

price gouging is and what factors go into it and then apply it to the facts of this case. We are after excessive profits like 255 percent in 12 months or 46 percent in 12 months, not the person who makes 5 percent in 12 months. And we want it to apply throughout the Nation, not just at the time of disaster and in the area affected by the disaster.

We provide the FTC with the right and authority to watch market manipulation. The majority party is silent on that fact.

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

(Mr. POE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

(Mr. BROWN of Ohio addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

(Mr. McHENRY addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to address the House out of order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

IRAQ AND PRISONER ABUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, 8 months ago standing outside this dome, the President of the United States spoke these words as he was sworn in for a second term: "We will persistently clarify the choice before every ruler and every nation, the moral choice between oppression, which is always wrong, and freedom which is eternally right. All who live in tyranny and hopelessness can know the United States will not ignore your oppression or excuse your oppressors."

Beautiful words, honorable sentiments, if only the Bush administration were conducting this war in Iraq in a way that actually reflects those values.

Last week, Human Rights Watch released a report that details once again how Iraqi war prisoners were subjected to acts of sadistic cruelty at the hands

of their supposed liberators. This time it was at Forward Operating Base Mercury, where beatings and other forms of humiliation took place on a daily basis for several months. Often, this was not even about interrogation or securing some vital piece of national security. "In a way, it was sport," said one sergeant in the 82nd Airborne, a way to "work out your frustration."

□ 1800

What is perhaps most tragic is that our soldiers who have committed these acts are themselves victims as well, victimized by their incompetent and amoral superiors who give a wink and a nod to torture and then blame it on a few bad apples. One officer in the 82nd Airborne, Captain Ian Fishback, was appalled by the prisoner abuse and tried in vain for a year and a half to get some clarification from his superiors about how prisoners should be treated, given that the administration had essentially tossed the Geneva Conventions in the trash can. He got no answers because the Pentagon seemed to want the abuse to continue but did not want to take any responsibility for it.

That is how it works with this crowd: The powerless take the fall while the high-level decisionmakers who make bad decisions are left in place to make more bad decisions. So it is that Lynndie England faces jail time for her conduct at Abu Ghraib while Tommy Franks gets the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

The prisoner abuse episode is consistent with everything else about the way this war has been handled. It indicates both a moral blind spot and a staggering incompetence that has cost nearly 2,000 Americans their lives. The Bush administration had no plan for how to conduct this war, they had no plan for securing the country once Saddam was deposed, and now they have no plan for ending the war. We need a compassionate and we need a viable exit strategy, one that ends the occupation but still gives us a constructive role in the rebuilding of Iraqi society. If the President will not do it, we will. If the President will not lead, we will.

Two weeks ago, I held an informal bipartisan hearing to discuss plans to withdraw our troops and end the war. We heard from a panel of Middle East experts and military strategists, just the kind of people George Bush should have listened to along his march to war, all of whom testified about the need for a change in U.S. policy in Iraq. The hearing was not about endorsing one particular approach. My goal was to put ideas on the table, to start a conversation that the Nation wants and the Nation deserves. Two-thirds of the American people disapprove of the President's handling of Iraq, and yet it has been some sort of taboo around this place to discuss troop withdrawal. The American people are way ahead of Congress on this. It is about time we caught up, it is about time we realized

RESPONSE TO SECRETARY BENNETT'S COMMENTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WESTMORELAND). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, this evening I rise to express my deep disdain and disgust for comments made yesterday on his radio show by former Secretary of Education William Bennett.

He said, and I quote, "You could abort every black baby in this country and your crime rate would go down. That would be an impossible, ridiculous, and morally reprehensible thing to do, but your crime rate would go down."

These are shameful words, Mr. Speaker. I am appalled to have to say them on the floor of the House of Representatives. Secretary Bennett's words reflect a narrow-minded spirit that has no place within American discourse. These words do not reflect the values of hope and opportunity for the future, they do not reflect the values of the American people, Democrat or Republican. Secretary Bennett does not reflect American mainstream values; he did not when he was Secretary of Education and he does not now. Leaders are called to higher standards than Secretary Bennett has demonstrated. We have a responsibility to lead, to be an example.

As Americans feel the pain of two hurricanes, as Americans still reel from questions about the role that race and poverty played in the government response to these devastating hurricanes, we must stand sentry against any hint of racism, any indication of injustice, any moment of intolerance. Now is not the time for divisive comments, now is the time for coming together, now is the time for healing.

What could possibly have possessed Secretary Bennett to say those words, especially at this time? What could he possibly have been thinking? This is what is so alarming about his words.

I urge President Bush to renounce his statement, and I call on Secretary Bennett to apologize. I encourage my Republican colleagues to join me on the House floor to reject these words and to speak for a future of tolerance and equality. I invite Secretary Bennett and other Republicans to join Democrats in creating solutions to national problems and meeting national needs. It is very sad, because children do study the words that are said on the floor of the House of Representatives, and these words are very shameful.

But words are shameful, too, that deny children the education they need, the health care they deserve, economic security for their families, a clean environment where they have clean air and clean water and safe food to eat; and when we deprive them of that we are insulting them, but these words are a direct hit at them. Secretary Bennett is a writer. He knows that words have

power. He knows how powerful these particular words are. An apology is definitely in order, and a rejection of these remarks also is in order from the President of the United States.

