No committee meetings were held.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 18 public bills, H.R. 1659–1676; and 4 resolutions, H. Con. Res. 77; and H. Res. 274–276 were introduced. Pages H3747–48

Additional Cosponsors: Pages H3748–49

Reports Filed: Reports were filed today as follows:

H.R. 1107, to enact certain laws relating to public contracts as title 41, United States Code, "Public Contracts" (H. Rept. 111–42);

H.R. 479, to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide a means for continued improvement in emergency medical services for children, with an amendment (H. Rept. 111–43);

H.R. 1246, to amend the Public Health Service Act regarding early detection, diagnosis, and treatment of hearing loss (H. Rept. 111–44);

H.R. 307, to enhance and further research into paralysis and to improve rehabilitation and the quality of life for persons living with paralysis and other physical disabilities (H. Rept. 111–45);

H.R. 577, to establish a grant program to provide vision care to children, with an amendment (H. Rept. 111–46);

H.R. 756, to amend the Public Health Service Act with respect to pain care (H. Rept. 111–47); and

H.R. 20, to provide for research on, and services for individuals with, postpartum depression and psychosis, with an amendment (H. Rept. 111–48). Page H3747

Speaker: Read a letter from the Speaker wherein she appointed Representative Edwards (MD) to act as Speaker Pro Tempore for today. Page H3709

Recess: The House recessed at 12:58 p.m. and reconvened at 2 p.m. Page H3712

Suspensions: The House agreed to suspend the rules and pass the following measures:

Expressing the need for enhanced public awareness of traumatic brain injury and support for the designation of a National Brain Injury Awareness Month: H. Res. 178, to express the need for enhanced public awareness of traumatic brain injury and support for the designation of a National Brain Injury Awareness Month; Pages H3713–15

Stan Lundine Post Office Building Designation Act: H.R. 918, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 300 East 3rd Street in Jamestown, New York, as the "Stan Lundine Post Office Building", by a ⅔ yea-and-nay vote of 396 yeas with none voting "nay", Roll No. 145; and Pages H3715–16, H3717–18

Lance Corporal Drew W. Weaver Post Office Building Designation Act: H.R. 1218, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 112 South 5th Street in Saint Charles, Missouri, as the "Lance Corporal Drew W. Weaver Post Office Building", by a ⅔ recorded vote of 399 ayes with none voting "no", Roll No. 146. Pages H3716–17 H3718

Recess: The House recessed at 2:42 p.m. and reconvened at 6:30 p.m. Page H3717

Privileged Resolution—Intent to Offer: Representative Flake announced his intent to offer a privileged resolution. Page H3719

Discharge Petition: Representative Latta moved to discharge the Committee on House Administration and the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform from the consideration of H.R. 581, to eliminate automatic pay adjustments for Members of Congress, and for other purposes (Discharge Petition No. 1).

Senate Message: Message received from the Senate by the Clerk and subsequently presented to the House today appears on page H3713.

Quorum Calls—Votes: One yea-and-nay vote and one recorded vote developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H3717–18 and H3718. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 12:30 p.m. and adjourned at 10:56 p.m.

Committee Meetings

STATE/LOCAL FINANCIAL LAW ENFORCEMENT

Committee on Financial Services: On March 20, the Committee held a hearing entitled ''Federal and State Enforcement of Financial Consumer and Investor Protection Laws.'' Testimony was heard from Elizabeth A. Duke, Governor, Board of Governors, Federal Reserve System; the following officials of the Department of the Treasury: John C. Dugan, Comptroller of the Currency; and Scott Polakoff, Acting Director, Office of Thrift Supervision; Elisse B. Walter, Commissioner, SEC; Martin J. Gruenberg, Vice Chairman, FDIC; the following officials of the Department of Justice: Rita Glavin, Acting Assistant Attorney General, Criminal Division; and John Pistole, Deputy Director, FBI; William Francis Galvin, Secretary, State of Massachusetts; Lisa Madigan, Attorney General, State of Illinois; Sarah Bloom Raskin, Commissioner, Office of Financial Regulation, State of Maryland; James B. Ropp, Securities Commissioner, Department of Justice, State of Delaware; and a public witness.

