

well as parts of four other states including my state of New Mexico.

As part of the treaty, the United States also agreed to honor the land holdings of the existing residents of its vast new territory. In many cases, however, the government ignored that pledge and the protections provided by the Constitution as more and more new settlers moved into this land covered by numerous Mexican and Spanish land grants.

Mr. Speaker, for 151 years, the United States government has turned its back on this issue. For 151 years, land grant heirs of New Mexico have cried out for justice.

Robert Kennedy once said that "Justice delayed is democracy denied."

Mr. Speaker, it is time to stop denying the full blessings of democracy to the land grant heirs. It's time to start hearing their cries.

In 1997, then-Representative Bill Richardson of New Mexico introduced legislation that would create a Presidential Commission to study the claims of the land grant heirs.

Last year, my predecessor, Mr. Redmond, introduced similar legislation in this body. With tremendous bipartisan support, the Guadalupe-Hidalgo Treaty Land Claims Act of 1998 passed overwhelmingly. Its supporters and cosponsors included not only the current Speaker of the House, but former Speaker Gingrich and members of the leadership of both parties.

With the passage of this bill, the House of Representatives sent a clear message that it was time to undo 151 years of injustice.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, the legislation never made it through the Senate. And so I stand here today urging my colleagues to once again take a stand for justice.

The bill I introduce today is substantively the one passed by this body last year. The bill will:

(1) Create a five person Presidential Commission, called the Guadalupe Hidalgo Treaty Land Claims Commission, to review the claims of the land grant heirs.

(2) This commission will examine land claims, made by three or more eligible descendants of the same community land grant.

(3) The members of the commission will be appointed by the President by and with the advice of the Senate.

(4) The bill also creates a Community Land Grant Study Center at the Onate Center in Alcalde, New Mexico. The center will provide the means by which to conduct research, study and investigate the land grant claims.

(5) The bill authorizes a total of \$8 million over the next eight years to pay for this.

This bill is a beginning, Mr. Speaker. It is my hope that this bill will be the conduit to continue to focus on this issue. I am confident that this body, and specifically members of the New Mexico delegation, can work together on this important matter.

Mr. Speaker, this bill rights a wrong. It creates a Presidential Commission to study the claims of the land grant heirs whose land was improperly taken over the past 151 years in the absence of protection by the U.S. government over the past 151 years.

It is time for our government to stop turning its back on the people of New Mexico. It is time for our government to stop turning its back on the Constitution.

Simply, Mr. Speaker, it is time for Congress to do the right thing.

This bill creates a commission that will evaluate each individual claim and make recommendations to Congress for final consideration.

It provides a fair solution. It provides a reasonable solution. And most importantly, Mr. Speaker, it provides a just solution.

POLL REVEALS AMERICAN WOMEN ARE CONSERVATIVE

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

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to share with my colleagues the results of a recent poll conducted by the Princeton Research Association for the Center for Gender Equity.

Mr. Speaker, the poll found that 53 percent of the females who responded thought abortion should be allowed only in cases of rape, incest, and to save the life of the mother. This is up from 45 percent in 1996.

Forty-one percent believe the issues that the Christian Coalition stands for would improve the lives of women, compared with 18 percent who said the group's issues make the lives of women worse.

Seventy-five percent said religion is very important in their lives, compared to 69 percent just two years ago. And 46 percent said politicians should be guided by religious values, compared to 32 percent six years ago.

To quote my former colleague, Randy Tate, "We are the mainstream. When two-thirds of American women agree with our agenda, even when they are asked by a liberal organization about us in their own poll, that is all the proof anyone needs."

I call these statistics to my colleagues' attention. I think it shows that American women are moving in a conservative stream.

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SIERRA LEONE AND INTRODUCTION OF BILL DEALING WITH JOB LOSS INITIATIVE TASK FORCE ACT

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, in Sierra Leone we have seen rebel offenses going after civilians day after day after day. Three thousand civilians dead have created a terrible, terrible tragedy in Sierra Leone and has created an acute need for medicine and health care and sanitation in this war-ravaged African nation. Rebels are attacking Sierra Leone's democratically-elected government. And so this week, Mr. Speaker, I will ask the State

Department to do a thorough review of this tragedy and recommend solutions to this Congress that will protect these innocent people.

Domestically, Mr. Speaker, let me turn to another subject very quickly and talk of the thousands of layoffs in this country. Although the economy is good, we have seen the energy industry losing thousands of jobs. We have seen the aviation industry losing thousands of jobs. This week, Mr. Speaker, I propose to file a bill entitled the Job Loss Initiative Task Force Act to help those around the Nation who have lost their jobs be prepared for the 21st century with a variety of specific programs that will assist them to secure training and then new jobs so that they, too, can be part of this good economy.

PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

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

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take the opportunity to talk about a serious problem not only in my own district but around the country. Last week in our district in Houston we released statistics showing the high cost that fee-for-service Medicare recipients pay for prescription drugs. The minority staff of the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight conducted an investigation in the 29th District of Texas and found that seniors pay inflated prices for medication that they need to maintain their health. The five best-selling drugs for older Americans are almost twice as expensive as the prices drug companies charge their most favored customers, including the United States Government.

The fundamental problems with finding affordable prescriptions for seniors are that seniors should not be forced into a managed care program just because they cannot afford their prescriptions. Many seniors around the country do not even have the opportunity to join an HMO because it is not servicing their area. MediGap insurance premiums that cover prescriptions are exceedingly too high.

In the last Congress there was legislation introduced by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. TURNER), and I cosponsored it, which would have made critical drugs more affordable to seniors. Whether we consider this proposal or another, this Congress needs to address this issue for Medicare seniors.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BURR of North Carolina). Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair announces that he will postpone further proceedings today on each motion to