

also be included on the panel. Bipartisanship is critical to the commission's success.

I have heard criticism that such weighty decisions on the Nation's financial future are the responsibility of Congress. Because of the ever-increasing politically charged atmosphere that has come to characterize dealings in our capital city, I fear that partisan rather than national interest has become the order of the day. Congress is paralyzed. Our political system is polarized. Many now only think about "red" or "blue" ideology, which has led to paralysis and disregard of the common good. The American people deserve an honest assessment about the federal government's future saving's account and checkbook—a discussion driven not by politics, but by statesmanship and one which elevates the Nation's sights.

Working together to find common ground, this group will comprehensively review entitlement benefits, patterns in savings and insurance for retirement, tax policies and the long-term implications of increasing foreign ownership of the U.S. Treasury.

Everything must be on the table. As a fiscal conservative, I believe that the economy grows when people keep more of their hard-earned money, and my voting record reflects this belief. But given the enormity of the challenge, the commission needs to be able to look at every component of our fiscal policy to fairly assess where we stand and how we can best move toward a sound fiscal future. In looking at revenues, I believe any changes in the tax code must help simplify the system and stimulate increased economic growth and thereby tax revenue. The late William Simon, who served as Treasury secretary under presidents Nixon and Ford, believed "the United States should have a tax system, which looks like someone designed it on purpose."

The IRS estimates Americans spend 6.6 billion hours per year filling out tax forms—including 1.6 billion hours on the 1040 form alone and nearly \$200 billion on tax compliance. That amounts to 20 cents of compliance cost for every dollar collected by the tax system.

Shouldn't we have a system that people understand? One that encourages faster growth in business formation, jobs, family income and tax revenue? A simplified tax code also could help increase the personal savings rate, which went negative for the first time since the Great Depression earlier this year.

After spending six months conducting town meetings around the country to determine the scope of the problem and consider solutions, the commission will present to Congress a report describing the long-term fiscal problems, public suggestions and views expressed during the town meetings and policy options available to ensure federal programs and entitlements are available for future generations.

With a bipartisan two-thirds majority vote, the commission will send to Congress a legislative package to implement the commission recommendations no later than 60 days after the interim report. The administration and Congress will have 60 additional days to develop actuarially equivalent proposals to achieve the same cost savings. Essentially, no later than 10 months from the organization of the commission, Congress would be required to vote—up or down—on each proposal.

For example, if the interim report is delivered on January 1, then the commission's legislative package would be due by March 1 and any alternative developed by Congress or the Administration would have to be presented by May 1.

All proposals must include a 50-year CBO score in addition to disclosing any impact on future federal liabilities. If more than one proposal receives a majority, the one garnering the greatest number of votes would prevail.

I have put in the legislation procedures for expedited consideration of the commission's legislation to ensure that the Congress acts. I do not want this to simply be another blue-ribbon commission whose findings end up on a bookshelf somewhere only to collect dust and never be acted upon.

I look forward to working with my colleagues to enact this legislation.

I also welcome a forthright national dialogue. Only by working together in a truly bipartisan manner will we be able to secure America's future economy.

I believe most Americans will welcome it as well, especially considering we all want what is best for our children and grandchildren.

I will close with the cautionary words of George Washington's 1796 farewell address:

"We should avoid ungenerously throwing upon posterity the burden of which we ourselves ought to bear."

CALL TO ACTION FOR THE CHILDREN OF KATRINA

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 7, 2006

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to enter into the RECORD "Witness for Justice #269" entitled Invisible People, published May 22, 2006 by the United Church of Christ of Cleveland, Ohio. The statement, one of a series of observations on the state of justice in the U.S. today, eloquently written by Carl P. Wallace, Executive Associate of this Church on 700 Prospect Ave. in Cleveland, criticizes the ineffectiveness of the current administration in contending with the devastating impacts of Hurricane Katrina. Mr. Wallace warns us, "Right before our eyes we are losing our children" as they continue to remain invisible in the eyes of the relief and aid workers in the Gulf Coast. Katrina orphaned thousands of children whose ordeal is prolonged due to inadequate health care, public education and housing services. "One in three sheltered children in the Gulf Coast region has some type of chronic illness." Almost none of them have health care coverage. Highlighting the fact that one-fourth to one-fifth of the children in America are growing up in poverty, Mr. Wallace suggests, and I concur, that the 1.9 trillion dollars of tax cuts would be better employed to provide health care for 9 million uninsured children and mitigate child poverty.