CENSUS 2010

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform: Subcommittee on Information Policy, Census and National Archives held a hearing on Census 2010: Assessing the Bureau's Strategy for Reducing the Undercount of Hard-to-Count Populations. Testimony was heard from Robert Goldenkoff, Director, Strategic Issues, GAO; Thomas L. Mesenbourg, Acting Director; Bureau of the Census, Department of Commerce; Stacey Cumberbatch, City Census Coordinator, City of New York; and a public witness.

GSA COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE CREDIT CRUNCH

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure: On March 20, the Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management held a hearing on the Serious Commercial Real Estate Credit Crunch and GSA: Leasing and Building During an Economic Crisis. Testimony was heard from Samuel J. Morris, Assistant Commissioner—Office of Real Estate Acquisition, Public Building Service, GSA; and public witnesses.

Joint Meetings

No joint committee meetings were held.

NEW PUBLIC LAWS

(For last listing of Public Laws, see DAILY DIGEST, *p. D261)*

H.R. 1127, to extend certain immigration programs. Signed on March 20, 2009. (Public Law 111–9)

H.R. 1541, to provide for an additional temporary extension of programs under the Small Business Act and the Small Business Investment Act of 1958. Signed on March 20, 2009. (Public Law 111–10)

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR TUESDAY, MARCH 24, 2009

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

Committee on Armed Services: to hold hearings to examine United States European Command and United States Joint Forces Command; with the possibility of a closed session following in SR–222, 9:30 a.m., SH–216.

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs: to continue hearings to examine modernizing bank supervision and regulation, 10 a.m., SD–538.

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: to hold hearings to examine the nomination of Thomas L. Strickland, of Colorado, to be Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife, Department of the Interior, 2:30 p.m., SD–366.

Committee on Environment and Public Works: Subcommittee on Clean Air and Nuclear Safety, to hold hearings to examine Three Mile Island, focusing on lessons learned over the past 30 years, 10:30 a.m., SD–406.

Committee on Foreign Relations: to hold hearings to examine alleviating global hunger, focusing on challenges and opportunities for United States leadership, 9:30 a.m., SD–419.

Full Committee, to hold hearings to examine the nominations of Richard Rahul Verma, of Maryland, to be Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Melanne Verveer, of the District of Columbia, to be Ambassador at Large for Women's Global Issues, and Esther Brimmer, of the District of Columbia, to be Assistant Secretary for International Organization Affairs, all of the Department of State, 2:30 p.m., SD–419.

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions: to hold hearings to examine addressing insurance market reform in national health reform, 10 a.m., SD–430.

Committee on the Judiciary: Subcommittee on Administrative Oversight and the Courts, to hold hearings to examine abusive credit card practices and bankruptcy, 10 a.m., SD–226.

Select Committee on Intelligence: to hold closed hearings to examine certain intelligence matters, 2:30 p.m., SH–219.

House

Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies, on Federal Law Enforcement Response to U.S.-Mexico Border Violence, 2 p.m., H–309 Capitol.

Committee on Armed Services, hearing on security development in the areas of responsibility of the U.S. Pacific Command, U.S. European Command, and U.S. Forces Korea, 1 p.m., 2118 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Military Personnel and the Subcommittee on Terrorism, Unconventional Threats and Capabilities, joint hearing on Department of Defense Health Information Technology: AHTLA is ''Intolerable,'' Where Do We Go From Here? 10 a.m., 2118 Rayburn.

Committee on Education and Labor, Subcommittee on Health, Employment, Labor and Pensions, hearing on Retirement Security: The Importance of an Independent Investment Adviser, 10:30 a.m., 2175 Rayburn.

