

claimed to be members of the Punjab Taliban. The victims are members of a minority Muslim sect, who, as a result of their beliefs, have been branded heretics who should be killed.

I urge my colleagues to join with me to condemn this hateful act and to express our sincerest condolences to the families of those killed and to those still living in fear in Pakistan because of their sincerely held beliefs. These cowardly assaults on people of prayer are attacks against people of all faiths, and these assaults cannot be tolerated.

It is time to pass House Resolution 764, which expresses the importance of interreligious dialogue and the protection of religious freedom and related human rights for persons of all faiths and nationalities in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

HOLDING BIG OIL ACCOUNTABLE

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

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Madam Speaker, the Republican Party's mantra of "drill, baby, drill" dropped from sight almost as fast as the Deepwater Horizon oil rig. Yet the fact is, while this was the worst ecological catastrophe in American history and an accident, it was also an inevitability. It was inevitable because, for 8 years, the Cheney-Bush administration allowed Big Oil to operate with almost complete disregard for the protection of our environment.

So I am proud of the fact that President Obama and the Democratic Party are now holding BP accountable for all of the costs of the cleanup and for the devastating impact on the local economy in the gulf. I am also proud of the fact that they are holding Big Oil accountable to explore and produce domestic energy on already leased lands at competitive prices in a clean and safe manner.

The gulf coast catastrophe underscores the need for comprehensive energy and climate reform to rein in Big Oil and to reduce our reliance on dirty fossil fuels and foreign sources of oil. It is what the Democratic Party wants. More importantly, it is what the American people need and want. Let's pass an energy reform bill now.

HEALTH INSURANCE REFORM

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

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Madam Speaker, just months ago, the President signed the historic health care reform law, and thanks to the Affordable Health Care Act, Americans are already seeing benefits from the reform.

First, our seniors on Medicare part D have begun receiving \$250 rebate checks when they fall into the doughnut hole so that they are receiving help

when they most need it. Second, the new law requires that health care insurers offer dependent coverage to allow children, up to age 26, to remain on their parents' policies, and that plan has been implemented by most policies.

Just today, the Department of Health and Human Services announced it would begin accepting applications for the Early Retiree Reinsurance Program to help early retirees get affordable coverage. Later this summer, Americans with preexisting conditions will be able to get insurance at affordable rates.

Now, we know that there are some who want to repeal all of these provisions and who want to take these benefits away from American families, but we remain dedicated to health care reform, which has expanded coverage to all Americans, and we are going to make sure that the law remains in effect.

TAMPA POLICE OFFICERS FATALLY SHOT

(Ms. CASTOR of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today on behalf of my community and home in Tampa, Florida, to mourn the deaths of two Tampa police officers who were fatally shot in the line of duty early this morning.

Officers David Curtis and Jeffrey Kocab simply were doing their jobs when they pulled over a car in what appeared to be a routine traffic stop at 2:15 a.m. this morning, but someone in the car was wanted on an arrest warrant. Demonstrating just how truly dangerous these jobs are for those who protect us, this stop was not routine. The officers were shot at close range, and later died at Tampa General Hospital.

Officer Curtis leaves behind a wife, Kelly, and four young sons. Officer Kocab leaves behind a wife, Sara, who is 9 months pregnant and is expected to deliver next week. Both of these young men were only 31 years old.

So I join the Tampa Police Department, Chief Jane Castor, Mayor Pam Iorio, and the entire city of Tampa in mourning the senseless loss of these two young community heroes.

EXTENDING EMERGENCY UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

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

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, we must extend the emergency unemployment benefits. Why? Because the program is structured to assist those who are looking for work.

If you are not looking for work, you don't get the extension of benefits. Why? Because 1.7 million people will

lose their emergency benefits in 4 days if we do not act now.

Over 100,000 will lose their benefits in the State of Texas in 4 days if we do not act now. Why? Because, for every dollar that we spend on unemployment benefits—emergency benefits, I might add—we turn over \$1.63 in economic activity.

Finally, we must do it because, but for the grace of God, there go I and because Dr. King was right. Life is an inescapable network of mutuality, tied to a single garment of destiny. What impacts one directly impacts all indirectly. It has an impact on all of us. We benefit when we spend the money.

FINANCIAL REFORM

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

Ms. CHU. Madam Speaker, when you buy a car, you expect to put a key in the ignition and go. When you eat at your favorite restaurant, you expect a memorable meal.

When the California Public Employees' Retirement System invested in mortgage funds with AAA ratings, it expected a safe, steady return. Instead, it lost \$1 billion when subprime mortgages, which were hidden in the funds, unraveled—wiping out the pensions of millions of public employees and leaving taxpayers high and dry.

The Wall Street reform bill ensures this won't happen again. It ends taxpayer bailouts. It lets investors know what they are buying, and it makes sure banks are never too big to fail. That is why I am backing this bill, and am helping those 1.6 million California retirees and countless others across America.

A vote against this bill is only a vote for the big banks that got us in the mess in the first place.

TRADE

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

Mr. COSTA. Madam Speaker, today, I rise to encourage our leadership to expand our trade opportunities and to grow our economy by calling up and passing our pending free trade agreements.

Just this week, President Obama reaffirmed his commitment to passing the Korea Free Trade Agreement. I applaud the President for this effort.

Korea, Colombia and Panama hold great economic potential for our country, especially for agricultural regions, such as the region I represent in the San Joaquin Valley.