I also join Mr. Wallace in questioning the reason behind this invisibility of our children. Are they invisible because "they do not vote, lobby or pay taxes?" Is it acceptable to allow these children to be neglected, even abused?

What happened to compassion and human kindness? Mr. Wallace ends on the hopeful note that through prayer and action "the invisible can be made visible." The Children's Defense fund has already released a "Call to Action for Katrina's Children," that focuses on providing immediate health and health services and quality public education, as well as, creating an enduring support base for such endeavors.

I join Mr. Wallace in all his concerns and call upon my colleagues in the Congress to alleviate the suffering of children affected by Hurricane Katrina.

[From Witness for Justice #269,

May 22, 2006.]

INVISIBLE PEOPLE

(By Carl P. Wallace)

Ever wonder what it would be like to be invisible? You could go around and nobody would see you. Nobody would know you existed. Do you remember playing hide and seek? Wow. If you were invisible you could always win the game because no one would be able to find you. "Ollie Ollie ump fee. I'm coming to find you." What a game. Those who could hide the best always won the game. It was great being invisible until you discovered that if no one cared to find you, you really did not win. Regrettably, there is a similar game being played in the Gulf Coast. Our children appear to be invisible. But it is no game. It is a situation of life and death. And right before our eyes we are witnessing the most devastating reality of what it means to be invisible in the richest country in the world. Right before our eyes we are losing our children.

We are literally losing our children due to the lack of adequate health care, public education and housing. There are over 125,000 displaced families in the Gulf Coast. In a Red Cross shelter north of Birmingham, Alabama there are over 2,000 children who have lost their parents. In a FEMA trailer park outside of Baton Rouge 700 of the 1,670 residents are children. In the richest nation in the world one-fifth to one-fourth of our children are growing up in poverty. Of the 1.9 trillion dollars of tax cuts, which will give the richest 1 percent of all tax payers \$57 billion each year, we could instead provide health care for all 9 million uninsured children and end child poverty in America. Wow! Centuries ago Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do nothing to hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." (Matthew 19:14). Maybe we missed Jesus' request.

Sometimes I wonder where our priorities are. A wise man once said: "Where your heart is there also is your treasure." Are our children our treasure? It is extremely painful to note that one-in-three sheltered children in the Gulf Coast region has some type of chronic illness. Are our children our treasure? In the Gulf Coast region one-half of the children who had some level of health coverage do not have any now. Are our children our treasure? Did the need for health care coverage just disappear? Have a heart. I guess invisible people don't need health care.

Let's think about it. Perhaps our children are invisible because they do not vote, lobby or pay taxes. Let's think about another point. Can you imagine what it must be like to be undocumented and in this situation? Is there such a thing as double invisibility?

The Children's Defense fund released a "Call to Action for Katrina's Children." It calls in part for: immediate emergency mental health and health services for children

and their families; quality public education and after-school and summer education; as much attention focused on constructing levees of support for strong health care, family and public education as they will for the construction of the physical levees that will hold back the water in future storms; and, prayer for Katrina children and families and for leaders who work for justice. Prayer and action will make a difference. Our children must be made visible.

Maybe, just maybe, if we lift our voices to make their needs known our children will not disappear right before our eyes. Maybe, just maybe if we take action we will not lose the least of these. Maybe, just maybe we will find our treasure. The invisible can be made visible.

"Ollie, Ollie ump fee. We're coming to find you!"

URGING TOLERANCE AND
PEACEFUL CHANGE

HON. HILDA L. SOLIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 7, 2006

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to express concern about the sharp rise in hate crimes and racial intolerance, and to urge acceptance in our Nation.

A recent report from the Southern Poverty Law Center stated that there were 803 hate groups in the USA last year. This is up from 762 in 2004 and is a 33 percent increase since 2000. The Center's report stated the national debate that has focused on immigration has been "the single most important factor" in spurring activity among hate groups and has given them "an issue with real resonance."

Hundreds of thousands of people marched peacefully throughout the Nation to give a voice for immigrants in this country. Half a million in Los Angeles, 300,000 people in Chicago, 40,000 in Washington, DC, and 20,000 in Milwaukee and Phoenix marched to defend the hopes and dreams of immigrant families. Nearly 40,000 students across Southern California, including students at several schools in my district, marched for the rights of immigrants.

Those who marched did so peacefully. I encourage everyone to remember the great history of change driven by nonviolent action, which is such a vibrant part of our Nation's fabric. Everyone is entitled to their own opinion, but I urge that such expression be done in a peaceful and non-threatening manner.

HONORING DR. ALLAN
ROSENFELD

HON. NITA M. LOWEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 7, 2006

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Dr. Allan Rosenfield on his 20th anniversary as Dean of the Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University.

