

Mr. RAMSTAD. Mr. Speaker, 9 years ago today, President Bush signed the Americans with Disabilities Act into law. Since my election to the House later that same year and as a Minnesota State Senator from 1981 to 1990, I have worked hard to help people with disabilities live up to their full potential. That is why I, like many Members of this Chamber, strongly support the Americans with Disabilities Act, and we celebrate its enactment. But, Mr. Speaker, much more work needs to be done.

In signing the ADA, President Bush noted the law is designed "to ensure that people with disabilities are given the basic guarantees for which they have worked so long and so hard: independence, freedom of choice, control of their lives, the opportunity to blend fully and equally into the rich mosaic of the American mainstream."

As we celebrate the anniversary of this historic legislation, we reflect on all that has been achieved for people with disabilities. We must also, however, address where we have failed to empower people with disabilities.

In 1990, President Bush, in signing that historic act, reminded us that many of our fellow citizens with disabilities are unemployed. They want to work, and they can work. This is a tremendous pool of people who will bring to jobs diversity, loyalty, low turnover rate, and only one request: the chance to prove themselves.

Mr. Speaker, despite the remarkably low unemployment rate in America today, people with disabilities are still asking for this chance to prove themselves in the workplace. A recent Harris poll found that unemployment among people with disabilities is between 70 and 75 percent. Think of that: 70 to 75 percent, or three-quarters of people with disabilities are unemployed in America today. Historically, fewer than 1 percent of people with disabilities leave the SSI and SSDI rolls following successful rehabilitation. Individuals with disabilities have insufficient access to and choice of services they need to become employed. Most SSI and SSDI beneficiaries are never even offered rehabilitation services.

Mr. Speaker, we all know the ADA sought to improve this situation. But the ADA did not remove all the barriers within the current Federal programs that prohibit people with disabilities from working. It is time to eliminate work disincentives for people with disabilities. Eliminating work disincentives for people with disabilities is not just humane public policy, it is sound fiscal policy. It is not just the right thing to do, it is also the cost-effective thing to do.

President Bush knew that discouraging people with disabilities from working, from earning a regular paycheck, paying taxes and moving off public assistance actually results in re-

duced Federal revenues. He noted, and I am quoting again: "When you add together the Federal, State, local and private funds, it costs almost \$200 billion annually to support Americans with disabilities. In effect, to keep them dependent." And that was in 1990, Mr. Speaker. We certainly spend more than that today to keep people with disabilities dependent on the system.

Like everyone else, people with disabilities have to make decisions based on financial reality. Should they consider returning to work, or even making it through vocational rehabilitation, the risk of losing vital Federal health benefits often becomes too threatening to future financial stability. As a result, Mr. Speaker, they are compelled not to work.

Given the sorry state of present law, that is generally a reasonable and a rational decision for people with disabilities. The National Council on Disabilities said it best in its report to the 105th Congress on removing barriers to work when it wrote: "Social Security programs can be transformed from a lifelong entitlement into an investment in employment potential for thousands of individuals." Transforming these Federal programs to springboards into the work force is a goal of legislation that I cosponsored in the House with the gentleman from New York (Mr. LAZIO) and many others on both sides of the aisle, the Work Incentives Improvement Act, or H.R. 1180. This critical legislation has been passed by the Committee on Commerce and a similar bill has been approved by the Senate.

Mr. Speaker, preventing people from working runs counter to the American spirit, one that thrives on individual achievements and the larger contributions to society that result. We must not rest until we pass the Work Incentives Improvement Act. People with disabilities deserve the opportunity to fulfill their dreams. Let us give them the chance to prove themselves now.

**RECOGNIZE THE KASHMIRI
PANDITS AS A MINORITY GROUP
UNDER INDIAN LAW**

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, although the world welcomes the apparent withdrawal this month of Pakistani forces from India's side of the line of control in Kashmir, we are continually reminded of the dangerous situation that still exists in that mountainous region.

