

IT IS TIME THAT CHINA LET THE CREW OF THE DOWNED EP-3 COME HOME

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

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Mr. Speaker, I would like to cover real quickly the EP-3 incident with China. Some of my colleagues had questions. From the time the aircraft was hit, the EP lost 8,000 feet. I am sure the crew inside thought that those were their last minutes. They had 20 minutes to make a determination with a single-engine gone, another engine damaged and the entire front of the airplane off.

Some of my colleagues say, why did they not fly to other places? The chances for fire and explosion on that airplane were very high.

Secondly, we are in a non-Cold War situation. The rules of engagement dictated that they fly and land that airplane to save the crew.

Why not ditch the airplane? The EP-3 has probably got a minute and a half from the time it hits the water. It is not like pulling over to the side of the road and changing a tire. Half the crew is going to be lost.

Why not bail out? The closest rescuer or destroyer was over 12 hours away, which would have put them there about 11:00 at night. It was not an option.

Our crew did a good job. They had 20 minutes to get rid of all the classified material, which we think that they were able to do. I think they did a good job. I think we owe them a lot of our appreciation, and it is time that China let them come home.

NAMES OF SURVEILLANCE EP-3 CREW MEMBERS DOWNED IN CHINA

Mr. KIRK. Mr. Speaker, continuing on that theme, I want to read the names of the crew: Richard Bensing, Steven Blocher, Bradford Borland, David Cecka, John Comerford, Shawn Coursen, Jeremy Crandall, Josef Edmunds, Brandon Funk, Scott Guidry, Jason Hanser, Patrick Honeck, Regina Kauffman, Nicholas Mellos, Ramon Mercado, Shane Osborn, Richard Payne, Kenneth Richter, Marcia Sonon, Jeffrey Vignery, Wendy Westbrook, Rodney Young, Richard Pray and Curtis Towne. Twenty-four Americans, day four of their being held in China. It is time to bring them home, Mr. Speaker.

SALUTE TO SCOTT GUIDRY BEING HELD IN CHINA AGAINST HIS WILL

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

Mr. WELDON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to salute Scott Guidry of Satellite Beach. He is a constituent of mine who is being held in China against his will.

The EP-3 military aircraft is sovereign U.S. territory. Under the 1944 Chicago Convention signed by China, that is considered sovereign U.S. territory and should be returned to the United States. China has chosen to ignore that agreement, along with many others over the years.

I would encourage every American who is going to go shopping over the next few days to look at the labels on the products they are going to purchase and see if it is made in the U.S.A. or it is made in China. I would encourage every American to stand in solidarity with all those servicemen being held against their will and send a message to our friends in China that they are doing something they should not be doing. We certainly join with all the families of all those airmen, naval officers, naval enlisted, who are being held overseas with our thoughts and prayers that we are with them. It is time that they be sent back.

□ 1600

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GRAVES). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

MENTORING FOR SUCCESS

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

Mr. OSBORNE. Mr. Speaker, a few years ago I ran across a study which was done on the Fullerton, California, public schools in 1940. It was kind of interesting, the number of the concerns that the teachers in the Fullerton, California, public schools had at that time. Number one was talking in class, number two was chewing gum in class, number three was not putting waste paper in the waste paper basket, and number four was getting out of turn in line when going from one class to another.

More recently I saw this study replicated when they went back to the Fullerton, California, public schools and asked the teachers what their main concerns were, and this is what the list read like. The number one concern was drug abuse, weapons in school, gangs, teenage pregnancy, teenage suicide, alcohol abuse, violence and so on.

So, in the last 50 to 60 years, we have seen an amazing shift in our culture. I guess over 36 years of coaching, I saw

some of the same changes, the same dynamics in some of the young people I was dealing with.

So I guess I have asked myself from time to time, what has caused this shift? I think really two basic elements that I can point to. One is family disintegration. Currently one-half of our children grow up without both biological parents, and back in the 1940s and the 1950s, this percentage was probably no more than 5 or 10 percent. We have 18 million fatherless children in our country today. When your dad does not care enough to stick around to see what you look like, it leaves a vacuum in your life, it leaves a hole that you are oftentimes trying to fill with all the wrong things. So fatherlessness is a huge problem. The out-of-wedlock birth rate has gone from 5 percent in 1960 to 33 percent today. So the family structure has definitely changed.

Secondly, I think there have been some things that I would refer to as the unraveling of the culture. I think almost everyone is aware of the fact that we are living in the most violent Nation in the world for young people. We have the highest homicide rate, the highest suicide rate for young people of any civilized nation or any nation anywhere.

Thirdly, drug and alcohol abuse has certainly become rampant and a very virulent problem in our society, and, of course, there has been a media influence that I think at times some of the music, some of the television, some of the movies that young people are exposed to has been a problem.

So, we may say that I have outlined a lot of problems. What are the solutions? We need some answers. I guess one of the things that I would point to that has proven to be effective is mentoring. A mentor is someone who supports, affirms, provides stability, provides a vision of what is possible for a young person. I guess in athletics I saw this very graphically borne out, because if you told an athlete or a player that he was not very good, that he did not have a future, that he was limited in talent, it would not be long before he would begin to play down to that expectation, and usually he would leave the team before very long. But on the other hand, if you said, I see a great deal of potential, I see some talent, I see some things where you could be a great player, many times that player will begin to perform in a way that he himself did not even begin to expect. So affirmation is critical.

Basically, that is what mentoring is. It is affirming. It is supporting. It is telling somebody they can do it.

So mentoring actually works. There are studies that have shown realistically that people who are mentored, who are in good mentoring programs, young people will be 52 percent less likely to skip school, 50 percent less likely to begin using drugs, 36 percent

less likely to lie to a parent, 30 percent less likely to commit a violent act of any kind, and they are less likely to drop out of school, and have better relationships with friends and family.