KATRINA UNEARTH'S DISASTROUS FISCAL STATE OF COUNTRY

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

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, almost a year ago, I spoke on this House floor warning of the dangers posed by the latest effort of the majority party to raise the debt limit for the third time during this administration to a whopping \$8.18 trillion.

I used the occasion to contrast the fiscal policies of the Clinton administration, namely, turning the largest budget deficits in history to the largest budget surpluses in history, with the fiscal policies of the current administration. However, my protestations and the warnings of my fellow Blue Dog Democrats continued to fall on deaf ears.

It is inconceivable that deficits soaring as far as the eye can see, mounting debt, and the skyrocketing costs of military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan would be ignored for so long and that it would take a tragedy such as Hurricane Katrina to finally serve as a wakeup call. For years members of the Blue Dog Coalition have warned that we were spending money we did not have, that the administration had no economic plan, and that massive untargeted tax cuts were not a substitute for an economic blueprint for our country's future. And yet the Congress continued to reject every proposal requiring us to do our budget in the same way that our constituents do, by paying as we go.

Now that Hurricanes Katrina and Rita have wreaked havoc on the gulf coast, causing hundreds of billions of dollars of damage, it is clear that we must take immediate action to get our fiscal house in order. Members on the other side of the aisle have finally acknowledged what Democrats have been saying for years, that our current economic policies cannot be maintained. Unfortunately, however, some in the majority party have proposed that we ask those Americans who have been impacted most by Katrina, namely, the elderly and those with low incomes, to bear the costs.

This is not the answer to the persistent poverty exposed so brutally and graphically by Katrina. We must pursue a comprehensive solution to our fiscal woes by suspending tax cuts for wealthy families, by cutting spending, and enacting PAYGO rules, pay-as-you-go, and establishing an emergency rainy day fund.

Mr. Speaker, the 2005 budget resolution included \$106 billion in new deficit finance tax cuts over the next 5 years. These additional tax cuts will impose a

huge additional debt burden on the next generation. If the government is forced to borrow the money to cover these added expenses, the yearly interest payments alone will pile on the already enormous debt that our children and grandchildren will be faced with paying off.

Most of these tax cuts will actually be doled out to individuals who do not need more of the government's largesse. With American troops in combat in Iraq and Afghanistan and with our country coping with the rebuilding of the gulf coast, all of us, all of us, must sacrifice for our troops and for our neighbors.

In addition to suspending tax cuts for wealthy families, the Congress must immediately restrain its voracious appetite for spending, finding places where cuts can be made to pay the costs of Katrina and Iraq. And in addition to making tough cuts, the Congress should move to immediately reinstate PAYGO rules to stop any further bleeding.

Finally, the Congress must establish a rainy day fund for future Katrinas so we will not find ourselves in this spot again. The interest earned by such a fund could be used for disaster planning and preparedness, to modernize our Nation's infrastructure, fortify our levees, and to update and make interoperable our communications systems.

The American people now understand the precarious state of the Nation's finances. Today our national debt stands at nearly \$8 trillion. Each citizen's personal share of that debt is almost \$27,000. This is what we bequeath to our children, and it conflicts most directly with what my parents taught me and what most of our parents taught all of us, that is, we leave the country a little better off than we found it.

In 1989, a New York City real estate developer named Seymour Durst placed a large National Debt Clock in Times Square in order to draw public attention to what he saw as a grim predictor of financial instability. For 11 years, the debt numbers on the clock rose at the breakneck pace of \$13,000 a second. In 1995, as the Clinton administration began to pay down the national debt, onlookers were shocked to see the numbers on that clock not only slow down but reverse. The clock was retired in the year 2000, as President Clinton announced record reductions in the national debt.

Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, no debt clocks were at work this time drawing attention to this crisis. It has taken Katrina to awaken the Nation to the coming fiscal crisis. Let us hope our response to this crisis is an improvement on our response to the last. We owe that to our kids.

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

(Mr. NORWOOD addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

(Mr. DeFAZIO addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take my Special Order at this time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

RECOGNIZING DONNA SMITH ON HER RETIREMENT AS LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL

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

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the end of a distinguished career and yet the beginning of new adventures and horizons.

This week my legislative counsel Donna Smith is retiring from my congressional office, ending an extensive and dedicated career of public service.

For the past 5 years in Washington, Donna has handled what she referred to as the three Es: education, energy, and the environment, as well as many other issues.

Donna is a California native born in Los Angeles. Her family soon relocated to San Diego. And what would be L.A.'s loss became San Diego's gain.

She graduated from Pomona College and received a teaching credential from UC Berkeley and began an 18-year teaching career. She instructed students in English, social studies, journalism, and history. She taught at the San Diego Unified School District and served as the junior high school principal and teacher for the San Diego Jewish Academy. During these years of mentoring and teaching, Donna was also active in the community and began her interest in public policy and politics.

Our association together began as members of the League of Women Voters where she served as the League's vice president from 1973 to 1977.

She helped introduce me to the issues I came to embrace and to the invaluable discourse of pro-con discussions for which the League is well known. At the same time, we were all building long-lasting relationships.

In 1992, Donna was appointed by San Diego Mayor Maureen O'Connor as a member of the San Diego City Council Elections, Campaign, and Government Advisory Board. And as a member of the board, she was instrumental in formulating a proposal for a San Diego ethics commission.

Donna holds a myriad of other interests beyond creating sound public policy. She loves music; travel; the arts;