

COST DRIVERS. FOR EXAMPLE, HOW BENEFITS ARE CALCULATE, FOR EXAMPLE, IS ON THE TABLE; WHETHER OR NOT BENEFITS RISE BASED UPON WAGE INCREASES OR PRICE INCREASES . . .

THERE'S A SERIES OF PARTS OF THE FORMULA THAT ARE BEING CONSIDERED. AND WHEN YOU COUPLE THAT, THOSE DIFFERENT COST DRIVERS, AFFECTING THOSE—CHANGING THOSE WITH PERSONAL ACCOUNTS, THE IDEA IS TO GET WHAT HAS BEEN PROMISED MORE LIKELY TO BE—OR CLOSER DELIVERED TO WHAT HAS BEEN PROMISED.

DOES THAT MAKE ANY SENSE TO YOU? IT'S KIND OF MUDDLED.

LOOK, THERE'S A SERIES OF THINGS THAT CAUSE THE—LIKE, FOR EXAMPLE, BENEFITS ARE CALCULATED BASED UPON THE INCREASE OF WAGES, AS OPPOSED TO THE INCREASE OF PRICES. SOME HAVE SUGGESTED THAT WE CALCULATE—THE BENEFITS WILL RISE BASED UPON INFLATION, AS OPPOSED TO WAGE INCREASES . . .

THERE IS A REFORM THAT WOULD HELP SOLVE THE RED IF THAT WERE PUT INTO EFFECT. IN OTHER WORDS, HOW FAST BENEFITS GROW, HOW FAST THE PROMISED BENEFITS GROW, IF THOSE—IF THAT GROWTH IS AFFECTED

. . . IT WILL HELP ON THE RED.
'NUFF SAID!

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KUHLMAN of New York). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

THE NO FLY NO BUY ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mrs. MCCARTHY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, last month, the front pages of our Nation's newspapers contained chilling headlines: "Terror Suspects Buying Firearms."

At least 44 times in a 4-month period, people whom the FBI suspected of being members of terrorist groups tried to buy guns. In all but nine instances, the purchases were allowed to go through.

A background check of the would-be buyer found no automatic disqualification such as being a felon, an illegal immigrant, or deemed mentally defective. There certainly have been many more instances of suspected members of terrorist groups trying to buy these guns, but since the Justice Department destroys background check records after only 24 hours, we will never know.

So not only are we allowing suspected terrorists to arm themselves, we are destroying the records indicating how many guns they actually have bought. We are destroying critical intelligence in the war on terror, and suspected terrorists are exploiting our pre-9/11 gun laws.

The question many of my constituents ask me is, "Why are these people

allowed to be able to buy guns in the first place?"

It defies common sense. We are at war. We saw what these terrorists are capable of armed with only box cutters purchased at a hardware store. Then why do we make it so easy for our enemies to buy firearms and ammunition within our own borders?

Since 9/11, we have adopted a multitude of new laws in the wake of the war on terror. Just try to fly out of Reagan National Airport. No one is spared from the reach of these new laws. Senior citizens, children, and Members of the House have been subjected to routine inspection before boarding a commercial flight. It is an inconvenience perhaps for some, but if it prevents one terrorist from boarding a plane, it is a good law.

But our gun laws are dangerously out of step with the war on terror. The same people who are prevented from boarding a flight can walk into a gun store and purchase a hand-held weapon of mass destruction. This is absolutely ridiculous.

Let me set the record straight. I am not out to take away the right of any law-abiding citizen from being able to buy a gun.

We need common-sense gun safety regulations that protect law-abiding gun owners, while making it tougher for criminals and terrorists to obtain guns. That is why I have introduced a bill that would deny those on the Transportation Security Administration's No Fly List from purchasing firearms.

Why the No Fly List? Granted, the No Fly List includes some law-abiding citizens who are on the list in error. But it is the only Federal terrorist watch list with a procedure to get innocent people off the list, and the No Fly List is the only watch list to have public scrutiny. Other lists without practical application may be just as inaccurate but afford no due process to those wrongly listed.

My bill will ensure that these people incorrectly listed on the No Fly will be able to get their names off the list as quickly as possible. They would then be able to complete their gun purchase, no questions asked. Again, an inconvenience for some but necessary steps to ensure terrorists are not buying guns in our country.

The Federal Government charged with protecting us from terrorists should put at least as much effort into making sure terrorists and criminals are buying guns as what senior citizens and children might bring aboard a plane. We are at war, and the Federal Government has made it easier for our enemies to arm themselves.

I have written Attorney General Gonzales and asked him to endorse my bill. And if he cannot endorse it, I want to know why. I understand the Second Amendment concerns of law-abiding citizens and gun owners. But these laws can coexist with responsible people's rights to hunt and protect their families.

Responsible gun ownership is a right of all law-abiding Americans, but we also have to take the responsibility to protect law-abiding Americans from acts of terror and crime.

Mr. Speaker, we have seen, unfortunately, many, many acts of crime and gun violence in the last few weeks. Each week for the next several weeks now, I am going to bring this subject up. I know a lot of the American people think Democrats have given up on this issue. I promise the American people, I will continue with this issue. I will fight for good gun safety laws to make this country safer.

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In SUPPORT OF LIEUTENANT PANTANO

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KUHLMAN of New York). 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 Wednesday I spoke about Marine 2nd Lieutenant Ilario Pantano and his struggle to defend his actions in battle.

April of 2004 was a time of widespread violence from Iraqi insurgents. It was the deadliest month of the war.

On April 15, 2004, Lieutenant Pantano was faced with a very difficult decision. Just 3 days after he had witnessed a deadly ambush, his unit received a tip about a weapons stockpile. Leery of the tip, he led a unit of 40 men to the area and immediately noticed two Iraqis in a vehicle who appeared to be escaping the area.

After stopping the vehicle, he ordered the two Iraqis to search the vehicle themselves so as to avoid a booby trap for himself or the others under his command. Suddenly, he said, the two insurgents pivoted towards him after disobeying his command to stop, and in a split-second decision Lieutenant Pantano decided he had to fire his weapon to protect himself and his men.

It was not until 2½ months later that his radio operator mentioned the incident to another Marine, who then accused Lieutenant Pantano of murder. He now is facing charges of two counts of murder.

Mr. Speaker, I have met Lieutenant Pantano and his family. I have watched again and again the "Dateline" interview Stone Phillips conducted with Lieutenant Pantano, and I have researched this situation at length. I believe Lieutenant Pantano is truthful in his recounts of the events of April of 2004 and he was justified in his action while having to make a split-second battlefield decision.

I question why the radio operator would wait 2½ months to tell his report of the events if he really believed murder had taken place. Furthermore, as is noted in the "Dateline" video, the sergeant was never even present for the actual shooting. How can he make a