As Dean of the Mailman School of Public Health and professor of obstetrics and gynecology, Dr. Rosenfield is a true giant in the fields of population, reproductive rights, health policy and human rights.

Throughout his career, he has fought against the global gag rule; worked around the world on issues of family planning and maternal and children's health, and been recognized as a pioneer for his work on maternal mortality.

During his distinguished career, one common denominator is found throughout his work—he embraces the needs of the people least likely to receive care. Dr. Rosenfield is a man who sees need and steps up to the plate to enact change.

Dr. Rosenfield is an extraordinary man whose courage and dedication have inspired all who know him. Among his many admirable traits, there is one I am particularly happy to share with him—his strong belief in the power of humankind kind to change the world for the better.

I am honored to not only know Dr. Rosenfield, the highly respected and dedicated academic, but to call him my good friend.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me today in recognizing the tremendous career of Dr. Allan Rosenfield and to congratulate him on his 20th year as Dean of the Mailman School of Public Health.

TRIBUTE TO TARA ELIZABETH
CONNOR, MISS USA 2006

HON. HAROLD ROGERS

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 7, 2006

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Tara Elizabeth Connor, a native of Russell Springs, Kentucky, who was recently crowned Miss USA 2006.

The entire Bluegrass State celebrated on April 21, when Tara not only captured the Miss USA title but also became the first Kentuckian in the pageant's 54-year history to do so. Although she is only 20 years old, Tara showed remarkable composure during the week-long Miss USA competition, which culminated in the nationally televised pageant on NBC.

A 2004 graduate of Russell County High School, Tara was able to realize her dream of becoming Miss USA through the tried and true formula of hard work, determination and pure talent that has marked generations of accomplished Kentuckians. As the reigning Miss USA, Tara intends to use her celebrity platform to raise awareness about breast cancer. I have no doubt that she will perform her newfound responsibilities with the same mix of energy and enthusiasm that she used to capture the Miss USA title.

While millions of Americans now know her as a "beauty" queen, those that know Tara best see her for what she really is—a down-to-earth Kentucky girl who is dedicated to her family and friends.

Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate Tara Connor on her honor as Miss USA 2006. Tara has made all of Kentucky proud, and I wish her the very best as she pursues her bright future.

HOMELAND SECURITY
APPROPRIATIONS H.R. 5441

HON. RUSH D. HOLT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 7, 2006

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I supported the Fiscal Year 2007 Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Bill (H.R. 5441). The bill provided \$33.1 billion for our Nation's homeland security. These funds will help our Federal, State and local first responders react to both natural disasters and terrorist events. Yet, funds appropriated in this bill represent only a 5 percent increase from the funds we appropriated last year and do not fully meet the homeland security needs of our country. Even though I supported the bill, I believe that we can and we should do more.

I am disappointed that Ranking Member OBEY's amendment to add \$3.5 billion to the bill for transit security, border security, port security, first responders, and preparedness programs was rejected along party lines by the Homeland Security Appropriations Committee and was prohibited from being offered. These programs are essential to strong and robust hometown security. This indispensable funding would have been easily paid for by rolling back the tax savings that taxpayers with incomes over \$1 million today received under the 2001 and 2003 tax cuts.

I am glad that this bill provides \$19.6 billion for border security. This represents a 9 percent increase from current funding and shows that the House takes seriously the challenges we face in securing our Nation's borders. Yet it still falls short of the request made by President Bush.

This bill also includes \$4.2 billion for port and cargo security, which is a 12 percent increase over last year. After the controversy over the D.P. World's attempt to acquire operating control of a number of U.S. ports earlier this year, Congress finally recognized the need to invest in container inspection and radiological detection. This bill also includes increased funding for grants to State and local governments to improve port security. But more needs to be done.

I was troubled that for the third year in a row DHS's rail and transit security grant program was flat funded at \$150 million. This bill already provided \$200 million for port security and \$4.7 billion for aviation security. That is why I joined my colleagues Mr. CASTLE and Mr. LYNCH in offering an amendment to increase funding for this essential grant program by \$50 million. A clear majority of Congress agreed with us and voted to ensure that rail security received an increase in funding. I am glad to have led this effort to make a small but important step to ensuring that our nation's rail and transit providers have the resources they need to ensure the safety of millions of Americans daily.

I remain troubled that nothing has been done in this bill to significantly reform the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). I have long argued that FEMA should be removed from the Department of Homeland Security and be reestablished as an independent agency that reports directly to the President.