Committee on Commerce, Trade, and Consumer Protection, hearing on Consumer Credit and Debt: The Role of the Federal Trade Commission in Protecting the Public, 10 a.m., 2123 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Health, hearing on Making Health Care Work for American Families: Improving Access to Care, 10 a.m., 2322 Rayburn.

Committee on Financial Services, hearing entitled ''Oversight of the Federal Government's Intervention at American International Group,'' 10 a.m., 2128 Rayburn.

Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia, hearing on Update on Lebanon, 2 p.m., 2172 Rayburn.

Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Commercial and Administrative Law, hearing on H.R. 1478, Carmelo Rodriguez Military Medical Accountability Act of 2009, 2 p.m., 2141 Rayburn.

Committee on Natural Resources, Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources and the Subcommittee on Insular Affair, Oceans and Wildlife, joint oversight hearing entitled ''Energy Development on the Outer Continental Shelf and the Future of our Oceans,'' 10 a.m., 1324 Longworth.

Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands, hearing on the following bills: H.R. 689, To interchange the administrative jurisdiction of certain Federal lands between the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management; H.R. 1078, Harriet Tubman National Historical Park and Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Historical Park Act; and H.R. 1275, Utah Recreational Land Exchange Act of 2009, 10 a.m., 1334 Longworth.

Committee on Rules, to consider the following measures: H.R. 1404, Federal Land Assistance, Management and Enhancement (FLAME) Act; and a resolution Providing for consideration of the Senate Amendments to (H.R. 146) Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009, 2:30 p.m., H–313 Capitol.

Committee on Science and Technology, Subcommittee on Energy and Environment, hearing to Examine Federal Vehicle Technology Research and Development Programs, 10 a.m., 2318 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Research and Science Education, hearing on Coordination of International Science Partnerships, 2 p.m., 2318 Rayburn.

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation, hearing on Overview of Coast Guard Acquisition Policies and Programs, 10 a.m., 2167 Rayburn.

Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs, hearing on the Nexus between Engaged in Combat with the Enemy and PTSD in an Era of Changing Warfare Tactics, 2 p.m., 334 Cannon.

Committee on Ways and Means, Subcommittee on Social Security and the Subcommittee on Income Security and Family Support, joint hearing on Eliminating the Social Security Disability Backlog, 10:30 a.m., 1100 Longworth.

Subcommittee on Trade, hearing on Trade Aspects of Climate Change Legislation, 2 p.m., 1100 Longworth.

Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, executive, briefing on SRP, 1 p.m., HVC.

Next Meeting of the SENATE

10 a.m., Tuesday, March 24

Senate Chamber

Program for Tuesday: After the transaction of any morning business (not to extend beyond one hour), Senate will continue consideration of the motion to proceed to consideration of H.R. 1388, Generations Invigorating Volunteerism and Education Act.

(Senate will recess from 12:30 p.m. until 2:15 p.m. for their respective party conferences.)

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

10:30 a.m., Tuesday, March 24

House Chamber

Program for Tuesday: Consideration of the following suspensions: (1) H.R. 1617—Department of Homeland Security Component Privacy Officer Act of 2009; (2) H.R. 1148—To require the Secretary of Homeland Security to conduct a program in the maritime environment for the mobile biometric identification of suspected individuals, including terrorists, to enhance border security; (3) H.R. 730—Nuclear Forensics and Attribution Act; (4) H. Res. 273—Recognizing the 188th anniversary of the independence of Greece and celebrating Greek and American democracy; (5) H. Res. 234—Expressing support for designation of a ''Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day''; (6) H. Res. 182—Expressing support for designation of the week of March 1 through March 8, 2009, as ''School Social Work Week''; (7) S. 520—The ''Stanley J. Roszkowski United States Courthouse'' Designation Act; and (8) S. 383—Special Inspector General for the Troubled Asset Relief Program Act of 2009.

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