Last Wednesday's New York Times reported that 20 Hindus were killed in 3 incidents before dawn last Tuesday in what the newspaper suggested could be a stepped-up campaign of hit-and-run tactics by Muslim insurgents in remote

areas of the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir. I am sad to have to report that these kinds of attacks are nothing new, Mr. Speaker.

The worst of these attacks in the village of Lihota left 15 dead. Last week's violence was the fourth mass killing in Kashmir in just 3 weeks.

Mr. Speaker, this spring, when Islamic militants had been infiltrating India's territory with the support of, and active collaboration with, Pakistan, the world took notice. The fact that India and Pakistan are both nuclear powers stirred up fears of a wider war. When it became apparent even to Pakistan's ruler that their gambit in Kashmir was both a military and a propaganda disaster, the Pakistani Government reverted to its traditional ploy by trying to internationalize the conflict by bringing in the United States as a mediator, an effort that our administration has wisely resisted.

However, Mr. Speaker, the prospect of an India-Pakistan war obscures the ongoing violence that has destroyed the life of this entire region. While people of all faiths have suffered, the Hindu community of Kashmir has been particularly severe. The Pandits have suffered as individuals, singled out for violence, and as a community, forced to leave their ancestral homes and way of life, turned into refugees in their own country.

Mr. Speaker, in light of the ongoing unique suffering of the Kashmiri Pandits, I am urging the Indian government to recognize the Kashmir Pandit community as a minority under Indian law to provide additional benefits and protection. While Hindus are the majority religion in India as whole, they are a minority, and indeed, a persecuted minority in Jammu and Kashmir.

Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that the chairman of the National Minority Commission has proposed that Hindu minorities in various Indian states be officially classified as minorities. The chairman's recommendation is pending before the government. Although such a designation would usually require an amendment to be passed by the parliament, the Lok Sabha, the lower House of the Indian Parliament, there may be occasions where the commission can unilaterally act.

While the details of such an action are obviously an internal matter for India's government, I soon will be circulating a letter to India's Prime Minister Vajpayee, which I hope my colleagues in Congress will join me in signing, urging that the appropriate steps be taken to provide the Pandits with the minority designation.

Mr. Speaker, the militants, with Pakistan's backing, have transformed a peaceful, secular state in India, one which happens to have a predominantly Muslim population, into a killing field. The militants make no secret

of their desire to drive the Pandits out of Kashmir and do not think twice about killing as many of them as possible. And under such a severe, violent threat to their very existence, I believe that the designation of minority status is an urgent priority and respectfully urge the Indian Government to make this designation.

While I understand the enormity of the challenge, I urge Prime Minister Vajpayee and his government to create an environment in which the Pandit community can return to their homeland in the Kashmir Valley in the future. I also urge that the government of India raise the ongoing genocide of the Kashmiri Pandit community in bilateral talks with Pakistan.

I have the highest regard for Prime Minister Vajpayee, both personally and in his capacity as the elected leader of the world's largest democracy. I know he also grieves over the victimization of the Kashmiri Pandit community, and I hope to work closely with the Indian Government with the support of the Kashmiri-American community in resolving this humanitarian crisis.

SECURITY AT OUR NATIONAL LABS—WE MUST ALL BE CONCERNED

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 of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, last week I came to the floor to talk about Chinese espionage, something that seems to be missing in media coverage. A couple of weeks ago, an interview on The O'Reilly Factor caught my attention. Bill O'Reilly spoke with Lieutenant Colonel Edward McCallum, the director of Security and Safeguards for the Department of Energy. After 9 years serving in this position, Colonel McCallum has been placed on administrative leave and his job has been threatened.

Mr. Speaker, Colonel McCallum has a long and distinguished military career. The colonel is an individual who takes his job as a defender of our Nation and our constitutional rights seriously. Colonel McCallum has dedicated his life to protecting the citizens and the critical national security interests of America; and now, he is being punished because he came forward with facts surrounding espionage at our research and weapons laboratories.