Still, while these trade agreements languish, our farmers continue to face high tariffs in these countries—some as high as 80 percent. Worse yet, many of our international competitors in the European Union and in Canada are expanding market opportunities by signing their own trade agreements and by

seizing markets that could and should belong to U.S. agriculture.

Madam Speaker, we are living in a global economy. If we are truly committed to economic recovery in the United States, now is the time to promote U.S. products abroad.

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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 later.

EXPANDING ACCESS TO STATE
VETERANS HOMES FOR GOLD
STAR PARENTS

Mr. FILNER. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4505) to enable State homes to furnish nursing home care to parents any of whose children died while serving in the Armed Forces.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4505

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

SECTION 1. EXPANSION OF STATE HOME CARE FOR PARENTS OF VETERANS WHO DIED WHILE SERVING IN ARMED FORCES.

In administering section 51.210(d) of title 38, Code of Federal Regulations, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall permit a State home to provide services to, in addition to non-veterans described in such subsection, a non-veteran any of whose children died while serving in the Armed Forces.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER) and the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BUYER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FILNER. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 4505.

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

There was no objection.

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

I rise in support of this bill, legislation to support the families of fallen service men and women. The bill offers access to State veteran homes to parents who have lost a child serving in the Armed Forces. While this service is currently available to some parents, we must recognize that any parent who has lost even one child should be given our support and care.

Madam Speaker, it is easy to understand the profound sacrifices that members of the armed services make daily in the service of their country. However, sometimes we forget that their fathers, mothers, husbands, wives and children also sacrifice deeply. When we memorialize the service of a dead servicemember, we must not forget the pain and sacrifice that their family has also endured.

Madam Speaker, this bill represents an important step forward in honoring the sacrifices of not just our servicemembers, but their families as well. I urge the support of my colleagues.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

(Mr. BUYER asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BUYER. Today, I rise in support of H.R. 4505 to enable State homes to furnish nursing home care to parents any of whose children died while serving in the Armed Forces.

This legislation was introduced by my good friend and colleague from Texas, MAC THORNBERRY.

The loss of a child is a heartbreaking tragedy for any parent. When that loss occurs in defense of American freedom and democracy, we as a grateful and compassionate nation, must do all that we can to ease their pain and provide for their needs.

The State Veterans Home program is a partnership between the VA and the States to provide a broad range of long-term nursing home care for our veterans in need of such care.

Although admission to a State Home is determined by each individual state, each Home is required to maintain a residency of at least seventy-five percent veterans. Non-veterans may be admitted to a State Home if they meet certain criteria. Under current law, eligible non-veterans are veteran's spouses, widows, and Gold Star parents who have lost all of their children in military service.

H.R. 4505 would allow Gold Star parents who have lost a child but not necessarily all of their children to service in the Armed Forces eligibility for admission to a State Home. This is a simple change, and simply the right thing to do.

I want to thank MAC for recognizing this gap and taking the initiative to introduce legislation to correct the oversight and improve services for a parent who suffered the loss of a child in service to our country.

It is important to note that this bill would not result in any additional cost to the VA. And, most importantly, would not in any way impact the space available to veterans in State Veterans Homes.

Our highest admiration and respect should always lie with our servicemembers and veterans who knowingly and willingly put their lives on the line to protect our freedoms. And, we must also acknowledge and honor their beloved family members who also sacrifice in service to our country.

H.R. 4505 is supported by the Gold Star Wives of America, other major Veterans Service Organizations, and the Department of Veterans Affairs.

I urge each and every one of my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 4505.

Madam Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the author of the bill, MAC THORNBERRY of Texas.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Indiana, who has been a very strong advocate for veterans and a respected voice in national security during the time that he has been in Congress. We will surely miss him in another year when he is no longer in our midst.

Madam Speaker, this is one of those issues that leaves people scratching their heads and saying, well, that doesn't make sense, because the way it works now is to be eligible for a State veterans home, a Gold Star parent must have lost all of their children. This bill will allow a parent to be eligible for a State veterans home if they have lost a child while serving in the military.

Now, there are 137 State veterans homes in all 50 States. Those States will still be able to determine the priority level about admissions. They still have to have 75 percent of their beds occupied by veterans. But the average occupancy rate now across the country is 86 percent. There is roughly 15 percent of empty beds in these homes, so this bill basically allows an added group of Gold Star parents who have lost a child while serving in the military to be eligible to fill those beds.

Essentially, there is no cost. The Department of Veterans Affairs has come back and said it will not cost the Federal Government anything. Our visits with the States have gotten the same result. It is supported by the American Legion, the VFW, and the Veterans Department.

Madam Speaker, I would say it has a practical benefit in that it gives an additional option for parents who have lost a child serving in the military, but in a larger sense, it gives a message of gratitude and support for the sacrifice that those parents have made.

I want to thank the chair and certainly the ranking member for bringing this to the floor. I want to express my appreciation to Dr. VIC SNYDER, the gentleman from Arkansas, who was an original sponsor of this bill with me, as well as Senator ENSIGN, who brought this matter to my attention last year. He tried to resolve it last year and was not able to do so, but hopefully it can be solved this year. I thank the gentleman again for yielding.

Mr. BUYER. Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the gentleman for bringing this, and I also thank the gentleman for his leadership on the House Armed Services Committee. You are filling a gap here. This is supported by the Gold Star wives, along with other major veterans service organizations.

I urge all my colleagues to join me in support of H.R. 4505.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. FILNER. Madam Speaker, I urge all my colleagues to support H.R. 4505, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by