

convening dozens of hearings to hear from officials at all levels of government on how funds are utilized, and mandating weekly reports on expenditures, and conducting audits and investigation on disaster assistance.

While I hope we will do more to cut spending and provide accountability, we all know that the Democratic plan is simply to spend, spend, and spend some more.

EXPIRING MEDICARE PROGRAM NEEDS URGENT CONSIDERATION

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

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I want to bring to the attention of the House a matter that really needs urgent consideration. There are 160,000 elderly and disabled Americans who depend on Medicare part B, a program called the QI program, qualified individual. That program is due to expire on Friday. That program, that benefit, pays Medicare part B benefits to people with incomes that are 120 percent to 135 percent of the Federal poverty level. How that translates is that people who are making less than \$1,092 per month as an individual or \$1,459 per couple, they are due to lose their benefit which, for some people, would be almost 10 percent of their income. The Medicare part B insurance program covers medical services like physician service, lab service, durable medical equipment, outpatient and home health visits. We have a bipartisan bill sponsored by myself and the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. LATOURETTE), H.R. 3800. We have to act in the next 24 hours to save the financial condition for 160,000 elderly and disabled Americans.

ENERGY SECURITY

(Mr. PRICE of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, over the past several years, we have all gained firsthand experience on the effects of America's outdated energy system with gas prices going up and down. Atlanta, my home, has seen gas prices anywhere from \$3 to \$6 a gallon. The results of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita show all of us how terribly dependent we are on foreign sources of oil.

This is a large and complex issue and not a challenge easily solved. Our recently adopted new national energy policy will put us on the right track, but more is needed. It is critical that we address some of the systemic failures that have kept us dependent on others for energy and kept us from aggressively developing a reliable alternative source. While our economy expanded over the past decades, our ability to refine oil actually decreased. Since 1981, we have lost over half of our refineries. The most dynamic Nation in the world has not built a new refinery

in 25 years. We are more dependent now on foreign oil than ever before.

We must move away from foreign fuel sources and move toward a solution that maximizes alternative fuel. Mr. Speaker, energy independence is not just energy security, it is national security.

MORE MONEY FOR GUARD EQUIPMENT NOW

(Mr. DEFAZIO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, about 2 years ago, I traveled to Fort Hood, Texas, to see my Guard unit before their deployment to Iraq. I was surprised to see that they were using radios that their families had bought for them at a place called GI Joe's, a good store in Oregon in the Northwest. But the point is they did not have the equipment they needed, they could not train on the equipment they were going to use in Iraq, and now it turns out that that equipment is not available in the United States of America to the National Guard.

Yesterday, Lieutenant General Steven Blum, chief of the National Guard Bureau, said he has about 34 percent of what is needed for the National Guard for equipment for homeland security, for emergencies, disasters or terrorist attacks. Thirty-four percent. He has radios, he said, that cannot communicate with the Army radios because they are Korean War vintage radios. This is an embarrassment for this country. This administration must give the Guard the tools it needs. We don't have to talk about a bigger role for the active duty military. We need to give the National Guard, who does not have problems with posse comitatus and other things, who performed admirably in this disaster, the tools they need for future disasters.

More money for Guard equipment now.

HURRICANE SAFETY ON THE CAPE VINCENT AND CAPE VICTORY

(Mr. POE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, as the howling winds and incessant rain from the "Lady of the Gulf—Rita" moved closer to southeast Texas, 90 percent of the population in my district evacuated, but the first responders in Beaumont and other towns were worried about where to ride out the looming summer storm and potential floods.

Docked in the Port of Beaumont were the Cape Vincent, helmed by Captain David Scott, and the sister ship Cape Victory, with Captain Kevin Brooks. These two massive vessels transport military cargo to Iraq and Afghanistan.

The captains and the mayor, Guy Goodson, met briefly. The plan: Use the ships. The ships were loaded with first

responders and police cars, fire trucks, ambulances, city dump trucks, front end loaders and even police helicopters. The expert ship crews coolly but quickly took little time in safely securing our first responders and their equipment. Tugs in the port operated during the howling hurricane winds to secure the ships.

In this operation, there was no senseless red tape, no forms were filled out, no committees met, and no permission from bureaucrats was sought. The people of Texas appreciate Captain Brooks and Captain Scott and their crews for, as we say in Texas, "Gittin' 'er done."

GAMING INDUSTRY AND TAX BREAKS

(Ms. BERKLEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. BERKLEY. Mr. Speaker, when Hurricane Katrina hit the gulf coast, homes and businesses were destroyed and people were left with nothing. To help those in Louisiana and Mississippi return home and go back to work, the gulf coast region must be rebuilt. The gaming industry will invest billions of dollars as it rebuilds the gulf region, making it an essential part of restoring employment, economic growth and tax revenue. Congress must not withhold incentives to rebuild from any employer that provides good jobs and tax revenue if we want to revive the economy of this region.

There is a movement in Congress led by the self-righteous anti-gaming police to single out the gaming industry and prohibit it from receiving needed tax incentives to rebuild. I did not see any Members of Congress, and certainly not FEMA officials, handing out paychecks to out-of-work employees in the gulf coast region. I did see CEOs of gaming companies standing there in the muck up to their ankles handing out checks to their employees.

Contrary to the biased view of some, the gaming industry should be fairly and equally like any other business when Congress develops legislation to help rebuild this region. The gaming companies remain committed to the communities and the people in the affected regions.

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IMMIGRATION REFORM

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

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, we need comprehensive immigration reform. Specifically, we need reform to support those who enforce our laws, instead of rewarding those who break them. The United States may need a temporary worker program, but definitely not an amnesty program. Our immediate need is more border patrol agents and diligent cooperation from local and State law enforcement agencies.