Mr. Speaker, when President Clinton appointed Hazel O'Leary Energy Secretary, a dangerously casual attitude invaded the Department of Energy. Colonel McCallum has said that as security was relaxed and even cut, he and members of his staff repeatedly contacted Secretary O'Leary's office urging her to take measures to protect our sensitive technology. Unfortunately, their efforts were ignored. This de-

structive management style began with Secretary O'Leary, but similar efforts to urge Secretary Bill Richardson to protect the security of our weapons laboratories has been stonewalled.

Mr. Speaker, it is bad enough to think that our national security has been compromised. Now the same government that fails to recognize the gravity of stolen national security secrets is penalizing individuals like Colonel McCallum who fought and continued fighting for the safety and protection of our Nation. This is outrageous and completely unacceptable. It was Colonel McCallum's responsibility as the director of Security and Safeguards to make the Department aware of how to better protect U.S. technology; and yet, when he and Members of his staff tried to bring attention to the issue and make changes, nobody listened, or worse, chose to ignore his warnings.

This begs the question: What else could have been stolen and who else could have gained access to this information? What new information is now available to other nations that threaten each and every citizen, and why are we not more concerned?

Mr. Speaker, the safety and protection of our national security is an issue of critical national importance. We must commend, not penalize, men and women like Colonel McCallum whose dedication and commitment to this country is so strong that they would risk losing their jobs and their livelihood to protect America.

We know this administration is responsible for compromising our national security. At the very least, that is unforgivable. In administrations of greater accountability, these acts would have been labeled treasonous. Instead, they would like to quiet Colonel McCallum and bury this messy espionage issue.

This is an issue with serious consequences for each of us. When our national security is compromised, so too is the safety of each and every American. Unfortunately, this concern is lost on many Americans. The advances gained by other nations make all Americans more vulnerable. As such, we should all be concerned; we all must be concerned.

Mr. Speaker, last week I had the opportunity to appear on The O'Reilly Factor to talk about Chinese espionage and Colonel McCallum's quest for the truth. As Mr. O'Reilly and I discussed, something must be done for the colonel and the American people who rely on the government to protect and defend them and their way of life. Like all Americans, Colonel McCallum deserves protection. While the administration is threatening his job simply for telling the truth, they threaten security and safety of us all.

Mr. Speaker, it has become clear that the President and the administration

are not committed to our national security, nor are they committed to the individuals who dedicate their lives to protecting it. Therefore, my good friend and colleague from Pennsylvania (Mr. WELDON) and I joined together to send a letter to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SPENCE), the chairman of the Committee on Armed Services, asking the colonel to testify before the committee about this grave matter. With help from Fox News and Bill O'Reilly, we have aggressively followed and reported on this subject.

We can continue informing the American people how this administration has compromised our national security. Since my appearance last week, Mr. O'Reilly and I have heard from scores of average citizens from across our Nation. Each e-mail, letter or phone agreed on two basic points: first, to protect this country, we must act to address past occurrences of espionage while ensuring that it does not happen in the future; second, we must protect patriots like Colonel Ed McCallum who continues fighting to protect our national security.

Mr. Speaker, I agree with the citizens who contacted my office: the security of our Nation is precious.

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IT'S TIME TO DECIDE OUR NATIONAL PRIORITIES

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, last week we saw the budget allocation for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education cut by an additional \$1 billion, making for a potential \$12 billion shortfall in these programs. We saw that same Committee on Appropriations bring to the House floor the FY 2000 defense bill as a level \$10 billion above the 1997 budget agreement cap for defense, and \$5.7 billion above the Administration's request, a request that was already \$1 billion greater than the FY 1999 allocation.

We saw the Republican majority approve a GOP tax bill, mainly for the very wealthy, which would reduce Federal revenues somewhere in the neighborhood of \$800 billion over the next 10 years, and nearly \$3 trillion in the following decade.

What is wrong with this picture? What is wrong is what is missing, funding for our children: for their education, their health and well-being; funding for our seniors: their security, their medicine, and their basic needs; funding for our communities: for their economic development and safety, the protection of open space, safe drinking