So for that reason I am introducing today a bill called Mentoring for Success. What this bill does is it provides grants to expand mentoring through new programs and existing programs throughout the country that supposedly, I believe, would probably reach about 200,000 young people in our country. It also would provide for training of mentors, background checks on mentors; and it would study the long-term effects of different types of mentoring programs. Right now there are a lot of them out there. We do not know exactly what is most effective, and this would provide for a study that would provide more data and more information.

Currently we spend billions of dollars on incarceration, on juvenile justice programs, and once someone is caught up in the juvenile justice system or the criminal justice system, oftentimes they just do not get out of it. So we need to spend more time on the front end of the process, and mentoring is certainly a very viable alternative and something that I hope that all people would certainly consider.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is very important. I think it is something that we really cannot afford not at this time to address.

THE TIME IS RIGHT FOR TAX REFORM

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

Mr. LINDER. Mr. Speaker, today the House of Representatives completed the third piece of President Bush's promised tax relief agenda. I have been proud to support President Bush with my vote in favor of all three of the components of this proposal.

But now that we have succeeded in the House with tax relief legislation, we must begin to turn our attention toward tax reform legislation. For that reason, I have come to the well of the House today to tell my colleagues that soon I will introduce in the 107th Congress my fair tax proposal. This proposal, which will be introduced as H.R. 2525, as it was in the 106th Congress, is bipartisan, cosponsored by the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. PETERSON), my Democrat colleague.

This is a serious proposal supported by academic research from Harvard, Stanford, Boston University, MIT, and more, and it is a popular proposal being supported by the over 400,000 members of Americans for Fair Taxation, and having had nearly \$20 million privately raised and spent on economic and market research to support this effort.

Mr. Speaker, let me tell my colleagues what we discovered. There is not a mechanism for a business to pay a tax. I have had several businesses in my life, and I never had that secret drawer where money piled up behind me to pay the corporate share of the payroll tax, the corporate income tax, or the accountants and attorneys to avoid the tax. It all gets embedded in the value of the product that is purchased by consumers, and the only taxpayers in the world are consumers who finally consume the product and all of the taxes embedded in it. Research we have had done at Harvard's economics department suggests that 22 percent of what one pays for at retail for personal consumption is the embedded cost of the IRS.

My friends, a fair tax is a national retail sales tax with a rate of 23 percent. You will pay 1 percent more for your cost of living, but you will get to keep your whole check, the whole check, including the payroll tax will no longer be taken out.

By authorizing this one sales tax, we will eliminate the personal income tax, the business income tax, the payroll tax, the death tax, the capital gains tax, the self-employment tax, and the gift tax. And, in doing so, we eliminate the IRS and all of its associated problems.

If anyone read this morning's Washington Post, Treasury Department employees, acting as citizens, making phone calls to the IRS helpline to get help with tax returns, tell us that 47 percent of the responses they received from the IRS people were in error. That is up from 25 percent 4 years ago. But our Treasury Department in which the Social Security resides tells us that 47 percent of their responses are wrong. They do not understand the system. It is time for it to go away.

I believe that the time for tax reform has come. While I certainly believe that the fair tax is the best change, I believe we should have an open debate on others. I am willing to talk about the flat tax. It is better than the current system. I also believe that we virtually passed the flat tax in 1986 with only two levels of taxation and eliminating many of the deductions, and we have amended it 6,000 times since then. For as long as we know something about you and where you make your income and how much you make and how you spend it and invest it, we can find ways to tax it. America deserves this debate so we can totally revamp the system.

Mr. Speaker, it has been said that the sales tax is regressive and hits most heavily on the poor. I want to say that the poor are paying it. Everything that anyone, rich or poor, buys has a 22 percent burden of the embedded cost of the IRS. Getting rid of the IRS will undo that burden. We also provide a rebate at the beginning of every month,

for every household, rich or poor, to offset the entire tax consequences of spending up to the poverty line. The Federal Department of Health and Human Services tells us that poverty-level spending, which is \$8,500 for a household of one or \$25,000 for a household of 5, will be enough spending to provide the necessities, the essentials of living, food, clothing, health care, housing. We believe that anyone should be able to buy those essentials with no tax consequences, and our rebate will cover those.

Mr. Speaker, if anyone is interested in becoming a part of this effort, contact me or the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. PETERSON). We cannot change this world alone, but with the help of our colleagues and the enthusiasm of America, we will.

SUPPORT THE MENTORING FOR SUCCESS ACT

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

Mr. KELLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Mentoring for Success Act which we filed earlier today. This bill authorizes \$100 million for competitive grants to be allocated by local school districts and nonprofit community-based organizations for the purpose of starting up mentoring programs for high school students, to encourage them not to drop out of high school, to reduce their involvement in gangs, and also to improve the performance for children, elementary and middle schools.

The chief sponsor of the Mentoring for Success Act is the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. OSBORNE). I am proud to be the original cosponsor of this important legislation.

I would like to address just three points today. First, I would like to talk a little bit about the background of the sponsors of this bill and why it is so important to us. Second, I would like to talk about the educational benefits of this bill. Third, I would like to talk about the crime prevention benefits of this bill.

First, with respect to the sponsor of this legislation, there is probably no Member of Congress who has had more success with mentoring young people than the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. OSBORNE), a former coach.

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Coach Osborne led the Nebraska Cornhuskers football team to three national championships, and he has the winningest coaching record in the history of college football.

As for me, my background in this area is far more humble than Coach Osborne's. However, I did have the privilege of serving as the volunteer Chairman of the Board of the Orlando-